



# CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF ESQUIMALT

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## NOTICE OF MOTION

From: Mayor Barbara Desjardins

Introduced: July 5, 2021

**Subject: Acknowledging Lekwungen Traditional territories sites of cultural importance in Esquimalt and representing First Nations history and culture through art**

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**WHEREAS:** The Township of Esquimalt is within the unceded territories of the Lekwungen speaking peoples, the Esquimalt and Songhees First Nations; and as such, sites of significance for both Nations are located within the Township borders;

**AND WHEREAS:** The construction of the Esquimalt Gorge Park Pavilion is a significant Township project scheduled to be completed by the end of this year within which the Township would like to highlight and celebrate First Nations history and culture through art and other representations;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:** That Council direct staff to prepare a report for Council consideration that recommends a process and framework for engagement that applies to history, culture and art and that has been developed collaboratively with both the Songhees and Esquimalt First Nations.

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### **STRATEGIC RELEVANCE:**

We strengthen the health, livability and diversity of the community

Advance the work of reconciliation with Indigenous People

We will build and enhance partnerships with community groups and other governments

Work with Esquimalt and Songhees First Nations to support economic, cultural, social, and environmental opportunities

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

A consultant with historic indigenous knowledge may help guide us to ensure that this is a sustainable and positive process. Materials, resources and unveiling costs for the current projects would be determined and added to budget discussions once Council has endorsed the process and staff have followed the process and engaged on both projects. This may be required to be a multi-year program.

**BACKGROUND:**

Within the Township borders, there are sites of significance to First Nations culture and history that are currently not acknowledged. Through the pursuit of truth and reconciliation the Township has an opportunity to bring these sites to public knowledge and provide education and acknowledgement to their significance to Lekwungen history and culture. In doing so we also hope to continue to build strong relationships with Songhees and Esquimalt First Nations. I have had an introductory discussion with Chief Rob Thomas of Esquimalt Nation and Chief Ron Sam of Songhees Nation regarding the sites of significance.

The Township also has the opportunity to celebrate First Nations history and culture through art or other representation within the new Esquimalt Gorge Park Pavilion which is scheduled to be complete by end of year. While this building also celebrates Japanese history in the Gorge, it has always been the intent to celebrate First Nations history and culture inside the building and/or within the landscape through artwork or other representations.

There is currently no timeline assigned to development of this process and for the staff report to come back to Council as pressure or urgency may be detrimental. We will want to ensure that best practices for this process are followed so as to ensure that this is a sustainable and positive process. The resulting process may then transition to a policy/framework and would be used to engage on the two projects.