Executive Policy Committee

City of Winnipeg

October 17, 2023

Re: Item No. 5, Renaming a Portion of Bishop Grandin to Edward Schreyer Parkway South

Dear Executive Policy Committee,

As the Welcoming Winnipeg Initiative Committee of Community Members ("CCM") with the Indigenous Relations Division ("IRD"), we were chosen to represent diverse and informed views of Winnipeggers concerned with the naming of public spaces. We advocate for representation and the rightful engagement/consultation of Indigenous peoples. The CCM process "incorporates a community-led input proactively utilizing a lens of inclusion and balance that will further mobilize the Journey of Reconciliation." (Executive Policy Committee, 2020)

Item 5, regarding the partial Renaming of Bishop Grandin Boulevard, should be, from here on and forever, referred to as *Abinoji Mikinah*. We were dismayed and disheartened to learn of a motion to undermine the re-naming of *Abinojii Mikinah*, a project to which the CCM, Elders working with IRD, and various other Indigenous community members have devoted considerable time, heart, and city resources.

To remind you, *Abinojii* means "children" in Anishinaabemowin, and this name was a result of an Elders Council made up of IRS survivors and intergenerational survivors who poured their heart and soul into this sensitive renaming process. Taking away a portion of this significance would show colossal disrespect to them and the children who did not make it home. In the IRS system and throughout history, Indigenous people have had to fight for their rights, representation, culture, language, and voice. And this 'fight' still occurs today and continues with this letter.

Additionally, *Mikinah* means "road" and symbolizes the journey of finding those children who did not make it home and the journey toward reclamation. This motion was put forward by two Counselors who pushed aside this 'journey' to chip away at Indigenous representation.

Additionally, let this point not go unnoticed: out of over a thousand streets in Winnipeg, they chose this road that represents the voice of IRS survivors and submitted this motion on September 29th, a day before the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, where the City of Winnipeg continuously put forward promises of working together in a good way, which is a portion of the statement made by Mayor Scott Gillingham to a room full of survivors and their families at the Every Child Matters Pow wow. Furthermore, we call on the EPC and Council to kill this motion and any future motions to change the name of any part of *Abinojii Mikinah, Awasisak Meskanow*, and *Taapweewin Way*, and commit to a just and meaningful relationship with the Elders of IRD and the CCM.

Sincerely,

Welcoming Winnipeg Committee of Community Members

Reanna Merasty, Chair
Mabel Horton, Co-Chair
Dr. Mary LeMaitre
Honoure Black
Albert Mcleod
Dr. Erin Millions
Raymond Sokalski
Angelina Pelletier