

August 16, 2023

Reconciliation

Trustees:

This letter is further to my June 3 submission to the LTC regarding the LTC's work plan for the coming term. In that letter I asked the trustees to designate reconciliation as a priority issue in the coming term and implement the LTC's Standing Resolution 2019-015 which provides a First Nations engagement framework. I understand from the correspondence in the June 3 agenda package that the Minister of Municipal Affairs has recently provided the Trust with new funding to advance reconciliation with our local First Nations who's unceded Traditional Territory we are privileged to share. I encouraged the LTC to seek funding support for a reconciliation initiative through the funds granted to the Trust by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs.

The LTC's Standing Resolution 2019-015 provides a reconciliation engagement framework with local First Nations including that trustees:

- write a letter to First Nations representatives introducing trustees and staff and providing a schedule of meetings and an update of current projects and advocacy activities.
- invite Elders from local First Nations to attend meetings.
- work with First Nations governments on cooperative initiatives including education on First Nations' cultural heritage and history.
- work with First Nations governments on engagement principles for inclusive land use, marine use and climate change planning, protection, and stewardship, etc.
- Establish and maintain ongoing dialogue with First Nations based on respect and recognition.

The minutes from the June 3rd LTC special meeting indicates that a further review of the land use bylaw is designated as the minor project. At the June 3 meeting trustees expressed some support for reconciliation with the WSÁNEĆ People whose unceded Traditional Homeland we are privileged to share. But

trustees took no specific action at that meeting to implement the engagement framework in the LTC's Standing Resolution 2019-015.

Instead, the trustees abandoned the important work the previous trustees had initiated with Bylaw 123. That Bylaw provided an important first step in recognizing the long history of W̱SÁNEĆ People in their Homeland on S,DÁYES and respecting the importance of reconnection of the W̱SÁNEĆ to their Homeland and to the resurgence of their Indigenous culture - ĊELÁNEN - their "birthright". As the Minister pointed out in referring Bylaw 123 back to the LTC for further consideration, the Bylaw would benefit from further direct engagement with First Nations representatives. The trustees rejected that option and decided to rescind Bylaw 123 rather than build on it.

After Bylaw 123 was given 3rd reading in September 2022 it was referred to the W̱SÁNEĆ Elders Council which provides guidance on community-to-community engagement with islanders who reside in W̱SÁNEĆ Traditional Homeland. In their October 2022 correspondence to the Minister, the W̱SÁNEĆ Elders (SELWÁN) advised that Bylaw 123 was "a strong document" and urged the Minister to "refer Bylaw 123 back to the Islands Trust for adoption...without further delay." The Islands Trust was provided with a copy of the Elders correspondence with the Minister. (See attached copy)

It is unfortunate that the Elders' advice was received after the close of the public hearing and was apparently not considered by the Minister or the Islands Trust for technical, legalistic reasons that were explained by the staff at the June 3rd meeting. Given the W̱SÁNEĆ Elders support, it is regrettable and perhaps paradoxical that trustees rejected what the Elders saw as a positive reconciliation initiative.

South Pender/ S,DÁYES is culturally important unceded Traditional Territory of the W̱SÁNEĆ People. Their long history on this land and surrounding waters is honoured in their stories and well documented in the archeological investigations with evidence of 5,000 years plus presence around what we now know as the

Bedwell Harbour basin. The South Pender community has a responsibility to recognize this important history and respect the cultural heritage of Indigenous People whose presence here preceded the arrival of settlers by many, many centuries.

There is a misunderstanding by some who contend that the only path to reconciliation with our First Nations neighbours is through formal government to government protocols. That is appropriate for land rights and title issues at Trust Council level. But it is not required for community-to-community engagement as envisioned in the engagement framework in the LTC's Standing Resolution 2019-015, or in the acknowledgement statement in Bylaw 123 before it was defeated by the LTC at their June 3 meeting.

