



# The Statues

## The Compelling Case For Keeping Them



A submission to Wilmot Township Council  
from **Robert Roth**  
pursuant to a council meeting  
scheduled for July 13, 2020

**A NOTE TO \VILMOT TO\VNSHIP COUNCILLORS  
ABOUT THE AUTHOR OF THIS SUBMISSION**

I am a retired journalist and educator and a direct descendent of the Roths who were pioneer settlers of the Oxford/Perth/Kitchener area in the early 1800s. I, therefore, have a deep and abiding interest in our region and our history.

I was the founding editor of the Stratford City Gazette prior to its sale to the Toronto Star, and later beoame editor of Inside Stratford-Perth. I hold a Master's Degree in Journalism from Carleton University and briefly served as a sessional lecturer there in its Department of Journalism and Communication. Subsequently, I was a lecturer in Algoma University's Department of Political Science and a lecturer in Laurier University's Department of Journalism. I was founding publisher of Media Magazine, the official publication of the Canadian Association of Journalists. I have been elected to public office as a municipal councillordn two Ontario municipalities, namely the Town of Aurora where I served as councillor and in the Township of Charlottenburgh where I served as councillor and deputy reeve. I currently reside in my home town of Stratford.

## **PROLOGUE**

The global anti-racism movement that is justifiably sweeping the world has ignited a fierce controversy over whether statues of certain historical figures should remain in public spaces.

All people of goodwill would agree that any manifestations of racism that continue to plague our society should be eradicated. However, in many cases, the attack on statues puts this movement for racial equality on a direct collision course with other principles of liberal democracy that just as earnestly deserve our attention and reverence.

When the Township of Wilmot meets on July 13 to determine the future of the statue of Sir John A. Macdonald and, indeed, perhaps the future of the "Prime Ministers Path" project in general, it will set an important precedent that will be watched from coast to coast, if not beyond. It is an awesome responsibility that Wilmot councillors face and it is hoped that this submission will contribute in some helpful way to those deliberations.

## **BACKGROUND**

As noted on the Township's website, the Prime Ministers Path project is a long-term project designed to educate people about the foundation and development of our country since its inception at Confederation in 1867. The path is the creative concept of Createscape Waterloo Region, a registered charity that funds projects to advance education, arts and culture in Waterloo Region. The pathway currently contains life-size bronze statues of five Canadian prime ministers, including its first, Sir. John A. Macdonald. Eventually 22 sculptures of our prime ministers - created by renowned Canadian artists - will flank the walking trail that winds through parkland beside Castle Kilbride, a museum and national historic site in Baden.

In recent weeks, there have been calls to remove the statue of Sir John A. Macdonald because of racist comments he made during his career and racist actions he took against First Nations people. These concerns are legitimate and honourable and the citizens who have raised them should be commended for the civic duty they have displayed. However, their position that the removal of the statue of Sir John A. Macdonald is the best way to recognize and atone for these historical injustices is misguided.

This debate is about more than statues. It is about how we interpret history and how, in a democratic society, we make decisions. Unfortunately, there are those on the extreme fringes of the anti-racism movement whose zealous behaviour is undermining some of our most fundamental principles, such as free speech. These principles - and the case for keeping all of the statues - are outlined in the pages ahead.

## **WHAT DO STATUES REPRESENT?**

The controversy over statues revolves around what they represent and it is the position of this submission that they are not meant to represent only the worst characteristics of the person who is the subject of the artwork.

In the case of Sir John A. Macdonald, for example, we do not erect a statue to him to dignify racism. We do it because - whatever his sordid shortcomings - he was one of the fathers of confederation. He set into motion a chain of events that created the nation we have today. And, dare I say it, the nation we love today. We are not a perfect nation yet, to be sure, but we are one of the best places on earth to call home. We are a nation that subscribes to a long list of noble principles: freedom of speech, freedom of religion, separation of church and state, equality of genders, equality under the law, freedom of association, health care as a right, and a host of other virtues that are not present in many parts of the world. And while, like virtually every other nation, we do not always live up to our ideals, we try to move consistently in that direction - a fact that is underscored by the very debate about racism and historical accuracy now taking place.

