



Council Member Motion

For the Closed Council Meeting of June 15, 2017

To: Closed Council

Date: June 8, 2017

From: Mayor Helps and Councillor Alto

Subject: Witness Reconciliation Program Appointments

CLOSED MEETING RATIONALE

This report is recommended for a closed meeting because it relates to intergovernmental relations and appointments of individuals. Consideration of this report in a closed meeting is authorized pursuant to Sections 90(1)(a) and 90(2)(b) of the *Community Charter*.

BACKGROUND

Last year, Council directed the Mayor's office to consult with the Esquimalt and Songhees Nations regarding their interest in participating in a Truth and Reconciliation task force and for any comments on a draft Terms of Reference.

As a result, Mayor Helps, Councillor Alto and City Manager Johnson met with Songhees Chief Ron Sam and Esquimalt Chief Andy Thomas, and their senior staff members Christina Clarke and Katie Hooper, to further the conversation about how the City of Victoria could act on its commitment to Reconciliation with the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations.

The Chiefs acknowledged the intent and commitment of the City to undertake this work. At the same time, the City heard a clear message from the Chiefs – this is our work, and we need to take responsibility for doing that work with integrity, an open heart, and a willingness to work in diverse ways and take the time needed. Reconciliation is the way forward; it is the process, not the outcome. Reconciliation is how, not what.

Subsequently, these messages were reiterated as conversations continued with the Chiefs, their Councils, their staff, and Elders. As a result, a new understanding developed, shaping a new plan.

We understand now that if the City is going to do more than talk about Reconciliation, we must be prepared to question convention, to learn from Indigenous custom and tradition, and risk doing things differently than our usual routines and processes. Our comfortable reliance on terms of reference, timelines, workplans, benchmarks, checklists and other conventional assessments of success and progress will not add value or meaning to this work, move it forward, or demonstrate our readiness to face and embrace the challenges of Reconciliation.

As we do this work, we need to be vigilant in holding fast to the principles of Reconciliation, and be mindful of a colonial world view in which local government's frame of reference is steeped, but is not dependent.

We acknowledge that Indigenous People's worldview is shaped by relationships – to the land, to the animals, to the ancestors, to future generations and to each other – including their elected counterparts. In the spirit of Reconciliation, we will craft a process that will create and use relationships as a foundation for our work together.

In shaping and implementing that process, we acknowledge that the voyage will take unexpected turns, so we will value the time taken and experiences had through those unanticipated adventures, and revel in their unforeseen discoveries. We will make mistakes, and how we recover from them will show our resilience and dedication. At different points, there will be congruence and agreements and meetings of minds and hearts.

As a corporation, we have not done this kind of work before. As the work is new to us, so will be the way we do the work.

How Will this Work Unfold?

In thinking about the messages we heard from the Nations, about how we might do our Reconciliation work in collaboration with them, how we will work to understand new ways of working while not asking them to do the work for us, we turned our usual governmental procedure on its head.

Taking a lesson from local Indigenous tradition and practice, we reconstructed our conventional corporate process to turn from our easy, predictable Task Force model to a model that is fluid, flexible, adaptable and fosters a long term relationship between the City and our Indigenous Partners. It allows for an openness to the unexpected that may extend our journey but enable us to appreciate the unplanned opportunities that will inevitably occur. Building and nurturing the long-term relationships needed to facilitate this model creates trust and demonstrates our commitment to doing our work as long as it needs to be done, as we reach for meaningful Reconciliation.

We propose a Witness Reconciliation Program that brings together traditional Indigenous Witnesses from both the Esquimalt and Songhees Nations' Councils, and a City Family, what the City would conventionally call a working group.

The Indigenous Witnesses will be the Chiefs and Councillors of the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations, who have already been chosen by their people as their leaders. The Witnesses will provide guidance and oversight for the Program, coming together occasionally in a traditional Witness Ceremony, perhaps two or three times a year, to hear, reflect, comment, advise – to witness and guide how the program moves forward. Witnesses will be compensated as per Indigenous custom.

