



ADOPTED

Saturna Island Local Trust Committee Minutes of a Special Meeting

Date: December 10, 2017
Location: Saturna Island Community Hall
105 East Point Road, Saturna Island, BC

Members Present: Paul Brent, Local Trustee
Lee Middleton, Local Trustee

Guests Present: Toby Joseph, Councillor, Tsawout First Nation
William Joseph, Tsawout First Nation

Staff Present: Gary Richardson, Island Planner
Fiona MacRaid, Senior Intergovernmental Policy Advisor
Lori Foster, Recorder

Regrets: George Grams, Chair

Public Present: There were approximately 50 members of the public in attendance.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Trustee Brent, acting as Chair, called the meeting to order at 2:10 p.m. and acknowledged that the meeting was being held in territory of the Coast Salish First Nations. He announced that the meeting was being audio recorded.

A/Chair Brent introduced Toby Joseph Councillor, Tsawout First Nation, and Councillor Joseph's son, William, who further opened the meeting with traditional drumming and song.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

For consideration to amend the agenda by adding the following:

2.1 Stewardship Award Presentation immediately following Agenda Approval.

By general consent the agenda was approved as amended.

2.1 Stewardship Award Presentation

Trustee Middleton presented the Enduring Achievement Stewardship Award to the Saturna Community Club for 80 years of promoting social and environmental well-being.

Trustee Brent spoke to the deserving nature of this group, that 8 decades was too long a wait for this recognition.

Jackie Campbell and Charles Reif accepted the award on behalf of the Saturna Community Club.

3. BUSINESS ITEMS

3.1 First Nations Relationship Building - Presentation

Senior Intergovernmental Policy Advisory (SIPA) MacRaild introduced the program/workshop. She commented that Saturna local trustees want to find a way to honor First Nations history and this workshop is a start to address wording in the Official Community Plan. SIPA MacRaild invited island residents to share thoughts and feelings on the material presented and to speak honestly, openly and be vulnerable.

3.1.1 Deep History of 14,000 Years - and Community Input

SIPA MacRaild, using a PowerPoint presentation, gave an overview of the deep history of First Nations settlements and presence around the Strait of Georgia region at the time noting evidence of sophisticated and diverse cultures.

SIPA MacRaild opened the floor to questions after the first segment of her presentation. The following comments were made:

- respect for the sophistication of people - not just hunters and gatherers, as originally taught in school;
- a complex culture of trade and material manufacturing;
- most densely populated area north of Mexico;
- how land/ice dynamics contributed to settlement – hinge points indicate aquaculture society;
- adaptability of culture i.e. shift in diet;
- pride being in the presence of First Nations history;
- emerging archeology connecting dots, stone evidence, reef net fishing and bead currency;
- bio-diversity attracted many groups/languages indicating sophisticated cultures;
- why has it taken us so long to come to this understanding – a morally fraught question;
- surprise - long history of hunting sea mammals;
- surprise - long regional history of multi-cultural societies;
- Saturna has 13 First Nations with interests, opportunities for creating protocols for cooperation.

3.1.2 History of European Contact - and Community Input

SIPA MacRaild introduced this segment using a map showing colonial interests in 1700. She described how the depopulation of First Nations peoples occurred through:

- European exploration and colonialism which brought diseases that impacted greater than the black plague;

- appropriation of land through questionably executed treaty agreements;
- inciting war fare;
- destroying lively hoods;
- erasing identity;
- *The Indian Act*;
- Residential Schools where starvation, abuse and other human cruelties occurred and, according to the United Nations meets the definition of genocide.