## **THE STATUES AND THE THREAT TO FREE SPEECH**

The debate over racism and statues cannot be understood in isolation from the other democratic principles that are inextricably intertwined with it. Unfortunately, a substantial part of the anti-racism movement has been taken over by the loudest, most extreme voices. These louder voices have created an atmosphere of intimidation that scuttles attempts for reasoned discussion. There is a growing, uncompromising attitude developing in some quarters that does not want debate. It demands an end to discourse and immediate acquiescence to an uncompromising position. Basically, this unyielding stand insists: You are either with us or you are against us. You are a good person - like me - or a bad person who disagrees with me.

A sign that one protester recently hung on the Sir John A. Macdonald statue is a clear manifestation of this intolerance of alternative opinions. While it flashed by the television screen quickly, it did not escape my notice. It was worded to the effect: "If you remove this sign, you're a racist." In effect, such a proclamation declares that there can be no other, possible, honourable position one can hold on the question of taking down the statue other than the self-righteous stance being taken by the protester.

Such extremism has become pervasive enough in our country and around the world to warrant our concern. People who do not share the views of these inflexible hard-liners are immediately centred out for public rebuke, pilloried on social media and often threatened with job loss. At the extreme end of this spectrum of intransigence are those who somehow feel they have the moral right to topple statues or pour red paint on them. We have seen far too much of this vandalism lately, world-wide. What is most disturbing is

that these militant tactics of give-no-quarter psychological warfare are working. The recent apology that RCMP Commissioner Brenda Lucki felt compelled to give is a case in point.

During an interview in June, the commissioner was asked about racism in the RCMP. If there is a tape available, I invite any open-minded people to view it - as I have. Her response was thoughtful and reasoned. In the interview, the commissioner conceded immediately that there was racism within the RCMP, but she was reluctant to use the word "systemic" because she had diligently sought out several reference books and found that the term could have various definitions - which, of course, is simply true. Mind you, she did not rule out "systemic racism" although some media incorrectly reported that she had actually categorically denied its existence. Not true. But her thoughtful ambivalence about the term "systemic" was enough to enrage the extremists who immediately assailed her in social media and called for her resignation. This hysterical, over-the-top reaction was, nevertheless, deemed newsworthy enough to justify its inclusion in repeated coast-to-coast Canadian newscasts. Caught in the eye of this heinous hurricane of invective-and with her job threatened-the commissioner recanted two days later and "admitted" that the racism in the RCMP is "systemic." Frankly, she had said nothing than warranted an apology.

This kind of pernicious bullying forces moderate voices to withdraw from public discourse for fear of being demonized and/or driven out of their jobs. As a result of such intimidation, we have come to a point today where virtually every politician who wishes to hold his or her seat has now proclaimed that every institution in the nation is "systemically" racist. In other words, our country is rotten to the core.

No thoughtful person would deny that racism persists in our country and around the globe. But people can legitimately differ in opinion over the nature, depth and manifestations of racism, and more importantly whether those manifestations are a dominant, conscious, or knowingly tolerated part of our nation's collective psyche or rather the leftover vestiges of historical injustices that continue to be practised by an unenlightened minority. The crux of the problem in the current debate is not that people disagree on this point. It is that they are not allowed to disagree. Period.

There has even been the suggestion that Canada Day no longer be celebrated but rather turned into a national "day of mourning." This preposterous notion was also deemed worthy of national media attention. But such self-flagellation is no more effective today as a cleansing technique than it was when practised by fanatical Christians during the dark ages. Beating on oneself does not purify the soul, it only injures the body. Most of us are happy and proud to be Canadians and the antidote to racism is not to tum ourselves into a nation of self-loathers. There is much to be celebrated in our Canada and there is also much that needs to come under tougher historical scrutiny. But there can be no denying that Canada only exists today because Sir John A. Macdonald and his associates

planted the seed. It is the planting of that seed- and its growth into the Canada we have today - that we acknowledge when we celebrate Canada Day and when we erect a statue of our first prime minister. We do not erect it to honour the vile side of his personal behaviours. Those behaviours are, indeed, ripe for reproach - especially because there are segments of our society who have not benefitted equally from the birth and growth of our nation - but there is a much better way of engaging in that reproach than taking down the statue, which is tantamount to trying to erase, rather than rewrite, history.

