



CLEARVIEW

REPORT TO COUNCIL

REPORT NUMBER: LS-011-2021
DEPARTMENT: Clerks Department/Legislative Services
MEETING DATE: September 13, 2021
SUBJECT: Indigenous Land Acknowledgement

RECOMMENDATION:

Be It Resolved, that Council of the Township of Clearview hereby:

- 1) Receive Report LS-011-2021 (Indigenous Land Acknowledgement) dated September 13, 2021; and,
- 2) That Council direct staff to schedule an education session on the proposed Indigenous Land Acknowledgement Statement provided within this report, to give further context on the Acknowledgment and provide Council the opportunity to give feedback prior to adoption.

BACKGROUND:

At the June 14, 2021 meeting, Council received a letter through public participation from Christopher Dodd regarding support/request for Clearview Township to develop an Indigenous Land Acknowledgement to be read at the beginning of Council and Committee/Board meetings. Across the province and the County of Simcoe, many municipalities have developed Land Acknowledgement Statements over the years to recognize the traditional territory of the Indigenous people(s) who called the land home before the arrival of settlers.

Importance of Land Acknowledgements

Land acknowledgements are a part in moving forward on a path to reconciliation and are influenced by the [Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 Calls to Action](#). It's important that with Land Acknowledgements, the opportunity is taken to educate the public on the significance of the relationship between Indigenous

Peoples and their territories and recognizing the history and presence of Indigenous Peoples on the lands that make up Clearview Township today.

In understanding how Land Acknowledgements are used, the Office of Indigenous Initiatives at Queens University provides the following:

“A land acknowledgement is something that a non-Indigenous person or visiting Indigenous person may do.

Indigenous people who originate from the land they are present on would not necessarily acknowledge territory by providing a land acknowledgement as it is their territory. If they are elsewhere in the country or in another country, they will acknowledge the ancestral holders and owners of that land. It is a sign of respect to acknowledge the land you stand on and to acknowledge the people for welcoming you there or allowing you to be there.”

In municipal government settings there are many opportunities to say a Land Acknowledgement statement. They can be used to open Council meetings, committee and board meetings, at the beginning of public events, etc. It gives time for reflection about what has occurred in the past and what changes can be made moving forward to further the reconciliation process.

COMMENTS AND ANALYSIS:

Understanding the background and purpose of Indigenous Land Acknowledgement Statements assists the Township in moving forward with developing its own.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission started the work of connecting with survivors and their families in 2007. This was a monumental process of getting to the truth of what went on at government mandated residential (and day) schools where Indigenous children were taken from their families and forced to attend. Many children never made it home and were subjected to the most extreme forms of abuse at the hands of school and government officials.

The Commission emphasized that reconciliation is about establishing and maintaining a mutually respectful relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in Canada. In order for that to happen, there has to be awareness of the past, acknowledgement of the harm that has been inflicted, reparation for the causes, and action to change behaviour. Reconciliation must inspire Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples to transform Canadian society so that future generations can live together in dignity, peace, and prosperity on these shared lands.

The release of the findings included 94 Calls to Action that are identified practices, policies and structural changes that need to be taken to redress the previous and ongoing impacts of colonization.

This work must be done on individual, community, governmental, and other structural levels. Reconciliation is about repairing and remediating old relationships, developing new connections, and ensuring that these are nurtured on an ongoing basis, from a place of truth and respect.

Of the ninety-four (94) Calls to Action, five (5) are directed to the municipal level of government;

43. Adopt and implement the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* as the framework for reconciliation.
47. Repudiate concepts used to justify European sovereignty over Indigenous peoples and lands, such as the Doctrine of Discovery and *terra nullius*, and to reform those laws, government policies, and litigation strategies that continue to rely on such concepts.
57. Provide education to public servants on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal–Crown relations. This will require skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism.
75. Develop and implement strategies and procedures for the ongoing identification, documentation, maintenance, commemoration, and protection of residential school cemeteries or other sites at which residential school children were buried. This is to include the provision of appropriate memorial ceremonies and commemorative markers to honour the deceased children.
77. Work collaboratively with the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation to identify and collect copies of all records relevant to the history and legacy of the residential school system, and to provide these to the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation.

