Protocol Agreement

between the

Office of the Wet’suwet’en

and the

Town of Smithers

-- Preamble --

The Office of the Wet’suwet’en and the Town of Smithers acknowledge that the people who we represent have a long history together. Both of our organizations recognize that a Protocol Agreement between us can act as a starting point to further discuss items of mutual interest and benefit to both parties. Our organizations are committed to the long-term future for the people we represent.

-- Guiding Principles --

The Town of Smithers and Office of the Wet’suwet’en share a number of principles that guide this Protocol Agreement.

It is the intent of both parties that over time the relationship will grow and the Agreement will be revised to reflect the relative priorities of both organizations.

• We believe this Agreement is a living document
  It is the intent of both parties that over time the relationship will grow and the Agreement will be revised to reflect the relative priorities of both organizations over time.
• **We believe in mutual respect**  
  We treat one another in the way we, ourselves, want to be treated. Each one of us is provided the opportunity to speak and contribute in our own way towards the activities in this Protocol Agreement.

• **We recognize the mandates and commitment of our organizations**  
  The Town of Smithers as a municipal government under the Local Government Act and Community Charter and the Office of Wet’suwet’en as an organization governed by the Hereditary Chiefs residing throughout the traditional territories.

• **We believe in cooperation**  
  There are many areas of mutual interest where opportunities can be increased by working together. Acting in an inclusive and collaborative manner are tangible ways to demonstrate cooperation. We have many common goals, especially when it comes to wanting the best future possible for our children.

We recognize that good communication builds trust between our organizations.

When we connect as people who care about our communities we are more inclined to develop common solutions to the mutual challenges we face. Creating an understanding based on the strengths from each other’s cultures allows us to find common ground. We must also have the ability to agree to disagree but still move ahead together on other topics of mutual interest.

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**Term**

The term for this Protocol Agreement will be for **five years** from the date of signing by both organizations. Near the end of that period, as outlined in the activities below, the organizations will meet to revisit the protocol, review successes and decide upon next steps which may include an expansion of activities.

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**Activities**

The activities of this Protocol Agreement will focus on improving information sharing and communication in a transparent and timely manner between the Office of Wet’suwet’en and the Town of Smithers in order to make opportunities for cooperation manageable and achievable.

Both organizations commit to a meeting schedule over a five year period.
Senior Administration, including the Chief Administrative Officer from the Town of Smithers and the Executive Director from the Office of the Wet’suwet’en, agree to meet quarterly. Topics and an agenda will be mutually determined prior to the meeting. Follow up items will be distributed after each meeting based on the minutes taken. Each organization will take turns hosting the meetings and sharing secretariat functions such as agenda distribution, minute taking and follow up item distribution. The main purpose of these meetings will revolve around operational and capital topics of common interest associated with the mandates of both organizations.

Political leadership, represented by the elected Mayor and Council from the Town of Smithers and the Hereditary Chiefs governing the Office of the Wet’suwet’en, agree to meet twice per year over the next five years. The Chief Administrative Officer and the Executive Director from each organization will mutually develop an agenda for these meetings. The topics could arise from the quarterly administration meetings. Or they may come about as the need arises for discussion on potential topics for mutual cooperation. The focus of the political leadership meetings is dialogue at the policy and political level. These meetings may provide direction for further activities that could form the basis for future agreements beyond the five-year term of this Protocol.

- Terms and Conditions -

This Protocol Agreement is not binding in any way as related to matters and interactions between the Office and Wet’suwet’en and the Town of Smithers that lie outside of this agreement. Neither does this Protocol Agreement apply in any way to any relationships, agreements or negotiations the Town of Smithers and the Office of the Wet’suwet’en have individually or jointly with any other levels of government or organizations. Either organization can unilaterally withdraw from the Protocol Agreement at any time.

Each party will obtain authorization before releasing sensitive information obtained through this agreement.

Once the Protocol Agreement is signed, both the Office of the Wet’suwet’en and the Town of Smithers will jointly write and distribute a media release intended to inform the people represented by the organizations about the further developed relationship as represented by the Protocol Agreement.

The Inaugural Protocol Agreement was signed by the Office of the Wet’suwet’en on January 25, 2011 and the Town of Smithers on February 1, 2011. The second Protocol Agreement was signed by both the Office of the Wet’suwet’en and the Town of Smithers on January 26, 2012.