

Snuneymuxw Chief and Council Resolution

Condemnation of Treatment of Tracy Samra; Return of Snuneymuxw Flag

WHEREAS the Snuneymuxw First Nation is committed to building respectful relations with the City of Nanaimo and the citizens of Nanaimo premised on recognition, friendship and good faith, and in furtherance of the implementation of the Treaty of 1854;

WHEREAS Snuneymuxw and the City of Nanaimo have engaged in recent years to build shared understandings and approaches to strengthening our relationship and to advance mutual objectives;

WHEREAS the Snuneymuxw Flag is an important symbol of the Snuneymuxw First Nation that must be treated with respect and dignity and must not be dishonoured in any way;

WHEREAS as a gesture of good faith, friendship and respect, the Snuneymuxw First Nation provided the Snuneymuxw Flag to the City of Nanaimo on National Aboriginal Day, June 21, 2015, to fly alongside the flags of Canada, British Columbia, and the City;

WHEREAS Tracy Samra was hired to be the Interim Chief Administrative Officer of Nanaimo in the fall of 2015 as City Manager and is a member of the Saddle Lake Cree Nation becoming the first woman and the first Indigenous person to hold this important role in Nanaimo – a fact celebrated by the Snuneymuxw First Nation;

WHEREAS in the spring of 2016, the Snuneymuxw Chief and Council expressed concern to the Mayor and Council of Nanaimo about the treatment Tracy Samra was already experiencing and the members of Nanaimo Council assured us it would be addressed and remedied and not continue;

WHEREAS mistreatment and violence against Indigenous women has been a major concern that has received high-level attention through numerous processes including the BC Oppal Inquiry, the recently concluded national Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the current national Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls Inquiry;

WHEREAS Tracy Samra was attacked with physical violence by Councillor Wendy Pratt in the spring of 2017, of which there is video evidence;

WHEREAS to date we are not aware of any public apology from either Wendy Pratt or Nanaimo Council for these events;

WHEREAS in the Nanaimo Bulletin story dated August 10, 2017, by Tamara Cunningham entitled “New petition calls for support for CAO, mayor’s resignation” Mayor Bill McKay was quoted as stating “I’ve not seen anything that’s suggested that Ms. Samra has experienced violence in the workplace” and thereby denying the reality of the events that have transpired. The story may be accessed at: <https://www.nanaimobulletin.com/news/new-petition-calls-for-support-for-cao-mayors-resignation/>; and,

WHEREAS concern has been raised about the Snuneymuxw Flag flying at City Hall given current events and specifically that these events bring dishonour to the Snuneymuxw Flag flying over Nanaimo City Hall;

The Snuneymuxw Chief and Council hereby resolves to:

1. Denounce the patterns of negative behaviour toward Tracy Samra that we first raised concerns about in the spring of 2016 and denounce the violence experienced by Tracy Samra in the attack against her by city councillor Wendy Pratt;
2. Request that the Mayor rescind his public statement of denial published on August 10, 2017, and apologize for the denial that Tracy Samra experienced violence;
3. Request that the Nanaimo Mayor and Council recognize the seriousness of the events and context by taking immediate steps to inform themselves of prevailing patterns of violence against Indigenous women in Canada and to prevent such violence; and,
4. Revoke Snuneymuxw consent to the Snuneymuxw Flag flying at Nanaimo City Hall and request the immediate return of the Snuneymuxw Flag.

PASSED UNANIMOUSLY, 29 AUGUST 2017