

Naming Committee's Recommended Ward Names

Executive Summary

The proposed Ward Boundaries Bylaw 19366 changes the City of Edmonton's electoral boundaries. On June 16, 2020, City Council motioned that the Naming Committee work with Indigenous communities to determine 12 ward names based on Indigenous place names.

The City of Edmonton's Naming Committee worked with Indigenous communities and Administration to develop twelve names for the proposed Ward Boundaries Bylaw 19366. This information report outlines each Ward name's meaning, spelling, pronunciation, and background including the process undertaken in the two months to develop these names.

Background

City Council motioned that Bylaw 19366 - Amendment to Bylaw 15142 - City of Edmonton Ward Boundaries and Council Composition Bylaw, as amended, be referred back to Administration for the Naming Committee to work with the Indigenous community to provide recommendations to name each of the new City's 12 wards based on Indigenous place names, and that Administration provide additional resources as necessary, up to \$150,000 with funding from Council Contingency, to support the Naming Committee to complete this work.

That Administration return to Council with a revised bylaw based on the Naming Committee recommendations no later than the end of September 2020.

At the request of local Indigenous community members and Knowledge Keepers, City Council decided at the June 16, 2020, meeting that all 12 wards should have Indigenous names. Administration began work with Indigenous Knowledge Keepers who were selected to co-chair an Indigenous Ward Naming sub-committee. The Co-Chairs and the City's Naming Committee worked with their networks and community contacts, including members from First Nations in Treaty Six, Treaty Seven, and Treaty Eight territories, as well as Métis and Inuit communities to identify language speakers, Elders, and other Knowledge Keepers who would form the committee and help guide the work of selecting 12 ward names.

Process

Co-Chairs (Circle Keepers)

Terri Suntjens is one of the local Indigenous community members and leaders who wrote to the City Council and the Naming Committee to express the importance of naming the new Ward Boundaries based on Indigenous place names. Terri is the Director of Indigenous Initiatives at MacEwan University and has been involved in creating that department within MacEwan University. Terri Suntjens comes from Saddle Lake Cree Nation in Treaty No.6 territory.

Rob Houle is also a known local Indigenous community member and leader who spoke to City Council about the significance of Indigenous place names. Rob is a writer and researcher, and had recently presented to the Edmonton Heritage Council on Indigenous place names as part of the symposium “Reconciliation and Resurgence: Heritage Practice in Post-TRC Edmonton”, as well as to the City of Edmonton’s Naming Committee. Rob Houle comes from Wapsewsiipi (Swan River) First Nation in Treaty No. 8 territory.

iyiniw iskwewak wihtwâwin (Naming Committee’s sub-committee)

During the July 7, 2020 Naming Committee meeting, the formal sub-committee was established and named ‘iyiniw iskwewak wihtwâwin’ by an Elder through ceremony which translates to Indigenous women’s involvement/movement/action.

iyiniw encompasses all those who come from the land, representing the first peoples.

iskwewak are the givers of life. The root word iskotew comes from the Cree word for fire.

wihtwâwin implies our being and the way we do things and our involvement in that process.

The sub-committee was made up of 17 Indigenous women who acted in the role of knowledge consultants to honour the voices of Indigenous women and their traditional roles in their communities as decision makers. The women invited to join *iyiniw iskwewak wihtwâwin* are educators, Elders, Knowledge Keepers and descendants within their respective Indigenous, Inuit, and Métis Nations. They have significant linguistic knowledge and experience providing education and leadership within their Indigenous language.

The naming process began in ceremony and continued to take guidance in ceremony as the group determined was required. During the process of

deliberating over names, the Committee members reached out to Elders and other members of their communities for guidance and input.

Naming Committee Chair Alyssa Lefebvre and three other committee members also joined the iyiniw iskwewak wihtwâwin as ex-officio (non-voting) members to listen, learn, and support the process of discovering the 12 Indigenous Ward names.

Guiding Values

iyiniw iskwewak wihtwâwin established in its guiding values that the names would be rooted in Indigenous language terms that reflect places, history, flora, and fauna. Early in the process, four names were chosen to recognize three Treaty 6 bands and the LGBTQ2S+ community. The names were also chosen with the opportunity to be written in Indigenous syllabics to further respect and educate the public on the traditional writings and meanings of the names selected for each ward.

