

Submitted via e-mail  
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I would like to start out by saying I am not opposed to Cannabis stores in Kitimat.  
I am opposed to us allowing one in our mall.

How inviting it will be to our many tourists from around the world.  
"Come on in" liquor store to the right, cannabis retail store to the left, a few more steps and you come face to face with a vape store.

I have lived here since 1976. I remember the way it used to be, all the stores we had. Hudson Bay Company, Reitmans, a shoe store, a fabric store, Doris's Deli, the list goes on.

Our mall should be a place where you can bring your children and grandchildren, where you can purchase the things you need without having to go to Terrace and spend your money there to buy things like shoes, reasonable priced clothes, nice towels and sheets. A place we can be proud of. Instead it is a place to buy liquor, vaping cigarettes and now possibly marijuana..

We should all be working on making our mall better for the community as a whole, not worse. This is a store that council has the absolute power to stop for any reason.

I would have jumped for joy if Deviant Fibres was going to expand into Kitimat selling the same things they sell in Terrace.

I have many concerns not only with it being in the mall but also with where it is in the mall. I worked in that very same unit for many years.  
The problems outside of that back door were many. One of my concerns is that if the back door is going to be used, there is a single access ramp for the mall and that back door blocks the ramp. Small children love to play on that ramp. When I worked in that location there were many seniors, mom's with strollers, students waiting to get the bus home that would stand on the side of the door. All it takes is one person to push that door open all the way and it will hit whom ever is standing beside it, then what?

The problems outside of that back door were many. The things I saw should not be seen by children and adding a cannabis retail store will only compound the problem.  
Some citizens in Kitimat are comfortable sitting on the steps of our mall smoking cigarettes, fighting, swearing, spitting, buying alcohol for minors, to mention a few.  
The RCMP were constantly being called because the people were drunk or stoned and now there is a possibility a cannabis retail store could be added.

Another problem was the smell of the cigarette smoke from outside travelled into not only that unit but also all the way to Mom's seating area. Now there will not only be the cigarette smoke but also cannabis smoke. It's like running a gauntlet now whenever you have to pass in front of the mall, cigarette smoke and drunk people asking for change.

It must be really fun for families who use our pool or rink but have to take the bus home. They have no choice but to deal with it. It's already illegal to smoke within 6 metres of a door or air intake, or bus stop.  
Now they get to deal with cannabis smoke as well. We can set bylaws against smoking in these areas but it won't stop them.

Yet there they are every day, fines will not deter them from smoking cigarettes or marijuana or drinking alcohol.

There are some citizens who think it is a good idea to have the store in the mall because people with prescriptions can just pick it up right there. What they do not realize is that they can not, this is not a medical cannabis store. It is by definition a non-medical retail cannabis store.

The people who own and work in these stores are not pharmacists or any type of medical professional, as a matter of fact by their own admission the people who may be running this store have never tried cannabis or know very little about cannabis.

Some think it will bring people into the mall to shop, let's be honest, they will come, buy the weed and go home to smoke it. Does Big Jim's bring people into the mall to shop?

Mothers with their little children and seniors go to our mall to shop. They go to Mom's for lunch, or the moms sit and have coffee while the children play by the bench in front of the hair dresser, well now possibly in front of a cannabis retail store.

At the public information session the owners of Deviant Fibres said he would have a security guard. It is my understanding that they are able to have an armed security guard. I do not know if that is their intention or not. Now I am going to assume that the guard will be inside the store.

Now what if the worst happens and someone comes into that store and tries to rob it? What if that security guard though properly trained and licensed is forced to use his firearm if he's equipped with one? In our Mall, where there are little children, mothers, store owners!!!!

This is our main shopping venue. We don't have sidewalk shops like other small towns do. We also use our mall parking lot for different festivities, the Lions Park, the pool and ice rink are right there. Now I know that we are not going to be able to stop everyone from smoking there whether or not the store is in the mall but it does make it less accessible in an area used for family based activities. Let's get back to filling up our City Centre Mall with shops like we used to have so that we do not have to spend our money in Terrace or buying from Amazon.

In closing as I said in my opening sentence I am not against Cannabis Retail stores being in Kitimat, but our City Centre Mall is not the right place.

I thank you for taking the time to read this.

Regards

Roberta Walker  
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