

Submission – Michael Bagamery

Expropriation and Rezoning of Lemay Forest (Item 1 - Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development – Notice of Motion)

Submitted: Wed, 03/26/2025 - 11:31

Delegation information

Committee you want to address

Council

Agenda item you want to address (number and title)

Item No. 1: Expropriation and Rezoning of Lemay Forest

Support or oppose recommendations

I support the recommendations

Submit comments in writing

I support the expropriation of the Lemay Forest. It is one of the last intact river bottom forests in the City of Winnipeg, with great historic, cultural, and environmental significance.

Within the Lemay Forest is the abandoned Asile Cemetery of unmarked graves. There are over 3000 children of varying ancestry but overwhelmingly of low socioeconomic status buried here.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Calls to Action 71-75 emphasize the need for the protection of Indigenous burial sites, reconciliation, and preserving sacred spaces like those in Lemay Forest.

These Calls urge the government to collaborate with Indigenous communities to preserve and protect burial sites as part of the healing process.

Additionally, some 700 impoverished mothers who died without support are buried in the Lemay Forest. It is not acceptable for a government to disturb the resting places of any persons, whether they were Indigenous or whether they or their recent ancestors came from another part of the world.

In addition to its cultural significance, Lemay Forest's trees and ecosystems provide vital environmental benefits to our city, including air quality regulation and wildlife habitat preservation. It is a key part of the lungs of Winnipeg. Diverse old-growth forests like Lemay Forest provide a much more complex, diverse range of services for all the species that use them, relative to young or monocultural forests: more habitats, more food sources, greater potentiality for carbon capture, and so on.

It is a nesting place for migratory birds, songbirds, birds of prey, and keystone species such as the protected pileated woodpecker (many species being protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty). It is also a wildlife corridor providing habitat and safe access for many wild species, importantly reptiles and amphibians.

Just 8 per cent of Winnipeg's land is covered by green space. Intact ecosystems provide for other species and for us in numerous ways. By comparison, 68 per cent of Oslo is green, as are 50 per cent of Vienna,

and almost half each of Sydney, Singapore, and Edinburgh. It would be far more sensible to build on a site that is already developed, especially by repurposing one or more buildings that have been abandoned.

We must ensure this sacred site and its ecosystems are safeguarded for future generations.

Public engagement (optional)

I consent to being contacted to participate in potential public engagement related to this matter.

Yes