At this time, numbers 75 and 77 do not apply to Clearview Township.

Although a land acknowledgement is not specifically identified as one of the 94 recommendations listed in the Calls to Action, the spirit of acknowledging the historic treaties occupied by indigenous peoples is consistent with Call to Action recommendation #47, where all levels of government are called upon to renounce concepts used to justify European sovereignty over indigenous peoples and lands.

Proposed Land Acknowledgement Statement

When developing a land acknowledgement statement research is important. Staff have reviewed other acknowledgements at different levels of government, agencies, and the private sector. Additionally, research has been done on the history of the area that is now Clearview Township. Below is the proposed Indigenous Land Acknowledgement that has been developed for Clearview Township:

“I would like to begin our meeting/event/gathering by recognizing the First Nations, Metis and Inuit peoples of Canada as traditional stewards and caretakers of the land. We acknowledge that Clearview Township is located within the boundaries of Treaty 18, the traditional lands of the Anishinaabeg, Haudenosaunee, Tionontati, Wendat, and is the home of many First Nations, Metis, and Inuit peoples as part of an intricate nationhood that reaches across Turtle Island. At this time of truth and reconciliation, we welcome the opportunity to work together towards new understandings and new relationships and ask for guidance in all we do.”

This proposed Acknowledgement provides Council with a basis for what the Township’s statement could be. Input from all of Council is important and the intent is to have feedback provided by members during an education session. As outlined previously, it is vital to understand the words that are being spoken with a Land Acknowledgement and an awareness of the past. Below is information providing historical context of different elements of the proposed Acknowledgment.

Lake Simcoe – Nottawasaga Purchase - [Treaty 18](#)

Signed on October 17, 1818, by representatives of the Crown and certain Anishinaabe peoples. It is also known as the Lake Simcoe-Nottawasaga Treaty and was the first of three treaties signed between October and November of 1818. A fourth, Treaty 27, was signed in the Spring of 1819. The treaty details include a payment of goods at the "Montreal Price," because Montreal was the economic hub of Upper and Lower Canada.

Nations and Communities Named in the Proposed Land Acknowledgement

Anishinaabeg

Pronounced: An – ish – in - aabe

Anishinaabe (singular form of Anishinaabeg) translates to original person and are comprised of the Ojibwe, Potawatomi, Odawa (Ottawa), Chippewa, Mississauga, Sauteaux, Nipissing, and Algonquin people. The name Ojibwa was given to the group by the European colonialists and means "people whose moccasins have puckered seams". Today we use the traditional name, Anishinaabe. Their territory included the northern shores of Lake Huron and Lake Superior from Georgian Bay to the prairies. More information on the history of the Anishinaabe can be read at the Innisfill library [website](#).

Haudenosaunee

Pronounced: Hoe – De – Nah – Show - Nee

Commonly referred to as the Iroquois Confederacy or the League of Five Nations, the Haudenosaunee of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy translates to People of the long house. Originally, the confederacy was comprised of five nations: The Seneca, Cayuga, Oneida, Onondaga and Mohawk. The Tuscarora joined later in the early

18th century to form what is now known as Six Nations. Historically, the Haudenosaunee inhabited territory that extended from the Genesee River in the west, through the Finger Lakes regions to the Hudson River in the east. For more information on the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, please visit their [website](#).

Tionontati

Pronounced: Tee – oh – nahn – TAH - tee

The Tionontati are a lesser known Indigenous group who occupied nine villages in the highlands South and West of Nottawasaga Bay extending West to the Southeastern shores of Lake Huron. Tionontati translates as people of the hills or on the other side of the mountain. After contact, the French nick named them *Gens de petun* meaning Tobacco Nation, eventually shortening to Petun (tobacco) which can be misleading as there are no records of them growing tobacco. After a series of epidemics and conflict in the 1600, the small amount of surviving Tionontati amalgamated with other tribes and joined the Wendat. More information can be found at the Clearview Library – *Petun to Wyandot* by Charles Garrad, through the [Canadian Encyclopedia](#), as well as on the [Dufferin County Museum](#) and [Wyandotte Nation](#) websites.

