Winnipeg | Indigenous Relations
Relations avec les Autochtones

JOURNEY OF RECONCILIATION
LES CHEMINS DE LA RÉCONCILIATION

WELCOMING WINNIPEG – Request Summary

NOTE: Request summaries are compiled by Indigenous Relations employees to ensure that identifiable, or potentially identifiable, third-party personal information or information of a sensitive nature is excluded from what is made publicly available. Indigenous Relations permits viewing of the full original submission by appointment through 311.

Request ID: 2021-005

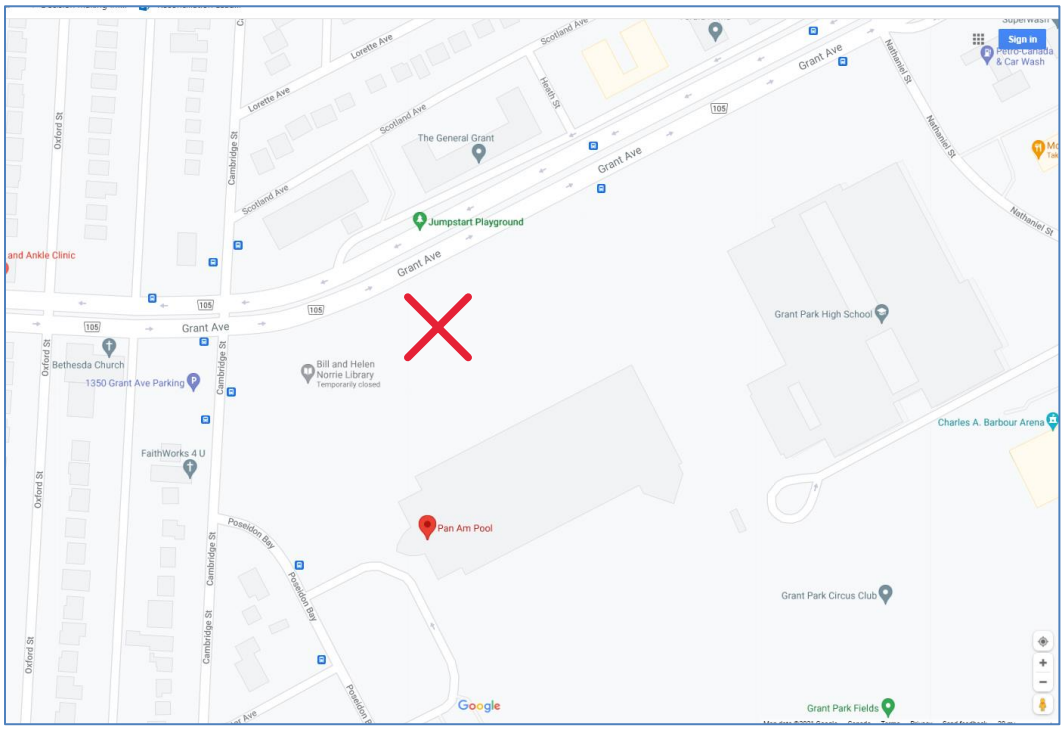
Name of Request: Renaming Pan Am Pool Park

Address: Grant Avenue and Cambridge Street

Demonstrated Community Support:

- Petition submitted: No. Due to COVID due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and physical distancing precautions, the City has temporarily suspended this requirement
- Letters of support provided: No formal letters provided however support has been shared through a variety of meetings between the City and Rooster Town families.

Project Details:



The existing name does not cause harm to the Indigenous community. The proposed name (Rooster Town Park) is to recognize the Indigenous community that was settled in this area before they were forcibly removed from their homes.

How does this renaming contribute to a 'Welcoming Winnipeg', as defined in the policy and what kind of evidence/research can be provided to support this state

Ultimately achieves a balanced perspective/story

Alignment to City of Winnipeg goals: Welcoming Winnipeg Reconciling Our History Policy: to resolve the absence of Indigenous perspectives, experiences, and contributions in the stories remembered and commemorated, and the City of Winnipeg's commitment to the journey of reconciliation.

