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VILLAGE OF QUEEN CHARLOTTE COUNCIL VOTES TO RESTORE ANCESTRAL HAIDA NAME DAAJING GIIDS

Queen Charlotte, British Columbia - On May 16th, 2022, Mayor Kris "Dluujuu" Olsen and the Village Council passed a historic resolution that would see the return of the name Queen Charlotte to the Province of British Columbia and restoration of the ancient and ancestral Haida name Daajing Giids. Moved by Councillor Sean Young, and seconded by Councillor Ayla Pearson, Council unanimously supported amending its municipal letters patent to establish 'Village of Daajing Giids' as the municipality's name.

"Our community has been built by volunteerism and a strong relationship with the Haida", states Mayor Olsen. He explains that "previous generations have built a hard-working, healthy community that is welcoming and inclusive. This is why we can have tough conversations in a safe, respectful and understanding way, while working on strengthening our relationship with our neighbours". Mayor Olsen emphasizes "I am so proud of the of the people who have built our community and created such a welcoming atmosphere for our residents to call home".

To change the municipality's name, Council must ask the Minister of Municipal Affairs to advance a request to Cabinet. By way of May 16th's ground-breaking resolution, Council has triggered the statutory two-week notice period that aims to see a formal request to Minister Cullen by June 6th 2022. From there, Minister Cullen will need to decide whether to advance the request for an Order-in-Council.

While Haida efforts to restore place names has been ongoing for some time, it wasn't until April 2019, when the Skidegate Haida Immersion Program (S.H.I.P.) wrote a letter to Village Council with a petition that the restoration conversations on Haida Gwaii broadened to the municipal setting. Mayor Olsen and Council engaged with the Haida Hereditary Chiefs Council shortly after receiving the request in 2019. In April of 2022, the Haida Hereditary Chiefs Council formalized their endorsement by providing a resolution that supports 'Village of Daajing Giids' as the restored village name.

Since the original request, with an interruption in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Council has been engaging with Village residents, business owners and island stakeholders to have meaningful discussions, listen, share knowledge, and ask and answer questions. In March of 2022, the Village disseminated a Community Response Form to formally gather opinions of residents and property owners. The results of the 380 conforming responses, which were shared at the May 2, 2022 council meeting, indicated that 48.7% of respondents strongly supported a change, 11.8% somewhat supported a name change, and 36.3% did not support changing the name of the village. Council's subsequent resolution on May 16, 2022 that supports restoring Daajing Giids as the municipality's name is the most recent step in an ongoing process started in 2019 that is without precedent.

Mayor Olsen notes "our community is committed to the Truth & Reconciliation Commission's calls to action and the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples". Mayor Olsen further clarifies "the ball will soon be in the provincial court. While our Council has expressed its full support of restoring Daajing Giids as our village name, the municipality must continue to operate as the Village of Queen Charlotte until a final decision has been made by provincial cabinet".

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