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From: Rebecca Steckle

Sent: Monday, October 5, 2020 7:46 PM

To: PSB Administration <psbadministration@haldimandcounty.on.ca>

Subject: [EXTERNAL]Re: The Outlandish and Irresponsible Claims and Rhetoric Used by the Haldimand Police Services Board

Please be cautious.

This email originates from outside of Haldimand County.

Attn: Haldimand Police Services Board

Hello,

I am writing today because I am utterly appalled to have read the recent statement from the latest meeting of the Haldimand Police Services Board.

The singling-out and characterization of Skyler Williams particularly, is shameful and egregious, and the mention of Christie Blachford's book as the only source to "prove" his "illegitimacy" within the current land dispute, exposes a clear and obvious bias. The same paragraph goes on to criticize Skyler and claim he is not credible, without offering any reason for this libel.

Further, it goes on in very bad faith to claim that at any time someone could place a tent on any property and claim it as Indigenous Land, which has not ever happened, outside of the disputed land in the Haldimand Tract, which is presently not developed on. This characterization of anyone at any time declaring the land "theirs" is meant to instill fear and anxiety in the community within Caledonia, and to attempt and personalize the opposition within the community with a threat of "what's next?" with no indication that there is any truth to that threat. It is unscrupulous and written intentionally to imply that this issue is something that it is not. Furthermore, it is deeply insulting considering the history of the nation of Canada, and settlers from Europe putting up tents and declaring that land belonged to them. This is a wildly insensitive and impertinent piece of biased misinformation.

Further, the focus on Indigenous peoples not receiving special permissions and protections reads as particularly racist, in that it presumes the reason for the OPP not raiding the camp or using more state sanctioned violence is precipitated by special rules for a minority group and/or race, rather than that there is a legitimate and historically significant issue here that is not going to be resolved with arrests, rubber bullets and boots on the ground. Your community reads words like these and they base their opinions on them, and by writing such an irresponsible statement, you directly endanger the First Nations Community.

The presumption and preoccupation with the race of the individuals in these minutes, (while it can be equally noted that not a single person on this board is not a white man) is curious at best, and chilling at least. The further inclusion of Canada being founded on principals that "recognize the supremacy of God" but omitting that it was also founded on the principals of Indigenous genocide and subjugation, is also an illuminating and disgraceful give away, about the bias and prejudice this board exemplifies.

Use of top-shelf, highly evocative words and phrases like “carnage”; “trespassers”; “Terrorists”[sic]; “violence”; “destroy public infrastructure”; “intimidation”; “occupiers” and “public safety” are meant to inflame rather than diffuse. They paint an exaugurated and hyperbolic tableau that is in no way reflective of the peaceful and non-violent actions of Land Defenders.

What I, and many others expect from you by way of good-governance and leadership on this matter is to:

1. Retract outright, the statements made in these minutes, facilitate an apology to the Six Nations Community from this board, and move to have the current members resign and be replaced by people better equipped to deal with the complexities and sensitivities necessary for dispute resolution in this county.
2. Acknowledge that, although seemingly ignored by this statement, Six Nations and the people who live there, are not foreign, nor are they removed from the community at large in Haldimand, and should not be spoken about as though they are “outsiders” by any governing bodies.
3. Demand and facilitate that all OPP in Halidimand, all council members and all present and future Police Service Board Members undergo racial sensitivity training and up-to-date conflict resolution that is informed by that training.
4. Reconvene an emergency meeting of the Haldimand Police Services Board, which, like all PSB meetings is open to the public, to address these concerns directly with the community they are tasked with serving, and receive statements and feedback on this position.
5. Retract specifically, and publicly the use of the word “Terrorist” as well as the other patently false characterizations of the Land Defenders at 1492 Land Back Lane chosen to escalate and bias the community against First Nations Land Defenders.

Hopefully this letter will find you feeling more community-minded, respectful of others and compelled to participate in the peaceful governance of your county. I find it very hard to believe you lack the means or opportunity to see that this is resolved, that these demands are met, that these Board Members resign, and that the damage that they have done is sufficiently mitigated and repaired.

Sincerely,
Rebecca