Throughout history, there have always been those who think they have the right to determine for others what is absolute truth and what is falsehood. But ever since the collective wisdom of the day once declared that the earth was flat, we have justifiably been wary of leaving any "truth" devoid of perpetual scrutiny. History has taught us that today's heresy is often tomorrow's conventional wisdom. It is that lesson of history that compels us to not only allow, but to encourage, full, free and unfettered speech.

Undoubtedly, such openness will necessarily result in some "false" ideas being promulgated. But even false ideas can perform a vital function in a democratic society. They rouse us to vigilance, shake us from our bed of complacency and provide us with the opportunity to revisit our "truths" and either change them or re-inforce them. For example, every time someone denies the Holocaust, scores of people rise up to challenge that position, thereby putting a spotlight on the truth once again, making it even stronger. In short, it is the clash of ideas that gives society its intellectual vigour. Free speech - as painful as it may seem at some times to some individuals - is the ultimate bulwark against bigotry and totalitarianism. One of the central characteristics of tyrannical regimes is their brutal stifling of alternative viewpoints and their insistence on being the sole arbiters of truth.

Those who would cripple free speech through psychological intimidation reveal their true nature - arrogant, elitist and profoundly anti-democratic.

This is why the task before Wilmot Township councillors is so crucial. It will set a precedent that may literally be watched around the world, about who we are and how we respond to the distemper of our times - with courage or capitulation.

(The threat to free speech has become so widespread and concerning that only last Tuesday, July 7, 150 intellectuals from around the globe released an "open letter" to the world in an attempt to halt this attack on liberal democracy. Excerpts from this letter appear in Appendix A of this document.)

## **RESPECTING OUR ARTISTIC TREASURES**

There is another factor that should be considered before a decision is made on the statutes. They are, in and of themselves, great works of art created by some of Canada's

outstanding sculptors. As such they become historical artifacts in their own right, regardless of the persons depicted. A truly civilized country should think carefully before removing or destroying works of art because that, too, has been a hallmark of tyrannies throughout history - the latest illustration being the destruction of centuries-old Buddhist statues and other historic sites in the Middle East by **ISIS** because these monuments did not reflect the group's bizarre and bloody interpretation of Islam.

In the case of the Prime Ministers Path, it would be quite possible to find dubious deeds performed by other prime ministers in the collection - Mackenzie King's refusal to let a boatload of Jews fleeing Nazi German land in Canada being just one case in point. The folly of trying to pluck out the "bad" leaders from the "good" leaders would simply undermine the entire creative concept of presenting a full picture of who has led the country since its inception. Moreover, it would put council in the precarious position of having to decide which prime ministers were "good" and which were "bad" and, in effect, which should be erased from history by removing them from the chain of events the sculptures are meant to portray.

### **THE PITFALL OF HISTORICAL ABSOLUTENESS**

Those who scour the eons of time in search of perfection- especially perfect people - are doomed to everlasting disappointment. If we remove the statue of Macdonald, why stop there?

For example, Martin Luther, the founder of the Protestant Reformation, was also a vicious racist, an unrepentant anti-Semite who, among other vile epistles, penned the venomous treatise, "The Jews and Their Lies." Should we tear down all of the Lutheran churches, or at least scrub out the name of Luther wherever it is found? Or can we still appreciate the many progressive reforms made in the church in the wake of the Reformation he sparked?

Similarly, should we immediately round up all of the Ford automobiles and take them to the junk yard? Henry Ford was a rabid racist who carried on an active anti-Jewish campaign during the 1920s, publishing a newspaper that blamed Jews for a host of perceived evils in the world. Hitler actually praised Ford's writings and in 1938 awarded him the "Grand Cross of the Gennan Eagle." Surely it is offensive when Ford's "mobile statues," brandishing the Ford name, are driven into Jewish neighbourhoods throughout the land. Or, despite Ford's contemptible behaviour regarding race, can we still acknowledge his contribution to the automobile industry and the industrialization of North America in general? These are the complexities that should always be open for debate.

## USING THE STATUES TO COMBAT RACISM

The Township of Wilmot's website sums up the real purpose of the statues quite eloquently when it notes that "subtle symbols and icons cleverly hidden and embedded in each sculpture will encourage visitors to explore the triumphs, tragedies and tribulations of Canada's Prime Ministers and the eras in which they lived."

