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Sent to the Clerk at: cblumenberg@pecounty.on.ca

Mayor Steve Ferguson
Prince Edward County
280 Main Street
Picton, Ontario

**Re: Statement of the Mayor - Consultation with First Nations
Special Council Meeting – January 19, 2021
Official Plan Amendment Application, Fourward Holdings Inc.**

Dear Mayor,

Donnelly Law (“we” or the “Firm”) represents Friends of South Shore (“FOSS”) in the above-noted matter.

At the close of proceedings during the January 19, 2021 Special Council Meeting, our client was shocked to hear you direct staff planner, Mr. Matt Coffey: “Matt, if we can speed this up for the sake of everyone that would be appreciated” [emphasis added]. Our office confirmed the statement on the video, captured at 36 mins 38 seconds of the Special Council Meeting. Your order to staff was in reference to an equally surprising “two-month” consultation Mr. Coffey proposed be undertaken with the Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte (“MBQ”) and the Huron-Wendat Nation.

Did you consult First Nations before directing staff to do so? The first of those consultations should have been to set the terms of your engagement with MBQ and the Huron-Wendat Nation. Furthermore, asking the staff planner to speculate on the spot how long the consultation would last was not a sign of respect or consideration for the concerns each Nation has expressed on this matter. Recorded at 18 min 21 seconds of the meeting, Mr. Coffey’s response estimating “two months” for consultation poses a serious risk to the credibility of this consultation.

Your statement in particular was inappropriate, disrespectful to First Nations, and runs contrary to the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission:

Principle #8. Supporting Aboriginal peoples’ cultural revitalization and integrating Indigenous knowledge systems, oral histories, laws, protocols, and connections to the land into the reconciliation process are essential.

Recently, you and Council committed the County to pursuing the implementation of these Principles. You told the media, “considerable work remains in the process of reconciliation and creating respectful relationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in our community.”¹ Unless you can demonstrate that the Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte and the Huron-Wendat Nation would like the consultation process to “speed up,” and to finish within “two months,” FOSS submits your statement is in error and should be corrected.

Naturally, FOSS leaves the determination of respectful process to First Nations. As residents, it is the expectation of FOSS that staff would not direct the consultation process. Emphatically so, considering that its process has clearly failed to date with Quinte Isle Campark and the Picton Terminals.

We remind Council that staff were quick to hire and pay Mr. Owens to peer review the cultural heritage evaluation of Mr. Michael McLelland, of ERA Architects, who recommended a cultural heritage assessment could not be completed without First Nations consultation. To everyone’s regret, Mr. Owens and staff ignored this recommendation, leaving residents concerned about both the credibility and the sincerity of the consultation.

FOSS respectfully submits County Council should follow the lead of other municipalities, allocate sufficient resources, refer substantive and process matters to the Prince Edward County Heritage Advisory Committee for review, and hire an experienced Facilitator who has worked successfully with First Nations to conduct the consultation. A respectful consultation timeline should be mutually determined, not dictated by the municipality; a first progressive step on the path of transparency and respect.

In closing, FOSS hopes Council will demonstrate its commitment to building trust and good relations by supporting and engaging its employees and Council in a program of Indigenous competency learning and cultural safety training.

Please do not hesitate to contact me at 416-572-0464 or email should you have any questions or comments concerning this correspondence.

Yours Truly,



David R. Donnelly

Cc: Chief Maracle
Chief Vincent
FOSS Board of Directors
Prince Edward County Council
Dr. Marcia Wallace, CAO
Mr. Michael Michaud, Manager of Planning

¹ https://www.thecounty.ca/county_news_notices/holding-court-statue-to-remain-on-picton-main-street/