



STAFF REPORT **Municipality of Wawa**



Maury O'Neill, CAO

To: Mayor and Council	Report No.: CAO 2022-01
Date: April 1, 2022	Meeting Date: April 5, 2022

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Recommendation

1. That Report CAO-2022-01 regarding a Land Acknowledgement be received; and
2. That Council support the approval of a Land Acknowledgement Policy for the Municipality at a future Regular Meeting; and
3. That an invitation be extended to Chief Tangie of Michipicoten First Nation to recognize the approved Municipal Land Acknowledgement at a future Council Meeting.

Executive Summary

At the March 15, 2022, Corporate Meeting, municipal staff were directed to develop a Land Acknowledgement for the Municipality to be used at Municipal Council Meetings. This was a recommendation made to Council by the Wawa Heritage Committee.

Background

Land or territorial acknowledgements are used in several municipalities following the publication of The Truth and Reconciliation Commission report in 2015. A land acknowledgement recognizes First Nation Peoples on whose traditional territories we work and live. Such acknowledgements demonstrate the recognition and respect for Indigenous peoples, both in the past and the present and the contributions they have made to our communities and Country.

Creating traditional land acknowledgements as a practice of reconciliation to recognize traditional or treaty territories of Indigenous peoples. Such statements are most often read at the beginning of Council meetings, municipal events and celebrations with others being read on an occasional basis only to continue for them to be meaningful and relevant.

Several municipalities within the province have implemented land acknowledgement statements. While there is no standard wording for these statements or consistent practice the acknowledgement should be genuine and reflect local circumstances. The statement should also reflect the contribution of all aboriginal peoples, including Métis.

Considerations

The Municipality of Wawa wishes to acknowledge First Nation people with a statement and ensure that the land acknowledgement remains meaningful and sincere. A Land Acknowledgement Policy will include that the Acknowledgement be used in the following proposed circumstances;

- Council Corporate, Special and Regular Meetings, including
 - ✓ Inaugural Session of Wawa Council following the municipal election,
 - ✓ Council Meetings where there is a matter discussed publicly or in-camera related to land and planning matters including the sale or acquisition of land.
- Municipal Reports, including
 - ✓ Corporate Strategic Plan, Official Plan or Official Plan Amendments,
 - ✓ Other documents as directed by Council in consultation with the CAO.
- Council Special Events, including
 - ✓ Municipal dedication ceremonies, opening of new facilities and infrastructure,
 - ✓ Other Special Events as directed the by Council in consultation with the CAO.

Proposed Acknowledgement

With the assistance of Councillor Melanie Pilon and referencing the *Traditional Territory Acknowledgements in Ontario* from the Ontario Federation of Labour and other sources, the following Land Acknowledgement is proposed;

We (I) will begin this meeting by acknowledging that we are gathering on land that has been inhabited by Indigenous peoples since time immemorial.

We (I) would like to recognize that we are in the Robinson-Superior Treaty territory and the land on which we are gathered today is the traditional territory of the Anishinaabe. Specifically, we acknowledge the neighbouring community of Michipicoten First Nation, to whom we have great respect.

We (I) also recognize the contributions of all Indigenous peoples, including the Métis, in shaping and strengthening the community and Province of Ontario.

Once Council has adopted a Land Acknowledgment Policy, it is recommended that Chief Tangie from Michipicoten First Nation be invited to attend a meeting of Council to officially acknowledge the Municipal Land Acknowledgement. Further, it is also recommended that the Land Acknowledgement be added to the Wawa Municipal Website.

Conclusion

Subject to Council's review and direction, staff will prepare a Land Acknowledgment Policy and bring forward at a Regular Council Meeting for adoption.

Submitted By:



Maury O'Neill
CAO-Treasurer