SIPA MacRaild opened the floor to comments which included:

- how do First Nation elders talk about this history with their grandchildren?
- story recounted about the resilience of a First Nation's community after residential school was torn down, a testament to aboriginal strength;
- discussion on the misinterpretation of the Douglas Treaty ruled in Supreme Court in favor of First Nations interest because it existed pre-confederate;
- no part in colonial history is morally neutral, society has a responsibility to right these wrongs – we were ignorant;
- school taught that disease depopulated First Nations peoples we were never told about Residential Schools;
- reactive behavior on peoples part because of fear of loss (real estate);
- definition of country, Rights of Canada (the Queen) and aboriginal – First Nations are “original”;
- moral neutrality is easy when one is ignorant of the facts, now we are beginning to know and with knowledge comes responsibility;
- school curriculums did not teach this history, only settler history;
- 1984 last Residential School closed – new information.

3.1.3 Making History: A Future - and Community Input

SIPA MacRaild encouraged the community to get educated, listen, not get defensive and to reach out and ask First Nations people for help in understanding.

Councillor Joseph spoke to his experience in Residential School, the effects of which he is still living.

The following comments were offered:

- there are people who live on Saturna who were in the Residential Schools, how many people know this?
- do not repeat mistakes, first Europeans had problems remembering the facts.

SIPA MacRaid defined the following terms:

- aboriginal title – not from the Crown – will always be here, is defined by them, exclusive to them and coexists with fee simple lands;
- aboriginal rights – defined as activities, self-governance, dealing with remains of ancestors, modern equivalencies to traditional activities;
- treaty rights – pre-confederate and modern treaty resolutions, breaches and processes;
- reserve lands – equivalent of private property communally owned in a fee simple-like way.

Some discussion occurred around aboriginal title and treaty process, irreconcilable legal differences between fee simple lands (exclusive right to use and occupy) and aboriginal title lands (exclusive right to use and occupy) the same land was noted.

SIPA MacRaid opened the floor, the following comments were received:

- start listening rather than talking, the start of the solution process doesn't come from settlers, it will come from First Nations;
- we do not know what First Nations (FN) need or want, it's about land, fishing rights, hunting and what the bigger picture is – what has happened is embarrassing and not sure how to repair;
- absolute aboriginal title vs absolute fee simple complicated with competing First Nations interests.

Councillor Joseph spoke about sčelājen or birthright. Douglas Treaty doesn't address this birthright to hunt, fish and gather. He held up his Status Card speaking about relations between Tsawwassen and Cowichan tribes explaining how birthright worked between different tribes and families. The modern treaty process is about assimilation between groups.

The question of "fear" was again raised. Fear as a non-indigenous person on FN lands; is there a way to move forward, what's going to happen to us?

Councillor Joseph said the intention is not to take over the land, rather recognition is being sought. We have a historical respect for the land and the way it has been used. He spoke about James Island and the removal of families there in 1910 for the government ammunitions factory and bulldozing of their homes and cemeteries. We don't want to do that to you, we have that respect, he said. I am born to these rights as are you; you have these rights now because you have used the land.

The following comments were received:

- this conversation has already covered over 100 years and we are only here, where will we be in the next 100 years;
- the agenda of genocide by powerful people then and now;
- the need for elders and clan mothers to guide and advise;

- Parks Canada allowed FN hunting on Sidney Island which serves; mutual interests because of fallow deer;
- FN family law and community laws.

Councillor Joseph thanked the community for being invited to this meeting where talk about Residential Schools, the 60's scoop, birthright, listening and sharing is how we learn and become better human beings. My hands go up to you! He asked the community take with them the knowledge of the Residential Schools, not the feelings.

Counsellor Joseph further commented on FN birthright and the passing on of gifts, family law and community law.

Senior Intergovernmental Policy Advisor MacRaid wrapped up the meeting inviting the community to make notes with the materials provided and to enjoy the food offered. She addressed the community asking if they wished to continue this discussion.

The community affirmatively responded.

The Saturna Island Local Trust Committee presented to Councillor Joseph and his son William, of Tsawout First Nation, gifts to take back with them asking that they share what they have seen and heard at this meeting, to continue the discussion.

4. ADJOURNMENT

By general consent the meeting was adjourned at 4:39 p.m.

Paul Brent, Acting Chair

Certified Correct:

Lori Foster, Recorder