The South Pender Historical Society has had an ongoing community-to-community engagement with the Tsawout First Nation which has reserve land on South Pender and more recently with the W̱SÁNEĆ Leadership Council. These engagements have resulted in many cooperative initiatives. (See attached list). There is a strong foundation for the LTC to take positive steps to increase and enhance recognition of and respect for our local First Nations through a community-to-community engagement as provided in LTC Standing Resolution 2019-015.

I urge the trustees to implement Resolution 2019-015 in the coming term and seek funding support for this through the funds granted to the Trust by the Ministry to implement this Resolution. In my view the South Pender community would strongly support a clear reconciliation initiative in the coming term. I would be happy to assist with any initiative that recognizes W̱SÁNEĆ cultural heritage and respects inherent rights.

Thank you for considering my views.

Paul Petrie

Paul Petrie



CC: Robert Dill, President South Pender Historical Society
Monica Petrie, Pender Truth and Reconciliation Circle
Peter Paré, co-chair TĒTĀĆES Revitalization Project
Tye Swallow, co-chair TĒTĀĆES Revitalization Project

Attach:

- Brief summary of WŚÁNEĆ community-to-community reconcili-action initiatives
- Elders' statement in support of Bylaw 123.

ÍY SÇÁĆEL Minister Cullen

Greetings. My name is Tye Swallow and I work for the W ŚÁNEĆ School Board as Facilitator/Director of Language Revitalization. As part of my role, I work with many W ŚÁNEĆ Elders (SELW ĀN) who guide all we do as a school and as part of our TĒTĀĆES (Islands - Relatives of the Deep) Revitalization Project and the TĒTĀĆES Climate Action Project.

The Elders (SELWĀN) have reviewed Bylaw 123 and consider it "a strong document". They would like the following statement to be added to the document through the appropriate procedures. The SELW ĀN would like to see Bylaw 123 adopted without further delay and urge you to refer Bylaw 123 back to the Islands Trust for adoption.

SELW ĀN (W ŚÁNEĆ Elders) Statement

It is a good thing to work with the people who live on our islands, and we appreciate the efforts made to incorporate the proposed amendments into the official community plan on

S,DÁYES South Pender Island. We see the value of sharing our knowledge, but not for people to culturally appropriate for commercial purposes. Conservation has always been our way of life, our belief to only take what is needed. There are cultural protocols that W SÁNEĆ people have followed forever. We strongly encourage respect for these ways, our natural laws, when interacting in the ecosystems of our homeland. There are certain species that are natural markers and seasonal indicators of our seasonal rounds in our homeland. We need to protect those and what they mean to us. Certain families have the knowledge, the language, the spiritual gift, to keep our traditional ways moving forward. These ceremonial ways are our laws and important to be passed down to future generations within our traditional homeland. The sacred ways and words must remain sacred – our CELÁNEN.

HÍ,SW KE MEQ SÁN

J,SINTEN – John Elliott Sr ÇOSINIYE – Linda Elliott SELILIYE – Belinda Claxton

Sincerely, Tye Swallow B.Ed, M.A.
Facilitator/Director Language Revitalization W SÁNEĆ School Board

Pender Reconciliation Initiatives

The South Pender Historical Society has been exploring Indigenous history and culture in the Gulf Islands since its inception in 2013 including:

