



OGIMAAWABIITONG

Media Release

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Kenora, ON

For immediate release

No consultation with Indigenous leaders on proposed bylaw

The proposed loitering bylaw being considered by the City of Kenora lacked any consultation with Indigenous leadership.

The Kenora Chiefs are comprised of nine First Nations surrounding the City of Kenora located in Northwestern Ontario. Board President and Chief of Niisaachewan Anishinaabe Nation, Lorraine Cobiness advises that the Kenora Chiefs were not contacted to discuss the proposed bylaw and were only made aware following the City's live-streamed Mayor and Council meeting. "The Kenora Chiefs lead by the Seven Sacred Teachings including respect. We have been working closely with the City of Kenora on several critical initiatives while operating by our own principles and expected that this was reciprocal. Meaningful solutions are "close" and collaboration between all levels of government, leadership, health and social services are needed to address our current situation. Successful partnerships must be built from respectful relationships founded upon trust and mutual understanding," she continued.

The City of Kenora has a long-standing history of race relations. "How long can the City of Kenora continue to ignore us? By failing to engage in dialogue of the proposed bylaw they are ignoring our voice and input into this decision. In order for positive change to take place, we need to have strong partnerships in decisions like this. This further implies that we are not contributing members to the local economy. In fact, Indigenous led organizations and communities drive the local economy and support local businesses all year long," stated Chief Waylon Scott of Wabaseemoong Independent Nations, a community located 112 kilometers from the City of Kenora.

Chief Howard Kabestra of Naotkamegwaning First Nation stated, "It was only in 2017 that the City asked that the Treaty #3 flag be flown at town hall. It was raised in honour to signify the reconciliation that was to be taken place between the City of Kenora and the Anishinaabe of Treaty #3. Their actions do not match their words. We as leaders are trying to create solid relationships and partnerships built on a foundation of trust, so we can collectively look for solutions, as opposed to creating more problems. We need to work collaboratively on matters like this, and including the Anishinaabe voice is a critical aspect in that. Our people need to be heard, and in this instance that did not happen," he stated flatly.

The proposed loitering bylaw will impact Anishinaabe who live in the City of Kenora, including those who maintain no fixed address. The proposed bylaw grants wide-sweeping and generalized powers of authority, with the ability to be applied inconsistently and disproportionately. The effects and the targets of the proposed bylaw could be unsupported if challenged under Canadian law.

The Mayor and Council for the City of Kenora are scheduled to vote on the proposed loitering bylaw on Tuesday, July 21, 2020.

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