



Borderland Pride

c/o PO Box 105, Fort Frances, ON P9A 3M5 or
PMB 181, 1801 2nd Ave, International Falls, MN 56649

borderlandpride@gmail.com
www.borderlandpride.org

April 29, 2020

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

Sent via Email: lslomke@fortfrances.ca; klawson@fortfrances.ca

Dear Mayor and Council:

Re: Celebrating Pride in the Time of COVID-19

Pride festivals are held around the world to celebrate diversity and inclusion and to affirm a community's openness and acceptance of LGBTQ2 (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer/questioning, and two-spirit) people.

Borderland Pride's annual Pride Week celebrations have been no exception and have become a highlight of the summer calendar. Pride returns economic benefits by bringing people out to support local businesses, dine at local restaurants, and stay at local hotels. It also helps to position the communities of our region as forward-thinking and inclusive places for families, professionals, and entrepreneurs to call their home and put down roots, confident in the welcome, love, and respect that they will receive here.

We are tremendously proud of our achievements over the past two years to bring communities together on both sides of the border to show our support for LGBTQ2 people, queer families, and young people of diverse identities and orientations.

This year, Pride will be observed under the unique constraints of social distancing and a restricted international border. As such, we presently expect that we will have to cancel plans for any in-person events or gatherings in June or July.

This is obviously disappointing for the many people in our community who have come to see Pride as an important initiative to strengthen our community, build confidence and belonging for young people, and celebrate summer with a positive message. At this difficult time, we think especially of those who are experiencing isolation with unsupportive families or caregivers, and those who are unable to connect with or take advantage of other means of personal support that are normally available.

As we plan some alternative event formats and turn to online platforms for Pride in 2020, some things remain the same. We once again look to local, municipal, and Indigenous government leaders to show their support for our LGBTQ2 community.

This year, we have two requests of your organization:

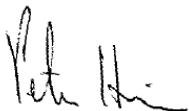
- **First**, we ask that your council adopt or enact the attached resolution or proclamation, declaring the month of June as “Pride Month” (as it is designated around the world) and affirming your community as a place of welcome, inclusion, and safety for LGBTQ2 people. Please email us a copy of your proclamation or resolution once adopted and signed.
- **Second**, we ask that your organization fly or display an LGBTQ2 rainbow flag for a week of your choosing in the month of June. We once again welcome photos of your flag on display or with representatives of your community for use on social media. We note that Pride flags have been distributed in previous years, but we can provide you with a new one if requested.

These requests may appear only symbolic, but their fulfillment is deeply meaningful to the LGBTQ2 community. We cannot understate the importance of demonstrating that local leaders in our region support the message of Pride. Borderland Pride regularly receives messages and emails from people with ties to communities across the Rainy River District and Koochiching County. They tell us about the abuse they suffered here as a young person who was different; about the times that they felt so isolated that they attempted self-harm; and about the bullies, the harassment, and the physical and emotional violence they survived, at home or at a school. Many tell us they have never come back as a result. Many also tell us that seeing Pride in their community means so much to them today because they know what it would have meant to them in their time of need.

In short: Pride is most needed where it is least visible. Together, please join us in showing that even in the shadow of a pandemic, our communities are supportive of LGBTQ2 young people and families.

Thank you for considering our requests. Should you have any questions, I can be reached directly at (807) 861-0638 or borderlandpride@gmail.com.

Sincerely,



Peter Howie
Co-Chair

Encl. Text of Requested Resolution/Proclamation

**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, *(Name of Mayor, Reeve, Chief, etc.)* do hereby proclaim the month of June 2020 to be Pride Month *(in/at) (Name of Town, City, Organization, or First Nation)*;
11. The *(Name of Town, City, Organization, or First Nation)* will publicly *(display/fly/raise)* a Pride flag in a prominent location for the week of *(date)* 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 _____ day of _____, 2020.

(Signature)

(Printed Name of Mayor, Reeve, Chief, etc.)