

Media statement from Sackville Ceasefire Now re: Tantramar Council Committee of the Whole meeting, March 25, 2024

Members of Sackville Ceasefire Now listened to the discussion at the Committee of the Whole meeting today regarding our submitted petition. We were deeply dismayed to hear evaluations and comments made on the genocide in Gaza by council members and mayor which lacked any meaningful research and substantive reflection.

Gaza may appear a world away to Tantramar council members and Mayor Andrew Black but we are very aware that the genocide unfolding in Gaza is an issue deeply affecting Tantramar and New Brunswick residents. We are a group of Tantramar residents united across diverse ages, faiths and backgrounds. Our rally on November 12, 2023 was the largest demonstration in recent municipal history other than the February 2020 rally over the potential Sackville ER closure.

Members of the Tantramar Council and Mayor Andrew Black may not feel that a letter to our federal government warrants uptake due to falling outside perceived “municipal jurisdictional responsibility,” but we strongly disagree. Hundreds of municipalities large and small across North America have participated in putting necessary pressure on their respective provincial, state, and federal governments. These actions did not “muddy the waters” but provided democratic clarity at an alarming and heightened time of crisis and misery.

Our group provided the Town of Tantramar clerk’s office with our contact information if any action was taken on our petition. We were not contacted about the petition’s inclusion on the Committee of the Whole meeting agenda. Interpretations of procedural by-laws and communication from staff, council members and the Mayor during this process have lacked continuity and transparency.

We plan to continue ongoing engagement with Tantramar council as well as provincial and federal levels of government. We regret that this council finds a genocide to be “too complicated” or “contentious” to object to by calling for federal action. We are all morally obligated to do what is within our power and means to call on Canada to enact a two-way arms embargo and impose state sanctions on Israel – essential steps towards a permanent ceasefire.