

Submission – Lucien Gagnon

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

**Submitted:** Tue, 03/25/2025 - 20:26

**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

**Comments**

The sacredness, historical and ecological aspects of the Lemay Forest need your protection. There is so much history buried in this land so do not allow it to be concreted over. This land was once owned by Louis Riel's main advisor, Noel Ritchot. He was also the lead of three delegates sent to Ottawa to negotiate the list of 20 provisions drafted by the Louis Riel led provisional government. These negotiated provisions are what led our province to enter confederation as the 5th province of Canada.

On the west end of the forest, Noel Ritchot started an Orphanage which he later donated to the Sisters of Mercy. They named the Orphanage Asile Ritchot. It sheltered individuals without proper supports, including orphans, single expectant girls and women, as well as single mothers. An analysis of the admission registry reported a total of 3,383 deaths associated with the institution. The location of the burials is not recorded as many were buried in mass graves and outside of the cemetery boundaries further east into the forest. The land is a burial ground and very sacred. For decades Indigenous groups have held sacred ceremonies and sweat lodges in the forest, allowing the spirits of the deceased to rest in peace. You need to recognize Truth and Reconciliation and help with the healing process. Every child matters!

The Lemay Forest is also very special. You can't simply plant trees to get what this forest gives. It takes a century or so of caring for nature to create a place like this. Cutting down trees when the property is landlocked and un-developable is not only immoral but a threat to climate resilience and sustainability. This should not be allowed to happen. It is time to start the expropriation process as the owner has already rejected generous offers for the land. I ask council to vote in favor of expropriation.