

To: The Honorable Erie County Legislature

From: The Clean Air Coalition

Supporting Materials to Testimony Given at Government Affairs Committee Meeting

October 9, 2014

Dear Erie County Legislature,

My name is Lorraine Tinsley. I reside at 131 Heath Street East, Toronto, Ontario, Canada and live near the Mount Pleasant Crematory in this city.

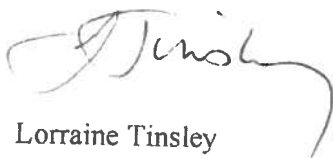
Mount Pleasant Group of Cemeteries (MPGC) has operated a crematorium in our neighbourhood 16.5 meters (54 feet) from existing, adjacent houses, since 1972. Complaints from families in our neighbourhood, over several decades, range from terrible burnt flesh and metallic odours to gas smells, and visible white and black smoke. Children in our community can now tell the difference between the smell of steak on a barbecue, and the smell of burning human bodies. We live from day to day not knowing what the next day will bring in terms of smells, smoke and the very real possibility of industrial accidents next to our homes, schools and playgrounds.

Local residents in the surrounding neighbourhoods have repeatedly raised concerns with our legislature and MPGC about the smoke, odours and emissions from the aging cremation equipment. When the corporation announced that they would adopt technology from Europe, we were told it eliminates 99% of emissions and there will be no smoke and no foul odours. We were told that this state-of-the-art technology would meet all our concerns, even though it had never been tested in North America under local conditions.

In the spring of 2014 MPGC began operating new equipment at this site. Residents began complaining of smells and smoke shortly after the crematory restarted operations. We have been following the news regarding Amigone Crematory in Erie County, New York. It is our understanding that the residents in Tonawanda, NY have some protection that we do not have in Toronto, including a legislative body that has the power to protect its constituency from the negative quality of life impacts caused by the start-up and ongoing operations of high-risk industrial incinerators in residential areas.

I urge the Erie County Legislature to learn from our neighborhood in Toronto. Crematories should not be allowed to operate next to homes and families; these are industrial facilities that belong in industrial zones, adequately separated from vulnerable populations. Please take action on this issue and protect the people, and especially the children, who live next to the Tonawanda facility from further harm.

Sincerely,



Lorraine Tinsley

My name is Tom Flash. I live at 122 Werkley. I've lived at this address for 62 yrs. My parents raised 10 children at this address.

ITEM #1 NUMBERS

The Amigone family owns 16 Funeral homes. Only ONE funeral home has a crematory. The other 15 funeral homes will send their cremation customers to one location. That location is at Parker and Sheridan drive in Tonawanda, which is where I live. Amigones crematory operates 10 ft from a residential neighborhood. With the popularity and low cost of cremations, the cremations done at this site will only increase. That crematory will run all day, every day.

ITEM #2 HOME RESALE VALUES

Who will want to buy our homes, once they find out there is a crematory operating next to our neighborhood. While the crematory has been shutdown for the last 2 years, realtors' have told perspective home buyers that the crematory is closed permanently. Imagine the shock and anger these new home buyers felt, when they found out that Amigone is planning to restart his crematory. A TV new reporter asked one of our neighbors, "Why would you buy a house next to a crematory". The neighbor replied, "I've lived here long before amigone started up his crematory". The reporter didn't know what to say!

ITEM #3 INCINERATORS

The Clean Air Act of 1990 shut down almost all incinerators, due to their levels of pollution being discharged from their stacks. At that time, most hospitals and nursing homes incinerated their medical waste and body parts. Schools burned their garbage. The garage pick-up in the town of Tonawanda was taken to an incinerator near the Sheridan Park Golf course to be burned. The only incinerator that was exempt from that law was a crematory. If you look at the permit issued to crematories, you find the word incinerator written at the top of the permit. Incinerators Pollute! No manufacturer of crematory equipment will guarantee that only clean air will come out of the stack during cremation.

ITEM #4 ZONING

I believe the sole purpose of the cemetary zoning code for crematories was to make sure they located in the middle of a cemetery, far away form residential neighborhoods. I can't believe government officials (who are elected to represent us) would allow a funeral home to have a small room in a funeral home designated as a cemetery. This crematory was installed without any prior notification to the neighbors, no impact study was done, no public hearing was afforded the neighborhood and no consideration was given to the neighbors for their quality of life and welfare. We had no input!

ITEM #5 CUSTOMERS

Amigone says he wants to take care of his customers. Since his crematory has been shut down for the last 2 years, his customers are being serviced by other crematories. A memorial service for his customers will still be done at his funeral homes. I see no reason why this arrangement can't be continued.

ITEM #6 REQUEST

I'm asking this honorable body to correct the injustice that was done to our neighborhood since October 16, 1990. That is the date Amigone was given his cemetery zoning by the Erie County Legislature.

Our neighborhood has been subjected to smoke, odors, soot and noise for over twenty years.

We are real people. Families young and old who want our neighborhood back. We have a right to breathe clean air!!