

**DATE:** June 21, 2021  
**TO:** Mayor Dave Bylsma and Members of Council  
**FROM:** Councillor Shelley Bradaric  
**SUBJECT:** Land Acknowledgement Statement for Council and  
Standing Committee Meetings

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The purpose of this memorandum is to present recommendation(s) to Members of the Committee for creating a Land Acknowledgement Statement to be included at the beginning of each Council and Standing Committee Meeting to be read by the Mayor or Committee Chair.

In 2015 The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) published a report which called for federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to be leaders in providing education to public servants and members of the public on the history of Aboriginal peoples in the spirit of reconciliation. Since the release of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report in 2015, many public institutions across Canada have made commitments to reconciliation based on a mutually respectful relationship with Aboriginal peoples. In the spirit of reconciliation, many municipal governments across Canada have adopted territorial acknowledgments to precede Council meetings and other gatherings. The TRC Report defines reconciliation as “an ongoing process of establishing and maintaining respectful relationships. A critical part of the process involves repairing damaged trust by making apologies, providing individual and collective reparations and following through with concrete actions that demonstrate real societal change”. Implementing the use of a Land Acknowledgement Statement represents a step in support of the reconciliation process with the purpose of the Land Acknowledgement statement recognizing the traditional territory of the Indigenous people who called the land home before the arrival of settlers, and in many cases, they still call it home today.

Staff's intention was to have a Land Acknowledgment Statement added to the Township's Procedural By-law, however, due to the importance and acknowledgement of this statement, staff recommend that the Land Acknowledgment Statement be approved at the June 21<sup>st</sup>, 2021 Administration/Finance/Fire Committee meeting in order for the statement to be included in each Council and Standing Committee Meeting commencing June 28<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

Staff have reviewed a number of resources after discussion with Wendy Sturgeon, Executive Director of the Niagara Chapter-Native Women Inc., and have created three Land Acknowledgement Statements for review and discussion. The three Land Acknowledgement Statements are outlined below:

1. We begin this gathering by acknowledging the land on which we gather is the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabeg peoples, many of whom continue to live and work here today. This territory is covered by the Upper Canada Treaties and is within the land protected by the Dish with One Spoon Wampum agreement. Today this gathering place is home to many First Nations, Metis, and Inuit Peoples. Acknowledging this reminds us that our great standard of living is directly related to the resources and friendship of Indigenous people.

2. On behalf of the Members of Committee/Members of Council and staff, we wish to acknowledge this land on which the Township of West Lincoln operates. The land on which we gather is the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabeg peoples and is still home to many indigenous people today. We are grateful to have the opportunity to work here today and to follow the Haudenosaunee system of blending laws and values and the Anishinaabe beliefs to strive to live in harmony and balance throughout the Municipality. We acknowledge that we are all treaty people and accept our responsibility to honour all our relations.
3. We begin this meeting today by acknowledging that the land on which we gather is the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabeg peoples. This territory is covered by the Upper Canada Treaties, is within the lands protected by the “Dish with One Spoon” wampum agreement.

Upon further discussion with Ms. Sturgeon, it was expressed that option two (2) of the statements listed above, deeply touches on the values and meaning of what is trying to be accomplished as this statement reflects not only our Mother Earth, but includes the essence and spirit (in general) of what early colonists and some settlers were unable to see, comprehend or understand about us, the Indigenous peoples and how we lived adhering to principles that guided us.

In light of the above, Staff are recommending the following resolution be adopted and that a Land Acknowledgement Statement be read as a standard greeting at the beginning of all Council and Standing Committee Meetings of Council as delivered by the Mayor and/or Committee Chair's until the amendment of the Township's Procedural By-Law is made to formally include the acknowledgement statement.

#### **PROPOSED RESOLUTION:**

That, the memorandum dated June 21, 2021 regarding “Land Acknowledgement Statement for Council and Standing Committee Meetings” be received; and,

That, Township Council authorize staff to adopt the practice of using a Land Acknowledgement Statement to be read as a standard greeting at the beginning of all Council and Standing Committee Meetings of Council, as delivered by the Mayor and/or Committee Chair's commencing with the June 28th, 2021 Council Meeting, until the amendment of the Township's Procedural By-Law is made to formally include the acknowledgement statement; and,

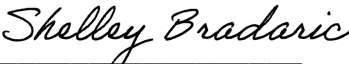
That, the Land Acknowledgement Statement read as follows:

On behalf of the Members of Committee/Members of Council and staff, we wish to acknowledge this land on which the Township of West Lincoln operates. The land on which we gather is the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabeg peoples and is still home to many indigenous people today. We are grateful to have the opportunity to work here today and to follow the Haudenosaunee system of blending laws and values and the Anishinaabe beliefs to strive to live in harmony and balance throughout the Municipality. We acknowledge that we are all treaty people and accept our responsibility to honour all our relations.


In addition to the Memorandum being submitted and prepared by those listed below, we thank Wendy Sturgeon, Executive Director of the Niagara Chapter-Native Women Inc., for providing guidance with the creation of these Land Acknowledgement Statements.


If you have any questions or concerns regarding the above, please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned.

Submitted by:

  
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Shelley Bradaric,  
Councillor

Prepared by:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Jessica Dyson,  
Deputy Clerk

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Joanne Scime,  
Clerk