Indeed, the purpose of the statues is not to glorify anyone, let alone the worst aspects of their persona. It is to invite people to discuss not only the good things about Canada but also the "tragedies and tribulations" that took place during our nation building.

By far, the best way to encourage a renewed understanding of our history is by keeping the statues on the Prime Ministers Path and using them as props to stimulate a much overdue debate and more critical examination of our past. Ironically, the statue of Sir John A. Macdonald possesses the ideal symbolism for stimulating this debate. The two chairs that sit beneath his countenance signify that there are two sides to every story. The chairs beckon visitors to sit down in the opposing chairs and debate those sides - the good and the bad.

As the articles contained on the Township's website aptly demonstrate, the municipality has no hesitation in spotlighting the "tragedies" that are part of our heritage. Perhaps, though, more needs to be done. Without question, more information should be placed with the statues that will shed a brighter light on the dark corners of our nation's past and the lasting, negative legacy it has left for some segments of our society, particularly our First Nations compatriots. New plaques, signs and stimulating recordings could greatly contribute to an understanding of our history, including the unwholesome aspects of racism, sexism and the other historical malevolencies that have, frankly, been an integral part of the development of every nation on earth. We are not unique in that regard nor, I would argue, are we the worst case example.

On a final note regarding statues, let us not forget that even the most horrific monuments can be turned to a good purpose. We did not tear down Auschwitz after World War Two. We kept it and used it as the most powerful educational tool imaginable for exposing the evils of genocide.

As for Sir John A. Macdonald? Let him stand there and finally be held accountable.



## APPENDIX A

Below is a small excerpt of an "open letter" signed and released on July 7 by 150 intellectuals from around the world expressing concern over the attack on free speech in our society. The letter will be published in the October issue of Harper's Magazine. It is also now available on the Harper's website. Harper's welcomes letters of response at [letters@harpers.org](mailto:letters@harpers.org).

Signatories include writers J.K. Rowling, Salman Rushdie and Margaret Atwood, outstanding academic thinkers such as Noam Chomsky, feminist activist Gloria Steinem, jazz great Wynton Marsalis, chess grandmaster Garry Kasparov, American Federation of Teachers President Randi Weingarten, Canadian-born political pundit David Frum and former federal Liberal Party leader and Harvard University professor Michael Ignatieff. Although these free thinkers are found on various points of the political spectrum - left wing, right wing and centre - they are so united in their concern over the threat to free speech that they joined together to release this letter of warning.

"The free exchange of information and ideas, the lifeblood of a liberal society, is daily becoming more constricted. While we have come to expect this on the radical right, censoriousness is also spreading more widely in our culture: an intolerance of opposing views, a vogue for public shaming and ostracism, and the tendency to dissolve complex policy issues in a blinding moral certainty.... Editors are fired for running controversial pieces; books are withdrawn for alleged inauthenticity; journalists are barred from writing on certain topics; professors are investigated for quoting works of literature in class; a researcher is fired for circulating a peer-reviewed academic study; and the heads of organizations are ousted for what are sometimes just clumsy mistakes. Whatever the arguments around each particular incident, the result has been to steadily narrow the boundaries of what can be said without the threat of reprisal. We are already paying the price in greater risk aversion among writers, artists, and journalists who fear for their livelihoods if they depart from the consensus, or even lack sufficient zeal in agreement."

Mr Mayor, Councillors, Ladies and Gentlemen.

I cannot speak with the authority of the prior presentations on the accomplishments, warts and all, of Sir John A MacDonald.

I can however state that he was the courageous force which brought together of disparate groups to form the country we know as Canada.

As I listen to, watch and read the news from around the world, as I walk through the Arrival's Door at Toronto International Airport, I often say to myself "Thank Goodness for Canada. Warts and all."

Yes, Sir John, as a great man, had greater failings than I can sometimes comprehend. But that is my problem not his.

Should you feel that it is desirable to move his image away from the glare of Main Street, might I suggest a quiet, contemplative corner in what is your delightful park.

There we could take advantage of the intention of the sculptor and accept the invitation of an old man (warts of red paint and all) to sit down on the proffered chairs and talk about our differences.

Maybe then we might have the opportunity, and responsibility, to accomplish something great. If we have the courage.

Thank you  
Paul A Smith, July 10, 2020.

