

Bonsoir Éric,

Merci beaucoup pour ton courriel. Tu trouveras ma réponse ci-dessous, en Anglais. J'ai fait toute mon éducation publique en français, mais je ne suis pas très à l'aise avec les réponses élaborées. Pardonne-moi! :)

1 - I truly believe the Francophone community in Sioux Lookout should have a respected and, most importantly, celebrated place within our community. Sioux Lookout is a diverse community and is one of the fastest-growing municipalities in Northern Ontario. Being a good community and welcoming more population growth means recognizing the different cultures, languages and experiences that make up our population. Francophones are part of that community. They are a piece of the mosaic that makes up Sioux Lookout.

I was born in New Liskeard, Ontario and moved to Hearst before eventually moving to Kenora. I was more fluent in French as a child, growing up in Hearst with Francophone friends - however when we moved to Kenora I did not attend French immersion, which caused me to eventually lose most of my French. That is why I want to help local parents bring back French Immersion to Sioux Lookout's schools so that we can have a generation of children who are able to take leadership positions as bilinguals. Having residents & municipal staff who can communicate in French is another strength for our community. It can help us attract and retain workers, welcome visitors and newcomers, and build relationships with Francophone communities elsewhere in Northern Ontario.

As a Municipal Councillor, I would want to see the Municipality take an inclusive approach to reasonable ways to ensure that French-speaking residents can engage with their Municipal government. Having residents and municipal staff who can communicate in French is another strength for our community. It can help us attract and retain workers, welcome visitors and newcomers, and build relationships with francophone communities elsewhere in Northwestern Ontario.

Sioux Lookout is a place where everyone has a seat at the table, including Francophones. I truly mean that.

2- The Municipality needs to work with our existing and established "Francophones de Sioux Lookout" group of local Francophones to collaborate to see what the Municipality of Sioux Lookout can do to improve municipal information for Francophones, by Francophones. Change has to do more than listening, but active collaboration and participation so that Francophones understand that their concerns are being addressed. Municipal information is public information, and residents should be able to understand the information that affects them. We have wonderful Francophones who work for the Municipality, and I want to be able to celebrate and elevate them.

What can the Municipality do in the short and long terms to improve access to French? Adding a French section to the Municipal website is a short-term solution to improving access that I see.

A longer-term collaboration that I want to tackle is having a process in place so that, if a community member requests information or communication in French, the Municipality has a clear and timely process to handle that request. Requesting French-language information needs to be simple, respectful and routine, not something residents should feel uncomfortable asking for.

We can measure whether the policies are actually working by utilizing our relationship with the Francophones de Sioux Lookout group to see where we have made progress and where things need to be improved.

Merci,

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Reece Van Breda