The City Family will meet regularly to think, share, imagine, plan, then prepare a program of possible actions to present to the Witnesses through a Witness Ceremony. It is comprised of a combination of City Council members, appointees from the Nations, and both Indigenous and non-Indigenous community appointees. One or two city staff members will be appointed as support for the Program. Bringing together elected officials, staff and community reflects Indigenous expectations that a family makes decisions with all its elements at the table.

In coming together, the City Family will work with an Indigenous Speaker who will recount the ideas brought forward by the City Family for the consideration of the Witnesses. The Indigenous Speaker will be compensated as per Indigenous custom. City Family members from the Songhees and Esquimalt Nation will be compensated as per the City policy compensating First Nations representatives to city projects. Additional city staff will be included on a flexible, ad hoc basis, as their expertise is needed for, and adds value to, each idea, project or action. As in any family, members' lives will change, and so Family members will change periodically, will serve intermittently, will come and go, offering their knowledge and energy as time passes, the journey meanders and their circumstances allow.

After each Witness Ceremony is complete, and the advice of the Witnesses offered and heard, the City Family will facilitate the actions needed to realize the ideas endorsed by the Witnesses. Subsequent Witness Ceremonies will provide an opportunity to reflect on the actions done, as well as look forward to future actions. A cycle of innovation, deliberation, and action will emerge, energizing our Reconciliation work while respecting and reflecting a living process.

An opportunity may be had to document the program on film, as a record of the work and for observation and use by other municipalities and/or organizations interested in a Reconciliation program. We are unaware of another example of a City Council initiating a program like this to realize Reconciliation or move forward the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) Calls to Action.

The Calls to Action and findings from, and collective materials amassed by, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission will provide a context and framework for the Witness Reconciliation program, its participants and its work. The Witness Reconciliation Program will consider how the City might respond to the five recommendations highlighted by the TRC for attention by municipalities but will also work in the broadest manner to realize, on a local scale, the TRC's mandate to tell Canadians what happened in the Indian Residential Schools, create a permanent record of what happened in the Indian Residential Schools, and foster healing and reconciliation within Canada.

DIALOGUE

This is a living program that will take many turns as it grows and unfolds. As such, it does not present itself with the typical blueprint our conventional corporate structure expects. It requires our confidence, our deft resilience, our willingness to be uncomfortable and appreciate the length and circuitous routes of the voyage. It will take time – decades of harm require more than just one year of Reconciliation.

As we journey on this way forward we will begin to recognize the depth of this work. We will need to speak now of 2017 as the first in our years of reconciliation, to show that we are committed to this work in the long term, and that we will take the time needed to make it real, and make it last.

We acknowledge and appreciate the work our Indigenous Partners have done to bring this Program to this place.

IN CONCLUSION

After thoughtful conversation with Songhees and Esquimalt First Nations, learning from the Nations' traditions, acknowledging the Nations' hope for this particular journey of Reconciliation, the City will embark on a Witness Reconciliation Program.

Through an agile and evolving process, we will work to make the culture, history, and modern reality of local Indigenous Peoples become present and apparent throughout the City, and valued in our residents' everyday lives. We will build and nurture strong relationships with the Songhees and Esquimalt Peoples that thrive in times of harmony and endure times of strife. As a City, we are committed to this work, in alliance with our Indigenous Partners.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the City Task Force formerly called the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC's) Calls to Action Task Force be now called the Witness Reconciliation Program.
2. That the draft Terms of Reference previously associated with the former Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC's) Calls to Action Task Force be replaced with the concepts outlined in this Report as the Witness Reconciliation Program.
3. That Council approves the concepts expressed herein as the Witness Reconciliation Program, and directs the Mayor in collaboration with the City Family and Witnesses, and such others as may be needed throughout the Program, to carry out the Program.
4. That updates on the progress of the Witness Reconciliation Program be presented to Council as part of the City's quarterly report.
5. That Council appoint the following individuals to the City Family at this time:
 - Mayor Lisa Helps
 - Councillor Marianne Alto
 - Councillor Charlayne Thornton-Joe
 - Brianna Dick (Songhees Nation)
 - Katie Hooper (Esquimalt Nation)
 - Carey Newman (Community)
 - Janice Simcoe (Community/Academic)
6. That Council rise and report on this Reconciliation Witness Program at the discretion of the Mayor.