Honours Indigenous peoples as the original peoples of this land and the contemporary context in which Indigenous peoples continue to have relationship with this land

Raising awareness of the Rooster Town (aka Pakan Town) story and changing the narrative by sharing the families' experiences to address myths and stereotypes related to the community, and the City's past role and future response to their forced displacement. The City is committed to working with families, Accord Partners and various departments to change the narrative through; Acknowledgment, Commemoration, and Education. (https://winnipeg.ca/indigenous/reconciliation/roosterTown.stm)

Promotes Indigenous reclamation of land, space and/or language

In the late 1800s, after being pushed from their Red River homes, six Metis families settled on land in what is now the Grant Park area. By 1911, the community had grown to 42 families and was known as Rooster Town. In 1951, the City began encouraging suburban development in the area. To remove Rooster Town families, the City and media reported false stories rooted in racist stereotypes that were harmful and humiliating to the community. In 1960, the last few houses were bulldozed and destroyed.

In partnership with the Rooster Town Families, Manitoba Metis Federation and the City of Winnipeg, coordination of a Rooster Town family reunion or picnic at the Bill and Helen Norrie Library on August 29 2021.

Rooster Town Families would like to have an unveiling of the new park name at this event. This is one important step in acknowledging the history and provides opportunity for education.

Offers an educational opportunity

The City is working with Rooster Town families to ensure accurate depictions of Rooster Town in (e.g. City websites and literature (such as information and resource guides), coordinate central location on city webpages to share the Rooster Town story, explore oral story telling by families and descendants at City libraries, (when public health orders permit), and provide language learning resources and programs in the Bill and Helen Norrie Library, and other library branches.

Invite/host Rooster Town families and descendants to attend and speak at key events, to change the narrative, such as Accord Gatherings.

The City of Winnipeg through the Welcoming Winnipeg process for place names and/or historical markers to name/rename city assets to honour of Rooster Town story, peoples and their legacy.

There are plans to have Rooster Town Tours in the future.

Supports telling the complete history of Winnipeg

Location of park is located on the land where the community of Rooster Town was located prior to being forcibly removed. The Bill and Helen Norrie Library located on this land offers patrons the history of Rooster Town from working with the families on the creation of their story to add as a permanent educational opportunity within the library.

Does this site have historical significance to the Indigenous community? Research Support:

Yes.

The Metis community was established in 1901 and were forcibly removed from their homes by 1960. Information about the community can be found here:

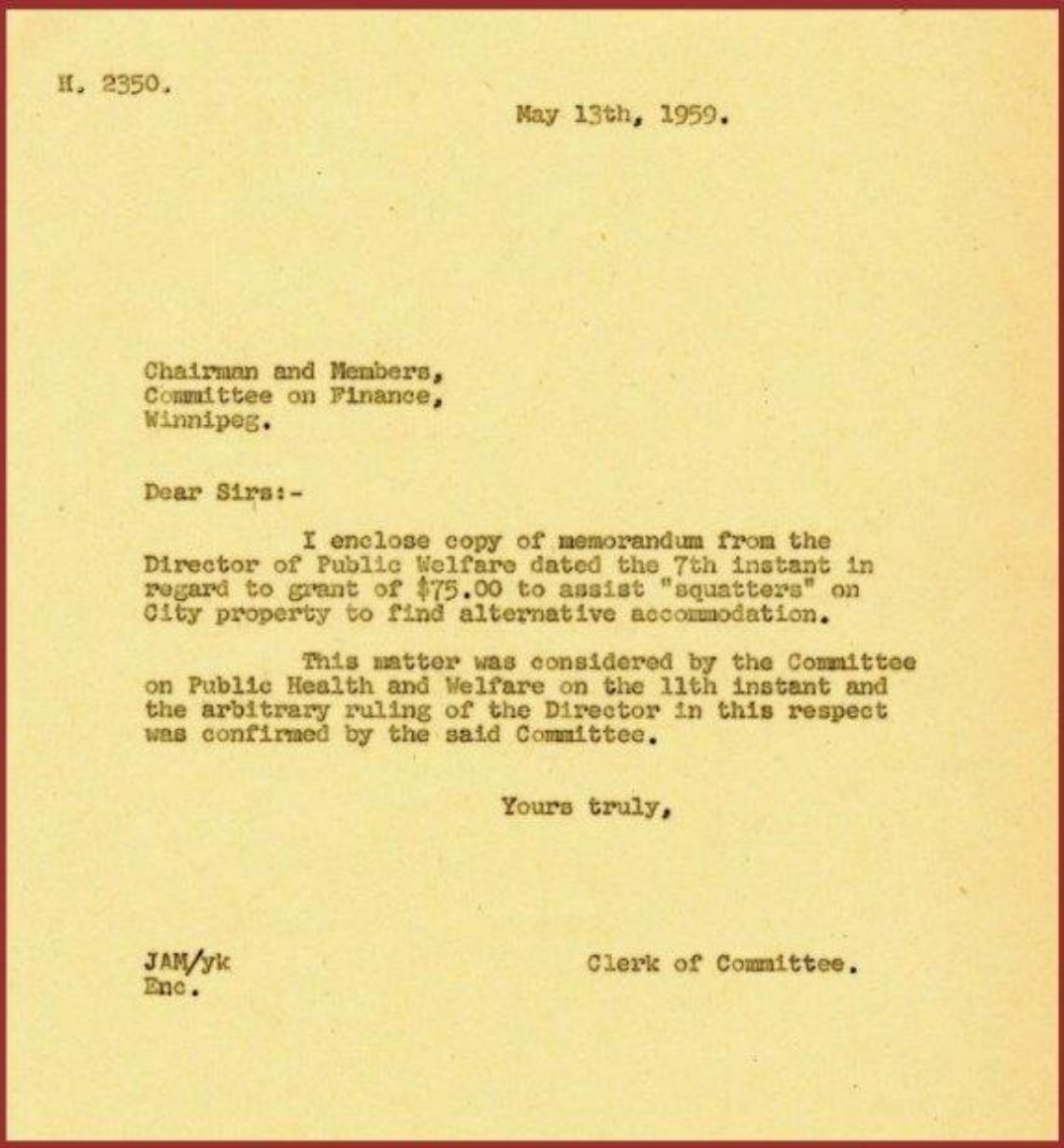
https://winnipeg.ca/indigenous/reconciliation/roosterTown.stm

