



The Corporation of the Town of Tecumseh

Legislative & Clerk Services

To: Mayor and Members of Council

From: Laura Moy, Director Legislative Services & Clerk

Date to Council: December 14, 2021

Report Number: LCS-2021-37

Subject: Indigenous Land Acknowledgement Statement

Recommendations

It is recommended:

That LSC-2021-37 entitled “Indigenous Land Acknowledgement Statement” **be received;**

And that the following Land Acknowledgment Statement **be approved** and kept as a living document, open for revisions for one year to allow for feedback on the Statement and related advice regarding its use:

We acknowledge that we are on land and surrounded by water, originally inhabited by Indigenous Peoples who have travelled this area since time immemorial. This territory is within the lands honoured by the Wampum Treaties; agreements between the Anishinaabe (Ah-nish-e-naa-bay), Haudenosaunee (Hoe-den-oh-show-nee), Leni (Len- eh) Lenape (Le-naw-pay) and allied Nations to peacefully share and care for the resources around the Great Lakes. Specifically, we would like to acknowledge the presence of the Three Fires Confederacy (Ojibwe (Oh-jib-way), Odawa (Oh-dah-wah), Potawatomi (Paw-taw-watt-oh-me) and Huron/Wendat (Wen-dat) Peoples. We are dedicated to honouring Indigenous history and culture while remaining committed to moving forward respectfully with all First Nations, Inuit and Métis.

And further that subject to the approval of the Land Acknowledgement Statement, the Procedure By-law be amended to codify the reciting of the Statement at meetings of Council and Committees.

Background

At the March 23, 2021 Regular Meeting of Council, administration was directed (RCM 102-21) to prepare a report on how to recognize indigenous heritage land within the Town.

A land acknowledgement is an act of reconciliation. It recognizes that long before other peoples arrived in Canada, Indigenous Peoples were inhabitants and stewards of the land and that they continue to play a vital role in its future. This recognition commemorates the close relationship Indigenous Peoples have with the land. It is also an important step in increasing awareness of Canada's Indigenous history and addressing the damage caused by attempts to eradicate or diminish Indigenous culture.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission, established in 2009 to hear the stories of survivors and address the legacy of residential schools, issued 94 calls to action in 2015. Recommendation No. 57 states:

"We call upon federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to 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 (UNDRIP), 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."

This education begins with recognition. Increasingly, governments, schools, non-governmental organizations and even businesses are adopting land acknowledgement statements as an early step in a process of reconciliation. These statements are read at the beginning of meetings, gatherings and events. To be meaningful, the reading of a land acknowledgement must be done deliberately and respectfully with the full attention of all those present.

Land acknowledgements mark a small but important part of the process of reconciliation and building a positive relationship between the settler community (non-indigenous people) and Indigenous Peoples.

Comments

The County of Essex and some of the area municipalities and organizations in the County of Essex have adopted Land Acknowledgement Statements based on various research on the Indigenous history of the region. The statements are similar, and some municipalities have said their statements may be changed based on further input. The history of these territories is not always agreed upon, so statements are often general and strive to be respectful of all views.

In preparing this report, the Land Acknowledgement Statements and reports to Councils for the Towns of Amherstburg, Essex and LaSalle, as well as the County of Essex and City of Windsor were reviewed. Also reviewed were the statements of the Essex Region Conservation Authority, University of Windsor, Windsor-Essex District Catholic School Board and Greater Essex County District School Board.

The statements that were reviewed all acknowledge the Three Fires Confederacy of First Nations, comprised of the Ojibway, the Odawa, and the Potawatomie Peoples. Some also refer to the Huron-Wendat Peoples.

In researching and preparing a draft Land Acknowledgement Statement for the Town, the Can-Am Indian Friendship Centre (CAIFC) was consulted and recommended that the following Land Acknowledgement Statement prepared by the Greater Essex County district School Board be used by the Town while further consultations take place with Indigenous Communities in our area:

We acknowledge that we are on land and surrounded by water, originally inhabited by Indigenous Peoples who have travelled this area since time immemorial. This territory is within the lands honoured by the Wampum Treaties; agreements between the Anishinaabe (Ah-nish-e-naa-bay), Haudenosaunee (Hoe-den-oh-show-nee), Leni (Len- eh) Lenape (Le-naw-pay) and allied Nations to peacefully share and care for the resources around the Great Lakes. Specifically, we would like to acknowledge the presence of the Three Fires Confederacy (Ojibwe (Oh-jib-way), Odawa (Oh-dah-wah), Potawatomi (Paw-taw-watt-oh-me) and Huron/Wendat (Wen-dat) Peoples. We are dedicated to honouring Indigenous history and culture while remaining committed to moving forward respectfully with all First Nations, Inuit and Métis.

Even though this Land Acknowledgment Statement is well-researched, it is recommended that it be a "living document" (i.e. open to amendments and revisions). This would allow feedback from Indigenous Communities, committees and organizations.

The acknowledgement of traditional territory demonstrates recognition and respect for Indigenous peoples and supports education on the history of the lands on which we live and work. Once Council adopts a Land Acknowledgement Statement, it would be appropriate for the acknowledgement to be placed on the Town of Tecumseh's website and be read at the beginning of Council meetings, Standing Committee meetings, Advisory Committee meetings and other special events as determined by the Mayor and Council.

A key part of stating a Land Acknowledgement at the beginning of a meeting is for participants to reflect on its meaning, what happened in the past and what changes can be made going forward in order to further the reconciliation process.

Subject to the adoption of the recommendation in this report, a revision to the Procedure By-law will be prepared for Council's consideration for adoption to include an amendment codifying recital of the Land Acknowledgement Statement at meetings of Council and Committees.

Consultations

Can-Am Indian Friendship Centre (CAIFC)
County of Essex
Area Municipalities

Financial Implications

There is no financial implication for the adoption of a Land Acknowledgement Statement.

Link to Strategic Priorities

Applicable	2019-22 Strategic Priorities
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Make the Town of Tecumseh an even better place to live, work and invest through a shared vision for our residents and newcomers.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Ensure that Tecumseh's current and future growth is built upon the principles of sustainability and strategic decision-making.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Integrate the principles of health and wellness into all of Tecumseh's plans and priorities.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Steward the Town's "continuous improvement" approach to municipal service delivery to residents and businesses.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Demonstrate the Town's leadership role in the community by promoting good governance and community engagement, by bringing together organizations serving the Town and the region to pursue common goals.

Communications

Not applicable ☒

Website ☐ Social Media ☐ News Release ☐ Local Newspaper ☐

This report has been reviewed by Senior Administration as indicated below and recommended for submission by the Chief Administrative Officer.

Prepared by:

Laura Moy, Dipl. M.M.
Director Legislative Services & Clerk

Recommended by:

Margaret Misek-Evans, MCIP, RPP
Chief Administrative Officer

Attachment Number	Attachment Name
None	None