Respectfully submitted,



Councillor Alto



Mayor Helps

Appendix A

Biographies of the Proposed External Appointees

Brianna Dick

Resourceful, creative and effective with social media, Brianna is compassionate and comfortable with the ability to resolve conflict. Confident and determined to promote cultural awareness and sensitivity for all ages, she is dedicated to developing and maintaining effective partnerships. Brianna is a Lekwungen Traditional Welcomer, following in the footsteps of her grandfather Skip Dick. She is a vocational consultant, a Songhees Academic Youth Leader, and achieved the Indigenous Studies Diploma from Camosun College

Carey Newman

An artist with a strong belief in the importance of tradition, Carey is active within the First Nations community and has been given the traditional name Ha-yalth-kingeme. Through his work he strives to highlight Indigenous, social and environmental issues. He is also interested in engaging with the community and incorporating socially innovative practice into his artistic process. Carey's most recent major work, the Witness Blanket, deals with the subject of reconciliation. Made of items collected from residential schools, government buildings and churches across Canada, this 40' long installation is currently on a 7-year national tour. Carey serves on the boards of the Victoria Foundation and Pacific Opera Victoria.

Janice Simcoe

Janice is an Anishinaabe kwe (Anishinaabe woman) who is a member of the Chippewas of Rama First Nation in what is now called central Ontario. She has lived on Lekwungen territory for the past 40 years. Janice is the Director of Eyē? Sq̓'lewen: The Centre for Indigenous Education & Community Connections at Camosun College. She has been working in Indigenous post-secondary education for the past 26 years and has been recognized locally, provincially and nationally for her innovation and leadership in this field. She is well connected and respected in local Indigenous communities, both with the Nations and the urban community. She has a BA in History from UVic and an MA in Leadership from Royal Roads, is married, and is the mother of an amazing daughter.

Katie Hooper

Katie is the Executive Director of Esquimalt Nation. She is currently engaged in a number of administrative, political, environmental, and economic projects with the intentions of enhancing opportunities and developmental growth for Esquimalt Nation and its members. She is a recent avid motorcyclist.

Appendix B

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Principles of Reconciliation

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada believes that in order for Canada to flourish in the twenty-first century, reconciliation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canada must be based on the following principles.

- 1 The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is the framework for reconciliation at all levels and across all sectors of Canadian society.
- 2 First Nations, Inuit, and Metis peoples, as the original peoples of this country and as self-determining peoples, have Treaty, constitutional, and human rights that must be recognized and respected.
- 3 Reconciliation is a process of healing of relationships that requires public truth sharing, apology, and commemoration that acknowledge and redress past harms.
- 4 Reconciliation requires constructive action on addressing the ongoing legacies of colonialism that have had destructive impacts on Aboriginal peoples' education, cultures and languages, health, child welfare, the administration of justice, and economic opportunities and prosperity.
- 5 Reconciliation must create a more equitable and inclusive society by closing the gaps in social, health, and economic outcomes that exist between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians.
- 6 All Canadians, as Treaty peoples, share responsibility for establishing and maintaining mutually respectful relationships.
- 7 The perspectives and understandings of Aboriginal Elders and Traditional Knowledge Keepers of the ethics, concepts, and practices of reconciliation are vital to long-term reconciliation.
- 8 Supporting Aboriginal peoples' cultural revitalization and integrating Indigenous knowledge systems, oral histories, laws, protocols, and connections to the land into the reconciliation process are essential.
- 9 Reconciliation requires political will, joint leadership, trust building, accountability, and transparency, as well as a substantial investment of resources.
- 10 Reconciliation requires sustained public education and dialogue, including youth engagement, about the history and legacy of residential schools, Treaties, and Aboriginal rights, as well as the historical and contemporary contributions of Aboriginal peoples to Canadian society.

Appendix C
The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action for Municipal Governments

The TRC "Calls to Action" for local governments, that the TRC believes are within the authority of a municipal government, are:

#43: We call upon federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to fully adopt and implement the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* as the framework for reconciliation.

#47: We call upon federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to 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: 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*, 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: We call upon the federal government to work with provincial, territorial, and municipal governments, churches, Aboriginal communities, former residential school students, and current landowners to 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: We call upon provincial, territorial, municipal, and community archives to 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.