## Township of Wilmot

---

**From:** noreply@esolutionsgroup.ca on behalf of Fay Wilson [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 30, 2020 11:46 PM  
**To:** Township of Wilmot  
**Subject:** John A MacDonald Statue

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open any attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

I have recently read in the newspaper that the John A MacDonald statue had been vandalized and that there were calls to take the statue down. I asked the Council to please consider keeping the statue up as a remembrance of Canada's first Prime Minister. MacDonald should not just be remembered for his wrongdoing in the past which were at the time considered right, he gave Canadians a chance at our own country that could've very easily become a part of the United States. We cannot have the mob mentality destroy our great Canadian history and bully the majority of Canadians who want to keep our culture and statues. There is space put up other statues that signify and remember great Canadians and their works towards our society. Please keep the statue up in the county.

Origin: <https://www.wilmot.ca/en/living-here/prime-ministers-path.aspx>

This email was sent to you by Fay Wilson [REDACTED] through <https://www.wilmot.ca/>.

## Township of Wilmot

---

**From:** noreply@esolutionsgroup.ca on behalf of Marilyn Albin [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, June 29, 2020 7:00 PM  
**To:** Township of Wilmot  
**Subject:** Monuments

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open any attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

I know I am an outsider, however feel we should leave the monuments, but necessary to include the negativity that trails the individual.

Good Luck with you decisions, Thanks for listening

Origin: <https://www.wilmot.ca/en/township-office/Township-Office.aspx>

This email was sent to you by Marilyn Albin [REDACTED] through <https://www.wilmot.ca/>.

## Township of Wilmot

---

**From:** noreply@esolutionsgroup.ca on behalf of Lisa Parent  
[REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, June 29, 2020 6:26 PM  
**To:** Township of Wilmot  
**Subject:** All historic sculptures should stay in place

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open any attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Leave the sculptures in place as history is history. However, if applicable plaques should be placed with them regarding any role they might have played in history. Also everyone needs to start thinking that all lives matter. Only the human shell is different. We are all spiritually the same.

Origin: <https://www.wilmot.ca/Modules/contact/search.aspx?s=rKJmm1wnArkgHd8LKy6WMweQuAleQuAI>

This email was sent to you by Lisa Parent [REDACTED] through <https://www.wilmot.ca/>.

RECEIVED

JUL 1 0 2

Dear Fellow Citizens,

I would like to address a few words concerning the Prime Ministers Path; full disclosure, I am a retired teacher of English, most of my career dedicated to Waterloo-Oxford, however, for three years Lou and I taught at the DND Senior School in Soest, West Germany as it was called before the Berlin Wall was breached by democratic forces. I should also say that Jim Rodger, a former colleague at W-0 and a personal friend of ours for many years is to be applauded as is the rest of the committee for the determination and devotion to the concept and realization of The Prime Ministers Path in Wilmot Township.

For me, history is not "just one damn thing after another" but a plane of developing understanding. At my own high school graduation many years ago, our guest speaker, Stan Hendra, a former history teacher at our school, told us to look at the breadth of history; that is, the succession of dates and events, but also to look at the depth of history to realize its overall impact.

And so, I come to the current issues.

Democracy is our precious birthright; the right to speak and the right to oppose are applicable to all ideas, private and public. The right of all private citizens to change their opinions is also a given. Opinions based on fact, research, thinking and personal philosophy are also implicit in encouraging citizens, young and old, to develop a world view.

But to the current situation of the statue, (statues) at Castle Kilbride. Once completed, it will show the continu-

um of the leaders of Canada from Confederation in 1867 to the present, bearing in mind that a current prime minister becomes a former prime minister as the future becomes the past. Theoretically, The Prime Ministers Path will never be complete!

Our country is replete with experts in a whole array of subject matters. Learning the details, the in-depth knowledge of a particular subject calls for individual study and research. If I want to know more about certain prime ministers, I read their biographies. Experts can be consulted on a wide range of subjects. John English can teach me about our democratic institutions and Karl Koenig can teach me about sewing on both modern and antique sewing machines.

I have two more points to make.

The artistic concept of the statue in question, as spoken by the sculptor, Ruth Abernethy, is that these leaders are not on pedestals. Her concept of Prime Minister, Lester B. Pearson certainly attests to that. No wonder his shoes are off when you observe his "hammer toes!" It has often been said the heroes of one kind or another are elevated personages, notwithstanding that whatever the fame, the statues have "clay feet."

