

Federal Government asked to “de-escalate war” by council

By **Dan Gray** - March 22, 2022 @ 12:23 pm



Community members gathered to support Ukraine in a march downtown, March 20, 2022 (Dan Gray/SaultOnline.com)

In a motion that Mayor Provenzano was quick to state isn't meant to criticize the federal government's response to the Ukrainian war, council has issued a formal plea.

After some discussion, the motion will see the City write a letter to the federal government asking them to “de-escalate war in Ukraine by demanding peace and diplomacy on the international stage...”



It will also ask other communities to issue the same request of the government.

Councillors debated this motion for a few moments, including expressing their original hesitations, as Matt Shoemaker did during his statement.

“I, too, had a bit of hesitation with this resolution when it was initially sent to us only because Ukraine was attacked, unprovoked by Russia, who is the aggressor here. So we cannot be calling for peace without condition, because the condition obviously needs to be that Ukraine needs to be returned as an unoccupied state and that Russia needs to be expelled from the country,” stated Shoemaker. “So I think that the spirit of the resolution

does capture that but there's a couple of words here that I I have had some hesitation about, but I'm happy to support it, given the overall intent of it."

Mayor Provenzano began his opinion on the motion with a declaration.

"Obviously, I want to make a few comments about what our federal government's done. Because I don't want the motion to be read as a criticism of it," stated Provenzano.

"I actually think that Canada has been a leader in responding to what's happening in the Ukraine and I want to commend the federal government for the steps they've taken to respond to it," said Provenzano. "I think there's very little that Canada can do to actually force a de-escalation of the war. But I think Canada, as a nation, has made significant contributions to deter the war, has made significant contributions to support the country of Ukraine."

He also took time to praise the foreign policy decisions of the government.

"I'm proud of what I think is some very good foreign policy decisions that the country has made and the leadership of the country shown in participating in the anti-war efforts."

Councillors Lisa Vezeau-Allen and Councillor Hilsinger were responsible for bringing this motion forward. Vezeau-Allen explained why.

"This came about because we had a communication from a constituent regarding the war and they were wondering if we were going to make a statement. I think, just from the activities yesterday, with 500 people at the interfaith walk, that only just supports what our community is doing," said Vezeau-Allen.

Hilsinger also gave her thoughts on the motion.

"I was at the walk of love yesterday. And it's very clear, and the sentiment was there. And we need to stand up for what's wrong in this world. And I find this very difficult because it's just so horrific and so horrible and war is horrible," said Hilsinger. "It feels very hopeless to me that there's very little that we can do. But we can make clear how we feel about it."

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A native of Centre Wellington, Ontario, I have worked as a freelance journalist all over the province of Ontario. Most recently I ran a local news page in my hometown of Fergus, Ontario. I look forward to bringing my experience covering breaking news, municipal matters and general interest stories to the team at Superior Media and communities we serve.

