



**MEDIA RELEASE**

January 16, 2018

**Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation acknowledges the concerns of peaceful protestors**

Nation holds space for community members to voice their key issues

**(Tofino, BC)** On the morning of January 15, 2018, approximately 40 **Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation (TFN)** members peacefully protested outside of the Nation's administration offices on Tin Wis Reserve.

The staff, led by CEO Ted Adnitt, invited these members to discuss their concerns at an informal meeting between elected council, Ha'wiih and some TFN staff. The meeting lasted over three hours where members discussed a variety of issues from health benefits, housing, job creation, and the need for more transparency through communications.

Chief Elmer Frank stated after the event that, "today, I felt the energy of our people was sincere and I felt the passion that those who attended the protest had to have their voices and concerns be brought forward. I really felt it was important to attend this morning and stand with our members rather than against them." Chief Frank went on to say "As leaders, we have been focusing on healing for our Nation in the last few years. I felt that attending and standing with our people this was a key mechanism to our journey of healing."

Many of those at this meeting had the opportunity to give voice to their key issues and were assisted by Hjalmer Wenstob who assumed the role of speaker for some members present and others that were not able to attend. Mr. Wenstob did an excellent job of keeping the discussion focussed and respectful.

Chief Frank also noted that, "concerns raised today are certainly important and many are being currently addressed by our administration. These just need to be communicated more effectively." In recognition of broader issues within the housing and health portfolios, Chief Frank committed to "ensuring that those will be reviewed and recommendations for change will come back to our citizens for their consideration."

Members were invited to attend either the upcoming Council meeting on January 19th or a TFN community meeting on February 21<sup>st</sup> to continue the important dialogue that transpired at this meeting.

Chief Frank concluded by thanking those attending by saying that, "going forward, we will continue to develop and evaluate how and when we communicate. We have already begun this process with community communications surveys and a strategic communications plan current being developed for the Nation. We hope this work will be satisfactory to all our people in the future." He concluded, "today was definitely a milestone that we should celebrate and a reflection of our continued commitment to the TFN Nation."

The gathering concluded with a prayer and traditional song performed by members from both sides of the event.

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**About the Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation**

The Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation and Administration is located on the West Coast of Vancouver Island, in Tofino, British Columbia. The Tla-o-qui-aht Nation and its people, are a nation with over 1200 Members. The Administration is comprised of more than 50 employees that continues to grow as the Tla-o-qui-aht Nation's Lands, Economic, and local growth continues. As a traditionally strong nation, our teachings continue to honor our traditional Governance of our Ha'wiih (Hereditary Chiefs), and in doing so we provide service to our members to care, and promote our traditional values.

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