



www.borderlandpride.org  
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@BorderlandPride

November 4, 2021

Mayor and Council  
Town of Fort Frances  
320 Portage Avenue  
Fort Frances, ON P9A 3P9

Dear Mayor and Council:

**Re: Support for Borderland Pride**

Borderland Pride has been pleased by the support we have received from the Town of Fort Frances since our inception in 2017 and our inaugural Pride Week in 2018.

On May 11, 2020, the Town of Fort Frances passed a resolution proclaiming the month of June 2020 to be Pride Month and committing to publicly display/raise a Pride flag. A copy of that resolution signed by Mayor June Caul is enclosed for your reference. On June 3, 2020, a flag raising ceremony took place at the Civic Centre. The ceremony was attended by Mayor Caul and she made a number of public statements that positively affirmed the need and importance of Pride. A copy of the 93.1 The Border article about this event is enclosed for your reference.

In contrast, the Township of Emo did not pass a similarly worded resolution in 2020. The subject of displaying a Pride flag was a hotly-contested issue in the community and a number of statements were made that were disparaging to Borderland Pride, its volunteers and supporters, and LGBTQ2 people generally. Property was destroyed and acts of violence were threatened against members of our organization. Borderland Pride responded by organizing a peaceful, family-friendly protest in Emo, notwithstanding the lack of municipal support. The event was well attended by hundreds of people in Emo and from across the region. It generated media attention nationally and from around the world.

That occasion and all of the advocacy surrounding it was consistent with the proclamation passed by the Town of Fort Frances. You will note that your proclamation states that Pride is necessary and knows no border. Therefore, it came as quite a surprise to learn that on June 22, 2020, Mayor Caul emailed Emo's mayor with the subject line "No endorsement by F.F. Town Council for Pride actions". Mayor Caul's message represents that it was sent on behalf of council and the municipality. She writes:

*Hi Harold. I feel it necessary to let you know that the actions of Pride, its comments and legal threats are not endorsed by myself, Council members, or administration. I value our relationship with Emo and every municipality in the district and hope that your Council knows that these actions in no way reflect our opinions.*

*Kind regards,*

*June Caul*

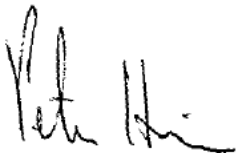
You can imagine our disappointment to read this message from the Mayor, ostensibly written on behalf of the municipality. It was neither “necessary” nor, to our knowledge, was it resolved by your council that she do so. The only apparent motive to send it appears to have been to oppose LGBTQ2 people protesting homophobic and transphobic actions by other public officials. There is no plausible reason to send this message to Emo’s mayor other than to undermine the objectives of Borderland Pride or its volunteers and community members.

Since Mayor Caul is the official spokesperson for the Town, it is difficult to reconcile her correspondence with council’s public statements, so we ask your council to confirm the following:

- Is the Town of Fort Frances of the view that LGBTQ2 people and other equity-seeking groups should not complain when governments decide to actively discriminate against them?
- Is council of the opinion that protesting or objecting to discrimination by a local government is wrong or offensive?
- Does your council endorse the bigotry, online abuse, and destruction of property that the decision of Emo’s council last year emboldened across the district?
- Have specific members of your council objected to our reliance on the protections of the *Human Rights Code*?

We have conferred internally and would appreciate your clarification as to whether, in sending this message, the Mayor is speaking only for herself, or for the Town of Fort Frances. All too often public commitments are made on equity issues, while a whisper-campaign unfolds behind closed doors. As a leading public sector organization and employer in our community, we ask your council to reaffirm its position.

Sincerely,



Peter Howie (he/him/his)  
Director

Encl. Email from Mayor Caul to Mayor McQuaker, dated June 22, 2020;  
Resolution in Observance of Pride 2020, dated May 11, 2020;  
“Pride Month Officially Kicked Off”, 93.1 The Border, dated June 4, 2020

**From:** [June Caul](#)  
**To:** [Harold McQuaker](#)  
**Subject:** No endorsement by F.F.Town Council for Pride actions  
**Date:** June 22, 2020 2:10:04 PM

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Hi Harold. I feel it necessary to let you know that the actions of Pride, its comments and legal threats are not endorsed by myself, Council members, or administration. I value our relationship with Emo and every municipality in our district and hope that your Council knows that these actions in no way reflect our opinions.

Kind regards,

June Caul

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**RESOLUTION / PROCLAMATION  
IN OBSERVANCE OF PRIDE 2020**


**WHEREAS:**

1. Borderland Pride is the LGBTQ2 (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer/questioning, and two-spirit) Pride organization for the Borderland region, which is comprised of the Rainy River District, Koochiching County, and the southern part of Treaty #3 territory;
2. Pride events across Canada and the United States and around the world promote diversity and inclusion and take a positive stance against discrimination, hatred, and violence towards LGBTQ2 people;
3. Pride is necessary to show community support and belonging for LGBTQ2 individuals and families, and LGBTQ2-identifying youth in particular;
4. Acknowledging and participating in Pride underscores and affirms our respect for the dignity, equality, and visibility of LGBTQ2 people and families;
5. The diversity of sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression represents a positive contribution to society and is a matter for our community to take pride, show its support, and celebrate;
6. The global pandemic has increased the isolation, anxiety, and insecurity of some of society's most vulnerable citizens, including LGBTQ2 people and youth;
7. Pride has been observed and celebrated in the Borderland region, and has become a highlight on the summer calendar;
8. The values of diversity and inclusion should be shared in common by all people, and know no border;
9. The month of June is internationally recognized as Pride Month;

**THEREFORE, IT IS RESOLVED THAT:**

10. I, Mayor June Caul do hereby proclaim the month of June 2020 to be Pride Month in the Town of Fort Frances;
11. The Town of Fort Frances will publicly display/raise a Pride flag in a prominent location in celebration of Pride; and
12. All citizens are encouraged to reflect and work together on equality, acceptance, and inclusion for all people throughout the year.

**IN WITNESS WHEREOF**, I hereunto set my hand this 11<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2020.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor June Caul



## Pride Month Officially Kicked Off

Fort Frances, ON, Canada / 93.1 The Border

[Randy Thoms](#)

Jun 4, 2020 | 7:36 AM

Borderland Pride has officially kicked off Pride Month.

Officials joined with area dignitaries for a flag raising ceremony at the Civic Centre in Fort Frances on Wednesday.

Co-chair Doug Judson notes their campaign "Pride Lives Here" has led to the distribution of over 700 signs all across northwestern Ontario and Koochiching County.

He says it's a strong message.

"Through Pride, we assert that LGBTQ2 people matter, that this is a place that can be their home, that their presence is valued and that diversity is a gift," says Judson.

Judson says it's also important this year that they be allies with others facing injustice in light of the protests south of the border.

Mayor June Caul says raising the flag is done to honour and accept those who have been marginalized because of their sexual orientation.

"LGBTQ2 people were born with their sexual orientation and have been struggling to be accepted for many years," says Caul.

Caul also spoke of the struggles people she knew personally including a childhood friend who was forced to leave the community.



Photo courtesy Grand Council Treaty 3

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