



CLEARVIEW

REPORT TO COUNCIL

REPORT NUMBER: LS-019-2021
DEPARTMENT: Clerks Department/Legislative Services
MEETING DATE: December 13, 2021
SUBJECT: Indigenous Land Acknowledgement

RECOMMENDATION:

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

- 1) Receive Report LS-019-2021 (Indigenous Land Acknowledgement) dated December 13, 2021; and,
- 2) Endorse the Indigenous Land Acknowledgement Statement for the Township of Clearview as presented in this report.

BACKGROUND:

On November 25, 2021, Council and senior staff took part in an Education Session focused on the topics listed in item fifty-seven (57) of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's *Calls to Action*. This Session was planned as part of the follow-up to the report to Council presented at the September 13, 2021 meeting, where staff provided a synopsis on the importance of Land Acknowledgements, how they relate to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action and a proposed land acknowledgement for the Township with an analysis of each part of it.

Presentations offered by Dr. Cynthia Wesley-Esquimaux, and Jennifer Summerfield provided important information and context to better understand indigenous history, worldviews, healing, and moving forward in truth and reconciliation.

Information provided in the Session afforded background information to move forward in creating and adopting a meaningful and sincere Land Acknowledgement.

COMMENTS AND ANALYSIS:

Understanding indigenous history, worldviews, and the purpose of Land Acknowledgement statements assists the Township in moving forward with developing its own.

Proposed Township Land Acknowledgement Statement

"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 was provided to Council in the September 13, 2021 report which addressed that, although a Land Acknowledgement is not specifically identified as one of the 94 recommendations listed in the Calls to Action, the spirit of acknowledging indigenous history and historic treaties is consistent with Call to Action recommendation forty-seven (47), where all levels of government are called upon to renounce concepts used to justify European sovereignty over indigenous peoples and land.

Further, as Dr. Cynthia Wesley-Esquimaux explained during the Educational Session, a Land Acknowledgement is an important piece in reconciliation as it not only recognizes the history and past caretakers of the land but is also an opportunity for local government to demonstrate the understanding of being connected to the land and create awareness in moving forward in policy creation and governance.

As Jennifer Summerfield explained through her presentation, acknowledging truths is the first step to healing. By acknowledging the past caretakers, history, and treaties of the land, the Township can actively demonstrate its recognition and begin to move forward in the process of truth and reconciliation.

Staff is recommending that the above Acknowledgement be endorsed by Council as it recognizes the key items that the Education Session presenters outlined should be reflected in one. Additionally, this Acknowledgment should be viewed as a living document. As we gain more knowledge through education and experiences, it may be appropriate to amend. This would be done through additional Council consultation.

When to Use the Acknowledgment

In understanding the purpose and thought that goes into an Indigenous Land Acknowledgement, it's important to articulate that staff is not proposing a mandate

on when the Acknowledgement should be spoken. It is up to the individual to speak the words and understand their significance. This Land Acknowledgement for the Township has been developed for use, when the speaker feels it is appropriate to do so. Although staff is not providing requirements for when it shall be spoken, below are times where one can consider using the Acknowledgement. This list is by no means exhaustive, it's intended to provide some examples for reference:

- Beginning of Council, Committee, and Board meetings
- Inaugural Council meeting
- Township events and festivals

CLEARVIEW STRATEGIC PLAN:

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

COMMUNICATION PLAN:

Should Council endorse the proposed Land Acknowledgement, it will be communicated to the public through our website and social media accounts. The Clearview.ca website will host an Indigenous information page to inform, promote, and host the endorsed Land Acknowledgement, Educational Session, and local indigenous resources.

An email will also be sent out to the Township's Boards and Committees to provide information on the Township endorsed Land Acknowledgement and to provide additional detail on appropriate uses should they wish to incorporate into their Board/Committee meetings.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

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

REPORT SCHEDULES:

Not applicable.

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