

'NAMGIS FIRST NATION CEMETERY

FORUM 2 NOTES

Date: January 14, 2026

Location: 'Namgis Council Hall

Attending:

'Namgis Lands and Infrastructure: Samantha Webster

LEES+Associates: Lacey Barr, Christen Oakes

Attendees: ~24 community members attended

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Product + Services Offerings:

- Several attendees questioned the cultural relevance and appropriateness of columbaria.
- Many community members were in favour of the addition of columbaria.
- One attendee inquired about the possibility of family columbaria.
- Several attendees expressed support for the inclusion of a memorial wall.
- One attendee asked about the possibility of a mausoleum for families.
- One attendee suggested that the columbaria could be designed to fit with existing traditions and aesthetics: i.e. having traditional images carved on them, or being made of ephemeral materials like wood.
- One attendee asked if traditional tree burial is possible.
- There is no strict tradition dictating who is buried with whom. Which family members a person is buried with comes down to personal preference and lot availability.
- Family plots, or groups of family plots, should be sized to accommodate ~50-100 burials to avoid separating family members who wish to remain together.

Lot Layout:

- One attendee asked if an East-West orientation was preferable.

- One attendee expressed the opinion that formal family plots limit flexibility at time of death, and that the current system is preferable.
- Several attendees expressed that the increased formalization of family plot boundaries will prevent families from encroaching on one another's space.
- Several attendees were concerned with ensuring that operations access is maintained to all lots, even when most of them are full, to prevent "boxing in" unused graves.
- The LEES team will need to confirm where families have informally reserved space within the cemeteries prior to finalizing the lot layout.
- One attendee expressed concern for a grave that is stepped on while coffins are carried into a nearby area. Cemetery layout to ensure adequate paths between graves.

Amenities:

- Several attendees expressed that gathering spaces within their cemeteries are not needed or culturally appropriate.
- The community gathers for services at one of the local halls, and gatherings are often made of 200+ attendees.

Cemetery Design:

- Attendees desired clarification on where the existing Gatu Road Cemetery boundary is, where the original 2 acre expansion boundary is, and what of the proposed development is outside that 2 acres.
- Some felt the Gatu Road Cemetery expansion was unideal because that land would be better used for housing.
- There are marked and unmarked graves under the shrubs at the site of the old hospital adjacent to the Old 'Namgis Cemetery. The proposed fence needs to be moved north to enclose these graves.
- There used to be a museum where the Info Kiosk is currently proposed at the Old 'Namgis Cemetery. Prior to the museum there were graves there. The proposed info kiosk needs to be moved to avoid these graves, and family members would like these graves to be marked with their headstones.
- "No Boat Trailer Parking" signage to be added on the north side of the Old 'Namgis Cemetery.
- Several attendees voiced support for expansion of the Wood St. Cemetery into the forested area adjacent, as that land is not currently being planned for anything.

- One attendee expressed that cemetery driveways should be minimized in order to maximize interment space.
- One attendee expressed concern over falling totem poles blocking the use of graves, and asked for consultation with adjacent families before poles are raised.

Cemetery Naming:

- Several attendees mentioned via feedback form that the Gatu Road Cemetery's new name would be more meaningful if it was a Kwak'waka word.
- Two attendees mentioned via feedback form that the Gatu Road Cemetery should remain called the Anglican Cemetery, as many 'Namgis FN members are Anglican.
- One attendee mentioned feedback that no matter the name change, people will likely still refer to the Gatu Road Cemetery as the "Anglican Cemetery".

Membership:

- Further decision-making will need to take place within the community to decide who is allowed to be buried at 'Namgis cemeteries, who must pay a fee, and who will be provided with lots for free.
- Several community members expressed that charging a fee to anyone would be in opposition to their personal and/or cultural values.
- Several community members expressed that non-members who have ties to the community should be allowed to be interred, so that family members and loved ones can remain together.
- One attendee offered that interment rights should be provided according to the Band list, which would align with other facilities in the community.
- One attendee expressed that 'Namgis First Nation members need to be prioritized when allocated plot space.
- One attendee stated that there needs to be a formal agreement as to where family plots are located, and permission granted to bury in those plots.

Forum Format Feedback

- Lunchtime forums are difficult to attend for those who work at that time.
- Handouts/pamphlets would have been helpful.
- Other methods of feedback such as surveys, handouts, etc. would have been helpful.