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**By email: [mayorandcouncillors@richmond.ca](mailto:mayorandcouncillors@richmond.ca)**

Mayor and Council  
City of Richmond  
6911 No.3 Road  
Richmond BC V6Y 2C1

Dear City of Richmond Mayor and Council:

### **Recognition of Indigenous People and Land**

I was born, raised and continue to live in Richmond. I am a member of the Nisga'a Nation and my husband is a member of the Gitxaala Nation.

#### Missing Children of Kamloops Residential School

As an Indigenous person with aunts, uncles and grandparents who attended residential school, it has been heartbreaking to have it confirmed there is a burial site with the remains of 215 children on the grounds of the former Kamloops Indian Residential School. These children died alone under horrible circumstances.

Indigenous children were forcibly removed from their families and communities and brought to schools that sought to break their ties to their families, communities, and culture. Like many Indigenous children, my family members spent a significant portion of their childhoods at the residential school where they were abused emotionally, physically and sexually.

It is an extremely painful time and it sparks a lot of grief, anger and sadness for Indigenous people.

I appreciate that the flags have been lowered at all of the City of Richmond buildings for one week in memory of the children.

An event to honour the children was organized by Karina Reid on May 31 at 7pm outside the Richmond Public Library. Thank you to Chak Au and Carol Day for taking the time to attend. Karina Reid is organizing a vigil on Tuesday, June 8 at 7pm and I hope that all of you attend.

## Land Acknowledgement

The City of Richmond is privileged to be on Musqueam land and it is time to acknowledge this and to work in partnership with the Musqueam First Nation. The land acknowledgement is more than a statement. It acknowledges the colonial context of the Indigenous territory and the relationship between the land and the Indigenous People.

In Richmond News article on January 19, 2021, Mayor Brodie is quoted at stating that the City of Richmond does “not want to acknowledge what might be important subject of litigation”. The City of Richmond should not be in litigation with First Nations. There should be negotiations rather than litigation in order to build a meaningful relationship between the parties.

## Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action

The Truth and Reconciliation delivered their Calls to Action on the legacy of the Indian residential school system in December 2015. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission - Calls to Action includes calls on municipalities to fully adopt and implement the UN Declaration as a framework for reconciliation.

I ask for your support to have the City of Richmond develop a plan to Implement the Calls to Action similar to the City of New Westminster:

<https://www.newwestrecord.ca/local-news/new-west-takes-bold-reconciliation-step-with-history-training-for-city-staff-3098764>

Action that is being undertaken by the City of New Westminster includes the following:

- \* Making it mandatory for all city staff to attend training on the history and legacy of residential schools.
- \* Providing mayor and council with training to understand the legacy of residential schools and colonialism.
- \* Undertaking research to understand which Nations have a relationship to this land.
- \* Undertaking research to better understand the historical actions of the city as they relate to First Nations.
- \* Ensuring this research respects and incorporates the experiences and stories of the First Nations that claim the territory upon which New Westminster is built to ensure the history isn't told from a colonial perspective; and sharing this information with the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation.

\* Providing the community with opportunities to learn the history and legacy of colonialism in New Westminster.

\* Establishing a formal territorial acknowledgement built from the information learned from First Nations during the research process, and having the territorial acknowledgment approved by First Nations that claim the territory before it's formally adopted by the city.

There are a number of consultants with the expertise to assist in these areas and have worked with other municipalities.

### Cultural Harmony Plan

On November 25, 2019, City Council adopted the Cultural Harmony Plan 2019-2029. Indigenous peoples are the first inhabitants of Canada with have a distinct relationship with land on which the City of Richmond is situated. The Cultural Harmony Plan places Indigenous peoples after of new comers to Canada. The Cultural Harmony Plan must be reviewed in order to include and focus on Indigenous Peoples.

For example, the Cultural Harmony Plan provides a commitment to reduce barriers to economic opportunities, services and programs for new immigrants (page 26).

### Place Names

The development of the aquatic centre and the Steveston Community Centre and Library provides the City of Richmond with an opportunity to recognize the City of Richmond is on the unceded traditional territory of the Musqueam First Nation. The display of Indigenous artwork and facility names are a good springboard for more substantive action.

This work must be undertaken under consultations with the Musqueam First Nation.

### Update the City of Richmond Website

Aboriginal people were on this land that is now known as Richmond prior to the arrival of the Europeans. The history section of the City of Richmond website does not reflect this fact. The exclusion of Indigenous peoples in the information within the history section provides an inaccurate and incomplete account of the history of Richmond. The history section of the website must amended include reference to the Musqueam First Nation and must be developed in consultation with the Musqueam First Nation.

### National Indigenous History Month

June is National Indigenous History Month which is a month to celebrate the history, heritage and diversity of First Nations, Inuit and Metis peoples in Canada. I am hopeful this will be celebrated by the City of Richmond in a meaningful way.

## Reconciliation


By taking the steps outlined in this letter, the City of Richmond will be taking steps to remedy the status quo and work towards reconciliation and a new relationship with the Musqueam First Nation and Indigenous constituents.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's definition of "reconciliation" is as follows:

"... Reconciliation is about establishing and maintaining a mutually respectful relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in this country. In order for that to happen, there has to be awareness of the past, an acknowledgement of the harm that has been inflicted, atonement for the causes, and action to change behaviour."

Reconciliation is a process of healing and building relationships. Reconciliation will require enormous effort and at some point the City of Richmond will have to undertake this work because the Indigenous People are not going anywhere.

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C. Gillanders". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "C" and a stylized "G".

Chaslynn Gillanders