

**Joint Message from Ethan Berkowitz, Mayor, Municipality of Anchorage, and
Aaron Leggett, President, Native Village of Eklutna
In Response to the
Sister Cities Commission Letter Regarding the Captain Cook Statue**

June 23, 2020

More than 200 years ago, when Captain Cook sailed into the waters off the shores of what became Anchorage, the Dena'ina people had already lived here for thousands of years. Though we recognize that the Captain Cook statue at Resolution Park in downtown Anchorage is connected to our Sister City relationship with Whitby, England, discussion about its removal is part of a broader conversation about ways the past affects our present, and how the mistelling of history perpetuates injustice and inaccuracy.

The statue is but one symbol among many that fail to fully and fairly recognize Anchorage's First People. Consequently, as part of the government-to-government relationship between the Municipality of Anchorage and the Native Village of Eklutna, we seek to establish a process that respects the crucial role and sovereign authority of local tribes as we more fully and fairly portray Alaska's past. As part of that process, and in an effort to redress omissions in the telling of Alaska's history, we believe decisions about the Cook statue should be made by the Native Village of Eklutna.

As the process expands, it should encompass deference to the names of places as they were called preceding the arrival of Captain Cook, and recognition of the history and stewardship of Alaska's Indigenous peoples.

It is our hope that a shared, more accurate, and complete telling of the story of this place will bring all the people in our community together.

Signed,



Ethan Berkowitz, Mayor



Aaron Leggett, President, Native Village of Eklutna