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**Subject:** Letter to Mayor and Council: June 14 Regular Council Meeting

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**From:** Dara Campbell [Redacted]  
**Sent:** Monday, June 14, 2021 2:59 PM  
**To:** cityclerk <[cityclerk@princegeorge.ca](mailto:cityclerk@princegeorge.ca)>  
**Cc:** mayorandcouncil <[mayorandcouncil@princegeorge.ca](mailto:mayorandcouncil@princegeorge.ca)>  
**Subject:** Letter to Mayor and Council: June 14 Regular Council Meeting

***I intend to publish this correspondence to the Council Meeting agenda for June 14, 2021. In addition, I understand that this letter, in its entirety, will become part of the public record and be published on the City's website. I am writing as a member of the public; I do not represent any organization, company, or political affiliation.***

Dear Mayor and Council,

I am writing to you regarding the proposed Safe Streets Bylaw and Parks and Open Space Bylaw Amendment. There is widespread concern and discussion surrounding homelessness, poverty, and drug addiction in Prince George. Unfortunately, however, there seem to be many in our community who are only committed to making these issues less visible instead of solving them. The Safe Streets Bylaw and Parks and Open Space Bylaw Amendment intends to criminalize behaviours and activities engaged in by Prince George's most marginalized and poverty-stricken citizens; this approach is abhorrent, ineffective, and lacking empathy.

In light of the 215 unmarked children's graves found on the site of the former Kamloops Indian Residential School and others recently uncovered across the country, I hoped that community leadership would finally recognize the need for compassion on these issues. Are you aware that nearly every Indigenous person living on the streets today is either a survivor of Canada's genocidal residential school system or the descendant of a survivor? Does our City Council and Staff understand the indisputable ties between the residential school system, intergenerational trauma, systemic poverty, and addictions?

If you want to prevent panhandling, loitering, littering, camping, and open burning, eliminate the need for people to do those things. Install more garbage cans and needle bins in 'problematic' areas, and prioritize affordable housing and other facilities that exist to meet people's needs. If you want to prevent overt drug use and the public presence of drug paraphernalia, support supervised consumption sites, harm reduction programs, and other services addressing addiction from a health perspective. Having an addiction isn't a crime; it's a chronic and complex disorder that often stems from trauma, such as a brain injury or sexual abuse or PTSD. We need holistic, long-term solutions rooted in critical thinking instead of band-aid measures that seek to appease community members who feel uncomfortable or inconvenienced by unhoused people or drug users.

Under capitalism, we are encouraged to criminalize poverty at the individual level instead of questioning the greater systems and mechanisms that enforce it. Under colonialism, we are encouraged to criticize and humiliate those living with addictions as a result of intergenerational trauma. They say if the plant is not growing, then we must examine the soil. I am heartbroken and angered that Prince George's leadership is seemingly uninterested in critically examining and rehabilitating the 'soil' that is clearly failing many members of our community. I am not an expert, and yet I am confident that no city has ever eradicated poverty and homelessness or healed drug addictions by criminalizing, penalizing, and further isolating those individuals.

Like all of you, I am passionate about the growth and betterment of this city. Personally, I dream of a thriving Prince George with vibrant green spaces, an abundance of locally-owned businesses, a flourishing arts &

culture sector, networks of walking and cycling paths, and community-wide health and wellbeing. The Staff Report to Council states that the Safe Streets Bylaw and Parks and Open Space Bylaw Amendment "are not solutions, however, provide additional tools and clarification." With all due respect, I do not see how the proposed tools and clarification align with or promote a healthier and safer community.

Mayor and Council, I urge you to reject these punitive bylaws and amendments. Please support Adam Davey and his team in learning more about the root causes of the issues they seek to address and how the impacts of these measures would do more harm than good. Furthermore, I hope any Councillor or City Staff tasked with developing tools, policies, and solutions pertaining to these issues is committed to engaging with and learning from subject matter experts in our community. I am confident that, with meaningful consultation and productive collaboration, the City can develop better tools than those offered by the Safe Streets Bylaw and Parks and Open Space Bylaw Amendment.

Sincerely,

Dara Campbell (she/her)