



Date: 2021-07-14

From: Brittany Drury, Clerk

Subject Land Acknowledgement Statement

Report LEG2021-22

Recommendation

That report LEG2021-22, Land Acknowledgement Statement, be received, and

That Committee hereby supports the proposed Land Acknowledgement Statement, as included in this report, and

That Policy ADMIN-04-2021, Land Acknowledgement Statement, is hereby approved.

Background

At their meeting on February 24, 2021, Council directed staff to prepare a report regarding implementation of a Land Acknowledgement statement, recognizing the rights of both former and existing First Nation communities within the Township, and Grey Bruce region.

Staff have consulted with local First Nation communities and present this report, and included statement, for Committee's consideration.

Analysis

Established in 2008, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada was constituted and created by the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement, to contribute to truth, healing and reconciliation for all those affected by former Indigenous Residential School systems. Following their investigation and detailed consultation, the

Commission published a report, including 94 calls to action to redress the legacy of residential schools and advance the process of Canadian reconciliation.¹

In support of the 94 calls to action published by the Commission, municipalities across Ontario, and beyond, have implemented reading of land acknowledgement statements prior to meetings and special events. These acknowledgements demonstrate recognition and respect for Indigenous peoples, both past and present, and the contributions said peoples have made, and continue to make, to communities both locally and nationally.

In 2018, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), established an Indigenous Relations Task Force that is to be a resource to assist member municipalities with creating traditional land acknowledgements “as a practice of reconciliation aimed at recognizing traditional or treaty territories of Indigenous peoples”. To review this resource, visit: <https://www.amo.on.ca/advocacy/strategic-projects/guidance-traditional-land-acknowledgement-statements>

In generating the Township’s land acknowledgement statement, staff consulted with local First Nation communities, Grey Sauble Conservation Authority and neighbouring municipalities. While there is no standard wording for these statements or consistent practice, the intent is for the statement to be genuine, with a commitment to acknowledging the complex history of Indigenous peoples. Therefore, land acknowledgements should be paired with ongoing consultation and education efforts, involving all impacted parties.

Staff have drafted the following statement for Committee’s consideration:

We acknowledge with respect, the history, spirituality, and culture of the Anishinaabek: The People of the Three Fires known as Ojibway, Odawa, and Pottawatomi Nation, who have inhabited this land from time immemorial. And further give thanks to the Chippewas of Saugeen, and the Chippewas of Nawash, now known as the Saugeen Ojibway Nation, as the traditional keepers of this land. We also recognize, the Metis and Inuit whose ancestors shared this land and these waters. May we all, as Treaty People, live with respect on this land, and live-in peace and friendship with all its diverse peoples.

¹ Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action:
http://trc.ca/assets/pdf/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf

Staff have prepared Policy ADMIN-04-2021, governing use of the above statement, in a clear and concise manner. Said policy has been appended to this report as Appendix A.

Should Committee support implementation of the above statement and approve the proposed policy, the statement will be read in the following circumstances:

- Prior to commencing business at meetings of Council and Committees of Council,
- Special events, and
- Any other circumstance as directed by Council in consultation with the Chief Administrative Officer and Clerk.

Moving Forward

With respect to the recently revealed atrocities committed at former residential school locations throughout the country, staff are investigating ways to collaborate with, learn from and support First Nations communities, both locally and beyond.

Grey County is home to the Anishinabek people of the Saugeen Ojibway Nation and includes the communities of Saugeen First Nation and Chippewas of Nawash Unceded First Nation. As neighbours to both communities, staff have contacted both Councils to offer the Township's support in promoting learning, collaboration, and discussions, both internally and to the public.

Such support includes participating in the Association of Municipalities of Ontario's (AMO) Declaration of Mutual Commitment and Friendship, as established in 2020. Staff will consult with both AMO and local First Nations communities regarding participating in said declaration and report back to Council regarding associated impacts, participation levels, etc.²

² Declaration of Mutual Commitment and Friendship: <https://ofifc.org/declaration-of-mutual-commitment-and-friendship-between-ontarios-municipalities-and-friendship-centres/>

Financial Impact

There is no anticipated financial impact to approval of the recommendations contained herein.

Strategic Priorities

The recommendation as included in this report achieves the fifth strategic goal, Deliver Effective and Cost-Efficient Services, as included in the 2020-2024 Township of Georgian Bluffs Strategic Plan.

Conclusion

Staff local First Nation communities, Grey Sauble Conservation Authority and neighbouring municipalities to develop the proposed land acknowledgement statement. It is recommended that Committee support implementation of the statement, and governing policy, as included in this report.

Appendix A: Policy ADMIN-04-2021, Land Acknowledgement Statement

Respectfully Submitted: Brittany Drury, Clerk

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	LEG2021-22 - Land Acknowledgement Statement.docx
Attachments:	- ADMIN-03-2021 - Land Acknowledgement Statement.docx
Final Approval Date:	Jul 7, 2021

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Jenn Burnett, Senior Planner

Janet Hilts, HR Manager

Steven Dollmaier, Director of Operations

Kassandra Rocca, Director of Finance

Al Meneses, Chief Administrative Officer