



JOINT DECLARATION OF INTENT AND FRIENDSHIP

BETWEEN THE TOWN OF FORT FRANCES AND THE AGENCY ONE FIRST NATIONS

WHEREAS:

1. Since time immemorial, the Anishinaabe have maintained a spiritual connection to Mother Earth and a custodial responsibility for the lands gifted to them by the Creator;
2. Prior to the arrival of Europeans to what we now know as the Rainy River District, the Anishinaabe were the self-governing and self-determining inhabitants of this land, with their own laws, language, traditions, sacred sites, artifacts, and customs;
3. The Anishinaabe entered into Treaty #3 with the Crown on October 3, 1873 – an agreement which was intended to share 55,000 square miles of present day Northwestern Ontario and Southeastern Manitoba, and set out a relationship between Indigenous and settler people to share these lands and their bounty, as neighbours and treaty partners;
4. The Town of Fort Frances (the “**Town**”) is a municipality that was incorporated in 1903;
5. Settler governments have not always lived up to their treaty commitments, nor their commitments as good neighbours to the Anishinaabe, as stated most recently by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (the “**TRC**”);
6. The Agency One First Nation communities of Couchiching, Naicatchewenin, Nigigoonsiminikaaning, and Mitaanjigamiing (the “**Agency One First Nations**”) are Treaty #3 First Nations whose people hold a shared and spiritual connection to the lands known today as the Point Park, just as many citizens of the Town hold a special connection to the Point Park;
7. Historical events related to the Point Park and surrounding lands have been the subject of various challenges between the Town and the Agency One First Nations for many years, giving rise to uncertainty between both parties;
8. The Town and the Agency One First Nations each recognize the desire to focus on shared goals and objectives – such as reinvestment in the Point Park and other economic and social development priorities;
9. Reconciliation is an important journey that our communities wish to undertake together, with an aim of better reflecting and acknowledging our shared history;
10. Litigation is very expensive, and does not create an atmosphere of peace and harmony among neighbours; and
11. All citizens of the Agency One First Nations and the Town have similar aspirations for our community, our people, our children, and our future;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT by signing below:

12. Each of the parties hereto signifies its sincere commitment to work together towards the following goals and objectives:
- a. The leadership of the Town and the Agency One First Nations shall meet regularly to discuss shared priorities and concerns, focusing initially on resolving the Point Park dispute, but transitioning to a longer-term relationship of mutual support and strategic alignment on various matters;
 - b. The Town and the Agency One First Nations are committed to sharing the Point Park lands as a park for all forever. We will work together to protect and develop these lands for public enjoyment, recreation, ceremonies, cultural celebrations, and activities. We will explore organizational structures and investment arrangements that will implement these goals to the satisfaction of all parties and their respective communities;
 - c. The Town and the Agency One First Nations will work together toward a goal of resolving and/or mutually releasing one another from claims, legal proceedings, and outstanding orders related to the Point Park and surrounding lands;
 - d. The Town and the Agency One First Nations will strike a committee or working group to make recommendations on matters related to reconciliation and;
 - e. The Town and the Agency One First Nations will identify opportunities in the near future for members of each community to come together to celebrate our renewed heritage as treaty peoples, neighbours, and partners.
13. The undersigned parties understand that these goals are not legally binding obligations, but make them none the less on their honour and sincere commitment as neighbours with a desire to make positive change.

Signed this 1st day of May, 2019.

For Couchiching First Nation:


Chief Brian Perrault

For Nigigoonsiminikaaning First Nation:


Chief Will Windigo


For Naicatchewenin First Nation:


Chief Wayne Smith

For Mitaanjigamiing First Nation:


Chief Janice Henderson

For the Town of Fort Frances:


Her Worship June Caul, Mayor