Removal of squatters from land sold to Winnipeg School Division No. 1.
File F. 1451(253).

417 - 8. The City has sold to the Winnipeg School Division No. 1 certain property located on Grant Avenue and Nathaniel Street for a school site and work on the school has commenced on the easterly portion of the land. At the present time there are fourteen squatters on this property and the School Division has requested the City to have them vacate the land in order that the school grounds may be put in proper shape by June 1st of this year. Your Committee has considered this matter and as the major factor involved is the expense involved in moving these families off the land, recommends that the City Solicitor be authorized to offer the sum of $75.00 to each family to remove themselves voluntarily by May 31st, 1959, or the sum of $50.00 after May 31st, and before June 30th, 1959; and that any families remaining after the last mentioned date be ejected under Court proceedings. Your Committee also recommends that should any of the families concerned wish to move their homes to other lands (provided such lands are not owned by the City) they be permitted to do so at their own expense upon complying with the applicable City by-laws. Any houses not so removed will be burned or demolished by the School Division. Your Committee further recommends that the City and the Winnipeg School Division No. 1 each assume one-half of the cost of the expenses incurred by the City in the above connection, including the payments for voluntary removal.

"ROOSTER TOWN"

Rooster Town



H. 2350.

May 13th, 1959.

Chairman and Members,
Committee on Finance,
Winnipeg.

Dear Sirs:-

I enclose copy of memorandum from the Director of Public Welfare dated the 7th instant in regard to grant of $75.00 to assist "squatters" on City property to find alternative accommodation.

This matter was considered by the Committee on Public Health and Welfare on the 11th instant and the arbitrary ruling of the Director in this respect was confirmed by the said Committee.

Yours truly,

JAM/yk
Enc.

Clerk of Committee.

Located on the present site of the Grant Park Mall and surrounding area, Rooster Town was a predominantly Métis community that was within City limits but separate in many ways. The community did not have the same level of infrastructure as other neighbourhoods, and homes were regarded as shanties. In the late fifties, people in Rooster Town were pushed off the land to make way for development. This letter refers to some of these residents as "squatters" and documents the role played by city officials in clearing the land for development. Negative portrayals of this community should be challenged. There are records that show former residents owned land and paid taxes.

If this application is not supported, what would the negative impact on the community be? (If applicable)

Not recognizing the city errored in removing this Metis community would have a negative impact to the former Indigenous residents of Roostertown. They not only took

my grandparent's land and house from them but they took their HOME from them. They never had a true home after being removed from their home and land!!

Any additional information the applicant would like the CCM to consider in making their recommendation.

Not applicable.