Wendat

Pronounced: When - Dat

The Huron-Wendat nations, with colonization, and the movement of nations to the South of Lake Ontario moving north, were pushed out of this area, and some ended up joining other nations within what would become Ontario. Their community in Canada, now sits, just north of what is now Quebec City. Please visit their [website](#) for some the history and current community initiatives and structure. There were other Wyandot nations, which ended up settling in what is now Kansas, and Oklahoma, United States.

Métis

Pronounced: May - Tee

The Métis Nation is comprised of descendants of people born from indigenous and settler relations. Beginning in the 18th and 19th centuries, the Métis communities emerged and developed across the Northwest within the Métis Nation Homeland, which refers to the three Prairie Provinces. Additionally, the Homeland has expanded to include parts of Ontario, British Columbia, the Northwest Territories and the Northern United States. For more information on the regions Métis community, please visit the Barrie Métis Council [website](#).

Inuit

Pronounced: Δ (ee) ɒ (nu) Δ^c (eet)

The majority of Inuit live in 53 communities spread across Inuit Nunangat, the Inuit homeland encompassing 35 percent of Canada's landmass and 50 percent of its coastline. For more information about Canadian Inuit, please visit the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami [website](#).

Analysis of Statement

This is the first step in bringing attention and displaying respect to the Indigenous peoples who first inhabited and continue to inhabit the land now referred to as Clearview Township.

The statement should remain broad in recognition and historical ownership. It should reflect the three groups of indigenous peoples as described in the Canadian Constitution; First Nations, Metis, and Inuit, specific clans/tribes/bands/etc. should be limited to traditional names and not be grouped together using colonially given "nick names" to further demonstrate the respect of traditional First Nations, Metis, and Inuit peoples.

The statement should reflect the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action that are aimed specifically to municipalities, where applicable for Clearview Township. Efforts to reconcile with Canada's indigenous people should not stop with a statement and should continue with educating Council and Staff, as such; the statement should commit to ongoing learning, understanding, and building positive and meaningful relationships with guidance from the indigenous community as we move forward in healing and reconciliation.

Education Session

"Education holds the key to reconciliation. It is where our country will heal itself, we need to tell the story of the Indian Residential Schools, listen, be educated and learn this history"

– Senator Murray Sinclair
Senate of Canada

Staff are recommending that to move forward, an education session should be scheduled to provide the following:

- Discussion on the proposed Land Acknowledgement statement in relation to the history of the area
- Invite local Indigenous speaker(s) to provide their perspective and history of the area. Staff have reached out to the Barrie Native Friendship Centre to see if there is an opportunity for collaboration.

- Provide an opportunity for Council to give feedback on the proposed Acknowledgement and identify any additions or changes
- Discussion on when the Acknowledgement could be spoken (Beginning of Council meetings, Committee/Board meetings, events, etc.)

From the education session, staff will provide a follow-up report to Council with a recommendation to adopt an Indigenous Land Acknowledgment.

CLEARVIEW STRATEGIC PLAN:

Governance – Enhance Council engagement through a review of engagement practices and techniques.

COMMUNICATION PLAN:

If Council directs staff to move forward, an education session will be scheduled and communicated to the public through our website and social media accounts. The education session will constitute a meeting of Council and will be broadcast on the Township’s YouTube channel.

An email will also be sent out to the Township’s Committees and Boards to provide information on when the education session will take place. This is important as the adoption of a Land Acknowledgement statement impacts the municipality as a whole and the context of the statement is important for members of the committees and boards to understand when being spoken at their meetings.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

There is no financial impact as a result of this report.

REPORT SCHEDULES:

Not applicable.

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