

March 25, 2025

City of Winnipeg Council Meeting / March 27, 2025
510 Main Street
Winnipeg, MB
R3B 1B9

ATT: Comment on Standing Policy Committee of Property and Development meeting of March 06, 2025
Item #2: Lemay Forest

I will try to keep this letter brief. The attempt to be short of words does not represent a lack of passion in the content. The land now commonly referred to as The Lemay Forest must be preserved as a Historical Site as a way to preserve and respect the history that has taken place on this land.

A listen to the words of Dr. Shelley Sweeney is enough that debate on building on this land should not be considered, let alone even be up for discussion. Dr. Sweeney has stated that potentially over 3000 bodies, mostly, but not limited to infants, were laid to rest on these lands. Some in the designated cemetery, but many outside of that zone, and potentially throughout the forest. She states that the identification of children's remains requires the knowledge and skillset of specialized archeologists. Bones do not start to form in newborns until they are approximately 8 weeks old. Then, the further development is a slow process that occurs right up until adulthood. Therefore, the bony remains of a child are difficult to identify, and it is my opinion, that potential work crews would not even realize the horror of what they were digging up if this land were to be disturbed. Dr. Sweeney states that infant teeth are so small that they take specialized skill to isolate and identify. It is horrific to think building on this land supersedes respecting and memorializing the children of the Asile Ritchot Orphanage that lost their lives during a terrible time in Canadian history.

The City of Winnipeg has pledged at various levels to preserve and plant trees for the sake of our environment. Allowing a functional eco system that The Lemay Forest represents, with it's approximately 14,000 trees, to be destroyed is a slap to what the City of Winnipeg representatives stated they stand for.

This land owner and planner have proven over and over that they do not want to preserve this important eco system. They have been offered significant funds to save the lands, but they have refused. As such, it is time that the City of Winnipeg to step in and do the right thing. It is now time that I request The City of Winnipeg to acquire, assemble or expropriate this land from Mazyar Yahyapour. The people of the City of Winnipeg deserve to have access to this historic land in the form of a protected public park and memorial site.

To the full council of The City of Winnipeg, it is time to do the right thing and preserve this land.

Sincerely,
Gerald Tole