

Lucy Wyn-Griffiths

From: Dr Donna Green [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, November 23, 2020 2:40 PM
To: Council; corporate
Subject: Fwd: Letter to Whistler Council

Monday, November 23, 2020

Dear Mayor Jack Cromton and Council Members, DeJong, Ford, Forsyth, Gills, Jackson, Jewett,

We are a family of six that have been homeowners at 7334 Toni Sailer for over 20 years. Our eldest son was a level 3 ski instructor and tennis instructor in Whistler for a couple of years between University degrees. After he finished his medical degree, he took a job as a hospitalist at a BC hospital and has been on the front line against COVID in the emergency room and intensive care. Our other 3 children have worked during the summer in Whistler restaurants and clothing stores. We are also supporters of a number of charities in town.

I was and am a strong supporter of the White Gold Undergrounding proposal that was approved by Council at their Nov 3 meeting. It was noted at that time that the proposal had been made with scrupulous adherence to all municipal requirements. It was also supported in a democratic vote by 94 White Gold residents which is 58% of our neighbourhood and opposed by only 14 showing strong support and will to have the project done. This is in excess of the required threshold and which is larger than the 52% turnout in the recent provincial election. We were therefore shocked and dismayed to learn that Council has decided to reconsider its decision at its December meeting.

In any democratic decision, there will always be dissenting opinions. I believe that when procedures are followed, questions answered and a (large) majority is in favour, that decision should stand. The interests of a small minority should not be permitted to overrule the wishes of a large majority.

We do have sympathy and understanding for the leaders of this community. Sometimes you have to make the correct decision to do what is best for the majority regardless of personal friends opposition to the plan. To be a community representative, you have to have courage, show leadership and integrity which you did at the Nov 3rd meeting. We congratulate you and are excited about the project moving forward and being implemented.

This proposal has been described by an opponent as a "beautification" project. While it will likely be deemed to enhance the area esthetically, it should also be considered a means of ensuring safety and reliability of the electrical grid in our neighbourhood. We, for example, have chosen to heat our home with electric heat, as opposed to burning fossil fuels. (I believe that the movement away from fossil fuels toward electrification is a stated goal of the RMOW Council). Undergrounding will greatly reduce the possibility of local power failures due to ice storms, vehicle mishaps with hydro poles, etc, which, if prolonged, could be a disaster for our home. We had a concrete example of this when several years ago at Christmas when the heavy snow on the trees affected the power lines and we had sparks flying all over our front yard. Fortunately the fire dept and BC Hydro were in a position to address this promptly before a fire started.

I also understand that some dissenters are objecting to the potential cost of this project. The dissenters have many options open to them. Provisions have been included for such individuals to spread out and minimize costs since the private utility connection does not need completion till 2022 or 2023. One of our neighbours, has kindly offered to lead through a not for profit to reduce the cost of the private connection through bulk purchasing power. A website has already been set up to collect information. Also a sizeable subsidy is being provided by BC Hydro which will be lost if the project does not proceed. As well there is a program run by the Province of BC to help seniors and others with property taxes. Some also have the ability to rent a suite within their home for extra income.

In summary, then, I respectfully request that Council abide by their previous correct decision to approve the White Gold Undergrounding project, and respect the wishes of a large majority of White Gold homeowners. Thanks for your consideration.

Yours truly,
Jeffrey and Donna Green, 7334 Toni Sailer Lane, White Gold, [REDACTED]

Sent from my iPad