



DELEGATION RESPONSE

Meeting: January 26th, 2026

Mark Dyrholm - Municipal Land Acknowledgement

BACKGROUND:

On November 24th a Land Acknowledgment statement was brought to Council, and Council made the motion to approve the Land Acknowledgement statement as presented to be placed on the website, and to direct Administration to do further research on the topic, which has been ongoing. On January 12th Mark Dyrholm attended Council as a delegation, raising concerns about the Land Acknowledgement Statement, particularly with wording in the final sentence (underlined below), and how this wording could affect property ownership and land titles.

Adopted Land Acknowledgement:

"The Town of Claresholm respectfully acknowledges that we are located on the ancestral and traditional territory of the Blackfoot Confederacy including the Kainai, Piikani, and Siksika Nations, as well as the Tsuut'ina Nation, the Stoney Nakoda Nations, Ktunaxa Nation and Metis Nations. We honour and respect their culture, traditions, teachings, and enduring relationship with these lands and waters. We provide this recognition as an act of reconciliation and gratitude to those on whose territory we reside."

Administration reached out for legal counsel in this matter, see their response in the attached document. While they state it would be difficult to argue that the language within the Land Acknowledgement itself creates any substantial legal risk for the Town, particularly given that lands in Alberta are subject to treaties (Claresholm being located in Treaty 7) which include a surrender of lands to the Crown; they did suggest that the Land Acknowledgement could be updated to remove the final words of "to those on whose territory we reside."

Edmonton, Calgary, Red Deer, and Lethbridge all post Land Acknowledgments on their website. Administration reached out to the legal teams of two of these cities for their input. One municipality responded, and agreed with the advice we received from legal and shared that they have not received concerns over their acknowledgement from their residents.

OPTIONS:

Council could rescind its approval for a land acknowledgement on the new website. Alternatively, council could amend the previously approved acknowledgement in line with legal recommendation as follows:

The updated Land Acknowledgement would read as follows:

"The Town of Claresholm respectfully acknowledges that we are located on the ancestral and traditional territory of the Blackfoot Confederacy including the Kainai, Piikani, and Siksika Nations, as well as the Tsuut'ina Nation, the Stoney Nakoda Nations, Ktunaxa Nation and Metis Nations. We honour and respect their culture, traditions, teachings, and enduring relationship with these lands and waters. We provide this recognition as an act of reconciliation and gratitude."

PROPOSED MOTION: Motion by Councillor _____ to adopt the amended Land Acknowledgement wording as presented.

Council could alternatively decide to make no changes, and no motion would be required.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Legal Counsel regarding Land Acknowledgment Statement
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PREPARED BY: Ali Hemmaway – Economic Development Coordinator

APPROVED BY: Abe Tinney

DATE: 2026-01-19
