



# Joint Press Release

## February 8, 2021



On the 170<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the Douglas Treaty (1851) at the Municipal Hall on the traditional territory of the Kwakiutl people, Hereditary Chief David Knox, Chief Councillor Ross Hunt Jr. and Mayor Dennis Dugas signed the Kwakiutl First Nation and District of Port Hardy Relationship Agreement. Councillors and staff from each community watched over this important achievement and celebrated via Zoom.

The Relationship Agreement is a document that will help the two communities work together through the purpose, principles & goals as follows:

*Both Communities agree that their work together is intended to support and promote the wellbeing of the First Nation, the District, and the North Island as a whole.*

*The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action underlie all our work together.*

*The First Nation and the District agree to share information from the Federal Government, Province of British Columbia, Regional District of Mount Waddington and other similar bodies that directly or indirectly impacts this agreement and/or shared interests.*

### **WHEREAS:**

- A. *The Kwakiutl and the District are building a working relationship based on mutual respect, friendship and trust within the Traditional Territory of the Kwakiutl First Nation;*
- B. *Good communication is essential for maintaining a positive working relationship and reaching mutual agreement on any subject;*
- C. *The Communities recognize that working together pursuant to a cooperative government to government relationship that will facilitate the sharing of information, improve communications, and establish a solid foundation for future planning as good neighbours going forward.*
- D. *There is value to both Communities in working together to share information and build towards prior and informed consensus on a number of practical items in each Community.*



**Hereditary Chief David Knox:** *"I am Honoured to be here and to have dialogue with the District of Port Hardy and to be present with Ross and Dennis to talk about how we can all work together for the future for the whole of the North Island. The more we can work together, the more we network the better off we all are as one big community."*



**Chief Councillor Ross Hunt Jr.:** *“This is a momentous occasion. The reason we are holding this today is because today marks the 170<sup>th</sup> day of silence from the Government, both federally and provincially. Thanks to the late Mayor Bev Parnham and former Chief Councillor Corrine Child for creating a relationship more than ten years ago that supported our dialogue to get to this point. Today what you are witnessing is the fruition of that relationship and this will mark the next steps for our Nation. Even though we have been met with silence from Canada we have been met with open arms from the District and that is an important step for us. We look forward to a better future together, we are in this together.”*



**Mayor Dennis Dugas:** *“This is one of the most important things I have been involved with as a Councillor and now as Mayor for the District. A big thank you goes to those who worked to get us here and how we all worked together to create an agreement that we can all work on together to strengthen our commitment to each other. Past Councillor Jessie Hemphill brought forward the idea of a First Nations Relations Committee and the importance to strengthen our relationship. This is the traditional territory of the Kwakiutl people and we need to work together to make it better for us all. We thank everyone from both communities for the desire to work together for the North Island. I am excited about this Relationship Agreement and our commitment to continue to work together.”*

On behalf of the Communities, Gilakas’la