

Hi Eric

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to your questions.

Question 1: What place should the francophone community have in Atikokan?

Atikokan's francophone community is an important part of the diversity and character of our community and should feel welcomed, respected and included in municipal life.

I believe good municipal government begins with listening. I would welcome the opportunity to have an ongoing dialogue with AFNOO and local francophone residents to better understand their priorities, experiences and any barriers they may face in accessing municipal information or participating in community life. Rather than assuming what those needs are, I believe it is important to hear directly from the people affected and look for practical ways the municipality can respond.

I also have a personal appreciation for Canada's French language and culture. My spouse is bilingual, and French language and traditions are a regular part of our family gatherings. That has reinforced for me the importance of respecting and celebrating both of Canada's official languages.

Regardless of the size of a particular community, everyone should feel that they have a voice and that they are welcome to participate in shaping Atikokan's future.

Question 2: What sort of policies would you put forward to make available or improve access to municipal information in French?

I believe municipal information should be as accessible as reasonably possible to the people we serve, including members of Atikokan's francophone community.

As a small municipality, Atikokan also has to be mindful of its financial and staffing resources. I would therefore support a practical approach that improves French-language access while remaining fiscally responsible. This could include identifying key municipal information that would be most beneficial to provide in both English and French, particularly important public notices, emergency information, election information and material affecting access to municipal programs and services.

Technology now gives small municipalities options that were not realistically available in the past. Translation software and artificial intelligence can significantly reduce the cost and time required to provide information in both official languages. These tools should be used

responsibly, with appropriate review for important public communications to ensure translations are accurate and clear.

I would also welcome input from AFNOO and local francophone residents about where improved French-language access would have the greatest benefit. My approach would be to use available technology, community partnerships and existing resources to make meaningful improvements without creating unnecessary costs for municipal taxpayers.

Good communication is fundamental to good local government, and language should not unnecessarily prevent residents from accessing important information about their community.

Regards

Jim Turner