

August 14, 2020

Dear Aboriginal Affairs Advisory Committee Members:

**Re: Protests and Fires**

**SUMMARY**

With the launch of the Indigenous Affairs Office we see new capacity to have discussions around how the City works with Indigenous organizations to address protests and encampments lead by Indigenous community members. We are particularly concerned about protests and encampments in which community members voice their concerns in ways that create issues of health and safety for community members attempting to access services at Indigenous agencies. We are further concerned about the use of fires at these protests and encampments which are being called “sacred fires,” but do not meet the community standards and protocols to be classified as such.

We propose that the Aboriginal Affairs Advisory Committee discuss the following:

1. How various Indigenous agencies can work with the City of Toronto and the Toronto Police Service to establish a table or task force to address protests and encampments that create health and safety concerns for community members attempting to access services.
2. How various Indigenous agencies can work with the City of Toronto and the Toronto Fire Services to develop a definition of what constitutes a sacred fire, and protocols and procedures around how to deal with fires at protests and encampments that do not meet this definition.

Regards,

*Frances Sanderson*

Frances Sanderson  
Co-Chair, Aboriginal Affairs Advisory Committee



Jeffrey Schiffer  
Co-Chair, Aboriginal Affairs Advisory Committee