

Bates, Tamara

Subject: FW: Form submission from: Request to Speak to Committee of Council Form

From: no-reply@hamilton.ca <no-reply@hamilton.ca>

Sent: July 6, 2021 12:56 PM

To: clerk@hamilton.ca

Subject: Form submission from: Request to Speak to Committee of Council Form

Submitted on Tuesday, July 6, 2021 - 12:55pm Submitted by anonymous user: 172.70.126.23 Submitted values are:

==Committee Requested==

Committee: Emergency & Community Services Committee

==Requestor Information==

Name of Individual: Steve Bunn

Name of Organization:

Contact Number:

Email Address:

Mailing Address:

Reason(s) for delegation request:

As a history professor with Ryerson University and as a resident of the city of Hamilton I would like to request permission to address the Emergency and Community Services Committee meeting of July 8th 2021 in order to provide some important historical context that is directly relevant to the city's pending decision on the removal (or not) of the statue of Sir John A. MacDonald in downtown Hamilton. Specifically, I have noted with worry the way in which an argument seems to have emerged that does not contest MacDonald's legacy as an architect of genocide but claims instead that his "great works" as the "father of Canada" should mitigate his genocidal atrocities. In particular, local historian [redacted] has recently used his authority on the subject to make public statements attributing "unbelievable" accomplishments to John A. MacDonald and claiming that he was "a true hero" that "made us all," and for these reasons his statue should remain in Gore Park.

I would like to contest such claims in the hopes that having a clear understanding of John A. MacDonald's historical legacy will help the Emergency and Community Services Committee avoid making an ill-informed decision on this motion. The "good side" of John A. MacDonald's legacy being disseminated by

[redacted] and others is rife with factual errors, errors of interpretation, errors of accuracy and most significantly severe errors of omission. This "history" that [redacted] has stated he is planning to use to "educate" Hamilton City Council is in my professional opinion much more akin to propaganda than education. The binary narrative of a "good" and "bad"

John A. MacDonald is not an accurate rendering of our history. I feel it is extremely important for the Emergency and Community

Services Committee to understand this aspect of the debate. Even if we completely ignore MacDonald's genocidal actions, even if we act like they never occurred, the remainder of his legacy – the purported "good side" of his leadership – was in reality nothing of the sort. Canada was born in spite of John A. MacDonald, not because of him. The veneration heaped upon MacDonald is not a product of his actual "accomplishments" but is instead a product of manufactured memory and politically-motivated commemoration left over from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Commemoration and history are two very different things, and it is critical that the Emergency and Community Services Committee understands this difference if they plan on rendering an informed vote on this issue. A decision to keep Hamilton's John A. MacDonald statue on the basis of our first Prime Minister's "good side" as filtered through the hagiography being offered by _____ and others would be a decision based on easily-documented factual error. Any Councillor voting to keep this statue because of John A. MacDonald's "good side" will need to defend this decision before, during and after the next election and beyond, and for this reason also it should be made clear to the Committee that the "good side" argument is historically indefensible. This is not an attempt to put forth my own opinion on the statue debate. This is an attempt to make sure that the democratic representatives that I voted for to make these difficult decisions are basing those choices on historical fact rather than idiosyncratic fantasy. Thank you very much for your time.

Will you be requesting funds from the City? No

Will you be submitting a formal presentation? Yes

The results of this submission may be viewed at:
<https://www.hamilton.ca/node/286/submission/521491>