

From: Briar Hopley
Sent: Saturday, April 30, 2022 4:15 PM
To: clerk@hamilton.ca
Subject: Calling on Hamilton's Mayor & Councillors to Remove SJAM Statue

Dear Hamilton Clerk,

Dear City Councillors,

I, _____, mourn along with the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc First Nation and all Indigenous families and communities in light of the recent discovery in Kamloops, British Columbia of the remains of 215 children at the former Kamloops Residential School. This represents merely the latest revelation from the violent, deadly, and traumatic colonial past and present of what we now refer to as "Canada".

Conversations are being held across this country as to what should be done now, even as we collectively brace for what many sadly acknowledge as the grim reality that further such discoveries will undoubtedly be made in the future. This appears to already be starting in Brandon, Manitoba and Lestock, Saskatchewan. There will be others.

One conversation that continuously resurfaces is the one relating to statues and monuments that function primarily to preserve the false patriotic and righteous legacy of the architects of Canada's genocide against Indigenous peoples. This discussion is occurring here in Hamilton, with the City set to decide this issue later this summer, and opinions already being aired in the media.

I stand in solidarity with all Indigenous community members who are re-traumatized each time they are forced to look upon the likeness of the perpetrators of these heinous crimes against them and their communities. Welcoming and accepting societies do not commemorate and idolize individuals who have intentionally and unashamedly committed unspeakable atrocities.

I call upon the City of Hamilton to expedite their process and make the right choice to remove the statue of John A. MacDonald from Gore Park immediately. The tide has turned on this issue, the public has become disillusioned with the myths that have been woven around these historical figures and now see who and what they truly were. These monuments elevate and celebrate nothing other than the ideals of colonialism, genocide, and white supremacy, just as their historical champions did.

Failure to take leadership on this issue would be a disservice to the community, and to those most directly affected by these issues. It would fuel anger, distrust, and disillusionment with the municipal process, and encourage resort to alternative methods of rectifying the issue. Indigenous communities have made themselves clear on this, and the best leadership is proactive, not reactive.

To be clear, this is only a start and is the absolute bare minimum response to these recent events. All cities in Canada must engage in a process of decolonization, anti-racism, and anti-oppression. We are on stolen land and operate within colonial institutions and a society permeated with white supremacy. The time for action is now.

Sincerely,

Sincerely,
Briar Hopley