

Pilon, Janet

Subject: J.A. Macdonald Statue

From: Randy Kay

Sent: July 8, 2021 9:26 AM

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EMERGENCY & COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

July 8, 2021

Every day that goes by, the moribund statue of Sir John A Macdonald invites protest and pain. Every day that goes by without recognition from city leaders of the harm it causes to indigenous and other groups invites more danger and division.

Some groups have gone openly, some stealthily, to make a political point about the poisoned legacy of MacDonald: one of colonialism, racism and genocide.

We've seen the statue draped in cloth to cover it, then a group of young men, literally wrapped in a flag, try to take it down, then at least two incidents of the statue being sprayed with paint and slogans.

In the absence of leadership, people will contend.

These forces will rally at this site because symbols mean something. Statues suggest permanence and invite reverence. The state players know this with uniforms, rituals, maces, thrones, ceremonial chains and other trappings of power.

Such symbols act as a thin veneer that provides cover for power. It is supposed to make us believe they are in control, and that we are outside of this select cult of "leaders."

The city quickly removes paint from the statue. This surface-level reaction is just another example of a lack of vision. Does anyone think that this issue is going to fade away? It's not. You can't remove the stain of history when it comes to crimes against humanity.

Those interested in preserving history will find the truth with a quick search online, not at the Gore Park location of the statue.

Other jurisdictions are removing statues of racists and murderers. MacDonald's likeness is going to come down, one way or another. Queen Victoria too. It's not if, but when.

If the Royal Bank, even the bloody Royal Bank, can withdraw from Canada Day celebrations, why are our municipal leaders maintaining a status quo of uncritical acceptance of these symbols of colonial expansion built on theft, lies and violence?

I urge the council to do the right thing, to get out bravely and quickly to remove this statue and others that only serve to glorify a past that can stand the test of time while causing unmistakable ongoing harm to large segments of the population.

Thank you,

Randy Kay