

Submission – Ken Harasym

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

Submitted: Wed, 03/26/2025 - 10:15

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 checkbox

Submit comments in writing

Comments

The Council of Canadians Winnipeg chapter urges you to approve the expropriation of the Lemay Forest in recognition of its deep historical and cultural significance.

The forest is home to the abandoned Asile Ritchot Cemetery, where 3383 children tragically died between 1904 and 1948, with many buried in unmarked graves. Preserving the entire forest out of respect for these graves is a moral imperative.

I urge you to consider the lessons we've learned from the tragic and ongoing struggle surrounding the search for the remains of missing and murdered Indigenous women (MMIW), particularly the controversy involving the Prairie Green Landfill. In that case, the previous provincial government, under Premier Heather Stefanson, was initially slow to commit to funding the search for the remains of Indigenous women who were believed to be buried in that landfill. Their hesitation was criticized as a failure to act swiftly and with the respect and care that the families of those women deserved.

Similarly, we now face a critical moment where the City of Winnipeg has the opportunity to make a choice. Will we take action to properly honour the graves of these orphaned children, or will we repeat the mistakes of neglect and inaction that have plagued Indigenous families for years? The failure to act in a timely and respectful manner when it comes to the land where these children are buried could be seen as a continuation of the historical indifference shown to marginalized communities.

Furthermore, the Lemay Forest has long served as an important site for First Nations and Métis ceremonies, and it is essential that this tradition continues. The cultural and spiritual importance of the land cannot be understated, and its preservation ensures that future generations can honour these practices.

As citizens concerned with corporate greed and the increasing influence of developers, we must support efforts to protect spaces like the Lemay Forest. It is a clear example of how we can stand against forces that prioritize profit over the well-being of our communities and our shared heritage. In a time when corporate interests threaten the preservation of our natural and cultural landmarks, it is crucial that we take action to protect public spaces like the Lemay Forest for the people of Winnipeg.

By supporting the expropriation of this land, we have the chance to correct a past wrong and send a strong message that the city is committed to justice, remembrance, and healing. I encourage you to consider how this decision reflects our collective values, and how it can help us move forward with integrity, learning from past mistakes.

For these reasons, we urge the City of Winnipeg to immediately expropriate all of the privately held lands known as the Lemay Forest, work to designate the Lemay Forest as a heritage site and to take the necessary steps to ensure it becomes a protected public park.

Public engagement (optional)

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

Yes