

VILLAGE OF DOWNERS GROVE
Report for the Village

SUBJECT:	SUBMITTED BY:
Council Member New Business – Land Acknowledgement Statement	Dave Fieldman Village Manager

SYNOPSIS

At the request of Commissioner Sadowski-Fugitt, the following proposal has been placed on the New Business Agenda.

Direct staff to:

- *Explore a partnership with the DGPL and DG Historical Society to research the indigenous history of the land covered by Downers Grove Village boundaries.*
- *Consider a land acknowledgement statement to be placed on the Village website regarding the history of the indigenous lands.*

Pursuant to Village Council policy, this topic shall be a discussion item only to allow the Village Council to direct staff to prepare an action for consideration at a later date.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT

The goals for 2019-2021 include *Continual Innovation* and *Exceptional Municipal Services*.

FISCAL IMPACT

N/A

RECOMMENDATION

Action at the discretion of the Village Council.

BACKGROUND

Commissioner Sadowski-Fugitt submitted the following request for consideration by the Village Council as New Business:

Proposal to have a Land Acknowledgement Statement

Objectives

- Explore a partnership with the DGPL and DG Historical Society to research the indigenous history of the land covered by Downers Grove Village boundaries.

- Consider a land acknowledgement statement to be placed on the Village website regarding the history of the indigenous lands.

Rationale

- As we continue to explore human services and diversity, equity, and inclusion practices throughout the Village, it is important to recognize the history of the land we sit on
- A land acknowledgement is a way to resist the erasure of the Indigenous peoples and their histories on our land
- It is a step to honor the truth and work towards a more equitable way of teaching the history of the area
- Along with honoring those who we consider to be founders of our Village, we should also honor those who lived and cared for the land we know as our home today
- It will be a start to build respect and understanding for those descendants and members of the indigenous tribes who were forcibly removed from this area of Illinois, which include, but may not be limited to: Kickapoo (Kiikaapoi), Peoria, Kaskakia, Potawatomi (Bodéwadmikiwen), Miami (Myaamia)

Proposed Actions

- Research, if possible with DGPL and DG Historical Society, the indigenous tribes who once lived on the land encompassed by the Village of Downers Grove
- Review existing land acknowledgement statements
- Craft a land acknowledgement statement for the land on which incorporated Downers Grove sits
- If contact information is available, begin communication with native tribes that were forcibly removed from our current Village boundaries to recognize their legacy
- Incorporate the story of the indigenous tribes into our historical records

In February, Commissioner Sadowski-Fugitt requested that staff prepare a report on Land Acknowledgements issued by municipalities, pursuant to the Council governance practice commonly referred to as the four-hour rule. Staff prepared the attached memorandum.

ATTACHMENTS

Memorandum from Manager Fieldman to Village Council dated February 15, 2021

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor & Village Council
FROM: David Fieldman, Village Manager
RE: Report on Municipal Land Acknowledgements
DATE: February 15, 2021

Background

Commissioner Sadowski-Fugitt requested that staff prepare a report on Land Acknowledgements issued by municipalities. As requested, staff has prepared this report pursuant to the Council governance practice commonly referred to as the four-hour rule.

Definition and Purpose of a Land Acknowledgement

According to the US Department of Arts and Culture, a land acknowledgement is:

“a simple, powerful way of showing respect and a step toward correcting the stories and practices that erase Indigenous people’s history and culture and toward inviting and honoring the truth”

Additional information from the US Department of Arts and Culture is available by clicking [here](#).

The University of Illinois defines a land acknowledgement as:

“a formal statement that recognizes and respects Native peoples as traditional guardians of lands and the enduring relationship that exists between Native peoples and their traditional territories”

Land Acknowledgements Issued by Municipalities

Staff conducted research to identify municipalities in the United States that have issued Land Acknowledgements. Staff completed a general internet search and reviewed the websites of the International City & County Management Association (ICMA), National League of Cities (NLC) and American Planning Association (APA) and was unable to identify any United States municipalities which have issued Land Acknowledgements.

Staff identified several Canadian municipalities which have issued Land Acknowledgements including Toronto, St. Albert and Vancouver (issued by the [Vancouver City Planning Commission](#)).

Toronto Land Acknowledgement

Land Acknowledgement for Toronto

We acknowledge the land we are meeting on is the traditional territory of many nations including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples and is now home to many diverse First Nations,

Inuit and Métis peoples. We also acknowledge that Toronto is covered by Treaty 13 with the Mississaugas of the Credit.

Land Acknowledgement for Scarborough

The land I am standing on today is the traditional territory of many nations including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples and is now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. I also acknowledge that Toronto is covered by Treaty 13 signed with the Mississaugas of the Credit, and the Williams Treaties signed with multiple Mississaugas and Chippewa bands.

Pronunciation

- *Anishnabeg: (ah-nish-naw-bek)*
- *Haudenosaunee: (hoodt-en-oh-show-nee)*
- *Métis: (may-tee)*

St. Albert Land Acknowledgement

An Opportunity to Recognize

A Land Acknowledgement is an opportunity for the City of St. Albert to recognize that we are residing and working in First Nation and Métis traditional territory. This statement was discussed with the Reconciliation Committee, Mayor and Council, Indigenous organizations and public at large both in person and through an online survey. The team decided on two versions. A formal land acknowledgement that would be available on print materials and should be widely displayed throughout municipal spaces, especially meeting areas. The other, an informal land acknowledgement that could be used at the start of a meeting, if no other order of government has acknowledged Indigenous land in a respectful manner. The land acknowledgement statements are the result of a dialogue on suggested wording and edited as the Payhonin Reconciliation St. Albert engagement process progressed.

Formal Land Acknowledgement

We respectfully acknowledge that we are on Treaty 6 territory, traditional lands of First Nations and Metis peoples. As treaty People, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, we share the responsibility for stewardship of this beautiful land.

Informal Land Acknowledgement

We respectfully acknowledge that we are on Treaty 6 territory, traditional lands of First Nations and Metis peoples.

Land Acknowledgements Issued by Universities and Institutions

Staff's research found that many Universities and Institutions have issued Land Acknowledgements including several in Illinois such as the University of Illinois, Northwestern University and The Art Institute of Chicago. Links to the Land Acknowledgements are provided below.

[University of Illinois](#)
[Northwestern University](#)
[University of Chicago](#)
[Art Institute of Chicago](#)

Preparing a Land Acknowledgement for the Village of Downers Grove

If so directed by the Village Council, staff could prepare a Land Acknowledgement for the Village of Downers Grove. The preparation would include conducting historical research to identify the Indigenous people who lived on the land where Downers Grove is now located. Staff would welcome the assistance of other community groups and organizations in conducting this research including the Downers Grove Public Library and the Downers Grove Historical Society. Once the research has been completed, staff would draft a Land Acknowledgement for Village Council review and consideration.