

.16

**CHEROKEE COUNCIL HOUSE
CHEROKEE, NORTH CAROLINA**

Date: _____

RESOLUTION NO. _____ (2026)

A resolution supporting the modernization of gateway signage to reflect the sovereignty, history, culture, and identity of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians.

WHEREAS, on March 2, 1961, the Tribal Council of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians adopted Resolution No. 392, authorizing the Executive Committee to work with the United States Department of the Interior, the National Park Service, and other appropriate officials regarding the installation of gateway signs identifying entry into Cherokee for the benefit of tourists and the traveling public; and

WHEREAS, Tribal Council recognizes and appreciates the previous collaboration required among federal, state and Tribal partners to establish gateway signage at that time and acknowledges the vision of those leaders in promoting Cherokee as a destination for visitors; and

WHEREAS, while continued coordination remains essential for the placement of gateway signage, the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, as a sovereign Tribal Nation, has the inherent authority and responsibility to determine how its history, culture, language and identity are represented at the entrances to the Qualla Boundary; and

WHEREAS, more than sixty-four years have passed since the adoption of Resolution No. 392, during which the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians has strengthened its government, expanded its economy, invested in the preservation of Cherokee history and culture, revitalized the Cherokee language, and continued to exercise its inherent sovereignty; and

WHEREAS, the Qualla Boundary is the homeland of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, comprised of lands painstakingly reacquired through the determination and sacrifice of Cherokee ancestors and held in trust for the Tribe, representing the perseverance, resilience, and self-determination of the Cherokee people; and

WHEREAS, the existing gateway signage was designed for another era and no longer fully reflects the history, culture, governmental maturity, Cherokee language, or sovereign status of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians; and

WHEREAS, the signs welcoming residents and visitors onto the Qualla Boundary should accurately represent the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians as a sovereign Tribal Nation while honoring the rich history, living culture, and legacy of the Cherokee people.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Tribal Council of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians hereby authorizes and supports the Principal Chief in initiating discussions and implementation regarding the replacement, modernization, and installation of gateway signage at all points of entry onto the Qualla Boundary.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that such gateway signage shall accurately identify the Qualla Boundary as the homeland of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians and reflect the Tribe's status as a sovereign Tribal Nation while celebrating Cherokee history, language, culture, identity, and the lasting relationship between the Cherokee people and their ancestral homeland.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Principal Chief shall designate the appropriate Tribal departments, including Cultural Resource departments, Cherokee Language Programs, Executive Public Relations, Commerce, and other relevant programs, to collaborate in the development of signage concepts that are historically accurate, culturally appropriate, visually welcoming, and representative of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians for both present and future generations.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Office of the Principal Chief shall compile and review the community input and naming suggestions previously submitted through the Cherokee One Feather regarding gateway signage and use that feedback in developing proposed signage verbiage. The proposed signage language shall be developed in collaboration with the appropriate Tribal programs and present to Tribal Council for review and approval within (90) to one hundred (120) days of the adoption of this resolution.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, upon completion of the design process and consultation with the appropriate federal and state agencies, the Principal Chief shall present the proposed gateway signage concepts and any necessary agreements to the Tribal Council for review and consideration before implementation.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Tribal Council reaffirms the vision established by Resolution No. 392 and recognizes that, while the purpose of welcoming visitors remains unchanged, the story we tell has grown. As visitors enter the Qualla Boundary, the gateway signs should reflect not only where they are, but who we are, a sovereign Tribal Nation whose homeland, history, culture, language, and future continue to thrive.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that this resolution shall be carried out by the Tribal Council and shall become effective upon ratification of the Principal Chief.

Submitted by Principal Chief Michell Hicks