Timelines and Meetings

iyiniw iskwewak wihtwâwin first gathered together on July 23, 2020, and met weekly every Thursday until August 27, 2020. A weekend retreat August 8-9 featured a tour with site visits to important places throughout the 12 wards which helped educate members and discover meaningful terms that related to a specific location and ward. All meetings and engagement took the necessary precaution of social distancing and safeguarding the members from COVID-19. Members were also provided the option of participating in the meetings through Zoom. All of the knowledge consultants of iyiniw iskwewak wihtwâwin were recognized for their work with an honorarium.

Ceremony

The process of discovery of the chosen names was guided through ceremony. A pipe ceremony started the naming initiative on July 7, 2020. Each meeting began with a prayer and had invited guests sharing knowledge in traditional Indigenous storytelling. The August 8-9 retreat included a night lodge ceremony at Alexander First Nation. On August 27, 2020, the iyiniw iskwewak wihtwâwin gifted the City's Naming Committee in a traditional pipe ceremony which included the exchanging of traditional ribbon skirts and sharing gratitude to the Elders and Knowledge Keepers of iyiniw iskwewak wihtwâwin for the chosen names.

The 12 Indigenous Ward Names

Ward	Name / Pronunciation	Origins / Meaning
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1	Nakota Isga	Nakota (Stoney)
	NAH-KOH-TAH EE-SKA	Nakota Isga means 'the people'. A Nakota chief from the south-east followed his vision and led his people to the shores of the sacred lake Wakamne (God's Lake - Lac Ste Anne). The area is rich in natural resources and was used to supply Fort Edmonton with fish during the early fur trade. Alexis Nakota Sioux Nation was the first nation to adhere to Treaty at Fort Edmonton.
2	Anirniq	Inuktun (Inuit)
	A-NIRK-NIK	Breath of Life - Connected to history of Inuit people who received treatment at the Charles Camsell hospital
3	tastawiyiniwak	LGBTQ2S+ (Cree)
	TASS-TAW-WIN-EE-WOK	The In-between People - This term was only used when referring to all of the iskwêhkânak ekwah nâpêhkânak. Each was free to move between gender roles
4	Dene	Dene
	DEH-NEH	Dene means all people of land and water. It is inclusive of Indigenous and non-Indigenous
5	O-day'min	Anishinaabe
	OH-DEH-MIN	The heart through which the North Saskatchewan River runs (literal translation: heart-berry). Historical hub for many nations to meet and trade.
6	Métis	Métis
	MAY-TEA	Given the history of the area and the use of the Riverlot system in this Ward, a Métis name was chosen. The Métis trace their descent to both Indigenous North Americans and European settlers.
7	sipiwiyniwak	Enoch Cree Nation

	SEE-PEE-WIN-EE-WOK	References the people of Enoch Cree Nation being River Cree. In the past, they were known as the River Cree by other tribes.
8	papastew	Papaschase Band (Cree)
	PAH-PAH-STAY-OH	Papastew was a highly respected leader of the Papaschase Band #136 and signed an adhesion to Treaty 6 in 1877. Papastew translates to large woodpecker.
9	pihêsiwin	Deity in Indigenous beliefs (Cree)
	PEE-HAY-SOO-WIN	Pays respect to the land of the Thunderbird and was informed through ceremony. This ward is home to sundances and traditional ceremonies.
10	Ipiihkoohkanipiahtsi	Blackfoot
	E-PEE-KO-KA-KNEE PIU-TSI- YA	Traditional lands where the Blackfoot Nation performed Buffalo Rounds. Refers to the migration of buffalo and hunting patterns.
11	Karhiio	Mohawk/Michel Band
	GAR-EE-HE-O	Karhiio translates to mean “a tall beautiful forest” in the Mohawk language. Michel Karhiio was the Chief of the Michel Band was an Indian reservation that was enfranchised on March 17, 1958, where the town Calahoo, Alberta is now located.
12	Sspomitapi	Blackfoot
	SS-POH-ME-TAH-PEE	Speaks to the Blackfoot understanding of the Star Person (Manitou Stone/Old Man Buffalo) that is present in many tribes in the West.

(Four names are not capitalized as they are Cree based language words and the Cree language does not incorporate capitalization)

Communication and Education

A child web page from the Naming Committee main web page will be created on edmonton.ca sharing each suggested Ward name, including the meaning of the

name, the language of origin and pronunciation. The web page will be live when this report goes live.

A documentary featuring the process, the various guests and presenters, engagement sessions, ceremonies, and celebration of the names is currently being produced and will be featured on the City of Edmonton's website shortly after the final approval of the Ward Boundary and Council Composition Bylaw. It is also the intention of the iyiniw iskwewak wihtwâwin to prepare pronunciation videos to assist Edmontonians on speaking and learning the new names.