

Esteemed members of City Council,

I am writing to express my concern around the protection of Lemay Forest.

This area is home to a healthy, natural environment which has great benefits to human life. Being in nature reduces stress and promotes good health, trees clean our air, cool our temperatures. They provide homes for many different species, and it is important species seen in Lemay Forest are protected under the Migratory Bird Convention and the Canadian Endangered Species Act. Maintaining this biodiversity is more critical than ever for humanity's future given the challenge that we are facing with increasing severe weather events and extremes. Once lost, all these benefits cannot be restored.

Importantly, the Lemay Forest area was the site of Asile Richtot from 1904-1948, an orphanage and young mother's home. The archives of the Société historique de St Boniface have documentation from a survey done in the 1970s that shows the location of a cemetery where children who died during their time at the orphanage were buried, including Métis and possibly Indigenous children whose mothers came from residential school. There is a claim that the cemetery was closed, and the graves moved in the 1950s, however the Catholic diocese of St Boniface, responsible for the orphanage and its cemetery, confirms that they have no record of the de-consecration of the site at Lemay Forest. St Boniface cemetery has no record that the graves were moved from Lemay Forest to the St Boniface cemetery. So further consultation with the community and expert archeologists is needed before the site is disturbed by development. Careful and rigorous examination to gain a better understanding of how many children or other people are buried, where they are buried, and how they lived is our duty to preserve history and advance reconciliation.

For these reasons I urge you to vote for the expropriation of this land from Memaz Incorporated, to keep it protected from development for the benefit of current and future citizens of Winnipeg.

Thank you

Marianne Clipsham

Winnipeg