- a presentation on the traditional 13 Moon Calendar by Elder SELILIYE (Belinda Claxton) 2014.
- a presentation on the resurgence of the traditional Reef Net Fishery by Dr. Nick Claxton 2015.
- a presentation on W̱SÁNEĆ ethnobotany with Dr. Nancy Turner and SELILIYE 2016.
- annual Ethnobotany plant walks with Elder Earl Claxton Jr. and knowledge keeper J-B Williams at Tsawout Reserve land on South Pender. (3 separate tours 2016-18)
- two traditional salmon pit cooks for the students at the Pender Elementary School with Elder Earl Claxton, Jr. and J-B Williams 2016 & 2017.
- a SENĆOŦEN language workshop for Islanders with Elder Helen Jack and SELILIYE 2017
- a 4' X 8' Installation of a 13 Moon Calendar with a brief history of W̱SÁNEĆ people in the Gulf Islands (in english and SENĆOŦEN) on South Pender near Tsawout reserve land 2017 unveiled by Chief Harvey Underwood July 1, 2017.
- A community salmon Pit cook with 150 islanders and TSAWOUT Elders and leadership to celebrate 5,000 years of W̱SÁNEĆ culture on Pender on Canada's 150 birthday. This event included participation of the community in the Kairos Blanket Exercise.
- a Tsawout-Pender youth leadership project with six grade 7 youth from Tsawout and six from Pender with a Tsawout teacher and elder and a Pender teacher and mentor in 2017. This class met 8 consecutive Thursdays to explore ancient and special sites to W̱SÁNEĆ culture and gave a presentation to the Pender Elementary School on their experience and learnings and a preview of their [video](#). They also gave their presentation at the 2018 Provincial School Trustees Association Conference in Richmond in 2018.
- Installation of a 13 moon calendar at Poets Cove Resort on May 9, 2019 using the SKÁU ŁTE image by Tsartlip artist MENEŦIYE.
- Support for project evaluation for TĚTĚĆES Climate Action Project in 2020.

There are other events including:

- Ben McConchie's acclaimed "symphony" tribute to First Nation's history and heritage presented to the Pender community in December 2018 and to students at ŁÁU, WELNEW, the W̱SÁNEĆ tribal school in January 2019.
- A pit cook for 230 Gulf Islands students on June 17, 2019 as part of an inter-island musical event co-sponsored by the Pender School and Ptarmigan Arts.
- A 1-year climate action education pilot project braiding Indigenous Traditional Knowledge with current climate science in partnership with the W̱SÁNEĆ Leadership Council, W̱SÁNEĆ School Board and the Southern Gulf Island Community Resource Centre

Pender Reconciliation Initiatives

(CRC). Three 5-day immersion courses were delivered in early 2020 to a total of 49 W̱SÁNEĆ and Gulf Island participants. This project received a \$70,000 grant from the Real Estate Foundation of BC and \$40,000 supplementary funding from the CRD. Based on the success of this project a W̱SÁNEĆ and Gulf Island steering committee has been established to carry this project forward.

- In 2021 the W̱SÁNEĆ and Gulf Island steering committee received a \$75,000 grant to support the ṮEṮÁĆES Revitalization Project. This project has produced four videos focused on W̱SÁNEĆ FN presence in their traditional unceded Homeland - ÁLENEŃEØ - in the SGI - S,DÁ,YES(Pender) and S,ḴTAḴ (Mayne). There will be a short video for each Island, a short animation video depicting the ṮEṮÁĆES story of the creation of the Islands, and a longer video “Whose Land is It? Based on the history of colonization in the Islands. The videos will be used as education materials for the ŁÁU,WELNEW Tribal School. The videos were presented in community forums on S,DÁ,YES(Pender) August 17 and S,ḴTAḴ (Mayne) August 27. The feedback from the forums was very positive and plans are underway to hold follow-up events on Pender and Mayne. The W̱SÁNEĆ school Board is arranging showings of the videos in the W̱SÁNEĆ communities and at the W̱SÁNEĆ Tribal School.

This project has been carried out in partnership with the W̱SÁNEĆ School Board, the W̱SÁNEĆ Leadership Council, the CRC and Raincoast Conservation Foundation. The Real Estate Foundation of BC provided a matching grant of \$75,000 to support this project.

The overall objective of these initiatives is to establish a respectful community to community relationship with the W̱SÁNEĆ FN and to support W̱SÁNEĆ reengagement with their traditional Homeland.

Paul Petrie, South Pender