My last point concerns the statue of Sir John A. MacDonald. It is a wonderful likeness of him, his government and his times. The opposing views concerning his worth are not revealed by a bronze depiction; bring these points of view to public attention, certainly, but also recognize the significance and contribution of one of the main leaders of

Confederation. There he is in Livingston Park at Castle Kilbride. The overall concept is to present the man with the addition of two chairs in front of him. These chairs invite dialogue, conversation and, of course, debate.

As a supporter of The Prime Ministers Path and as a private citizen with no political power, except my right to vote, I would make myself available to occupy one of those chairs if a fellow citizen would sit in the other one for a conversation.

Please call me if this proposal appeals to your sense of democracy.

John A. Cull

July 9, 2020



**Dennis and Patricia Mighton**

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
CANADA

Email [REDACTED]

Wilmot Township Council  
60 Snyder's Road West  
Baden ON N3A 1A1

July 9, 2020

TO: Wilmot Township Mayor Armstrong  
Wilmot Township Councillors Fisher, Gerber, Gordijk, Hallman and Pfenning

CC: Dawn Mittelholtz, Municipal Clerk  
Tracey Murray, Deputy Clerk

FROM: Dennis and Pat Mighton

RE: Our statement of opposition to the motion "to pause any further investment and expansion of the Prime Ministers Path immediately until we consult with First Nations groups and Friendship Centres in Waterloo Region and any other impacted groups until a sufficient, respectful and transparent consultation process is completed with accountability ..."

**Introduction**

*"The Township of Wilmot is honoured to be the proud home for The Prime Ministers Path by Createscape Waterloo Region. This Path invites you to stroll through Canada's history since Confederation."* So begins the description of the Prime Ministers Path on the Township's website.

Under the heading Educational Resource Key Concepts the website description continues: *"We wish to provide the opportunity to learn and assess how our Prime Ministers and their decisions have influenced us, economically, socially and culturally. We aspire to encourage learning and discussion that provides insight into each of the Prime Ministers and how their personal lives and approaches shaped their political careers and Canadian life."*

It appears that we have been caught off guard. As we stroll through our history we don't always like what we are learning. For some segments of our population the influence of our Prime Ministers has been far from positive. For many indigenous people the impact has been devastating. Some non-indigenous people are learning of this for the first time. We are appalled by some of the actions of some our political leaders and ashamed of our own lack of knowledge.

so the journey has begun. We are willing to listen and to learn. To pause the installation of additional statues along the Prime Ministers Path, or to possibly consider removing any of the statues, would not, in our opinion, further the learning process. It could, in fact, bring it to a halt.

The following is a two-part statement. Part 1: Why we oppose the motion. Part 2: Why we support the installation of the Prime Ministers Path in Wilmot Township on the grounds of our Township Administration Office and Castle Kilbride.

### **Part 1: Why we oppose the motion**

#### **a) The statues are a gift to the people of Wilmot.**

The Prime Ministers Path is a gift from the charitable organization Createscape Waterloo Region to the people of Wilmot, to be shared with the people of Canada and beyond. Createscape initiated this project, a collection of statues of Canadian Prime Ministers representing the history of Canada, when one of its founders realized that no such collection existed anywhere in Canada. We, along with many others, were delighted when Wilmot Township Council accepted Createscape's generous offer to locate the statues in Baden on the grounds of our township office and Castle Kilbride. As we understand it the statues, once installed, become the property of the Township to maintain and promote. The benefits to the Township are enormous; the cost minimal.

Createscape has worked diligently for several years to raise funds privately to have the statues (eventually to include all of our Prime Ministers) created and installed. They have recently built up momentum. To put a hold on the project at this time would be highly unfair to the hard-working members of this very generous and well-intentioned organization.

It would also be unfair to the people of Wilmot on whose behalf Council accepted this gift. We have attended the installation ceremonies and witnessed the palpable excitement and enthusiasm of our fellow Wilmot residents as the statues were unveiled.

Putting a hold on the project after welcoming and accepting this gift and allowing Createscape to proceed this far would also send the wrong message to anyone considering a future gift of any kind to Wilmot Township.

#### **b) The motion is vaguely worded.**

How many First Nations groups and Friendship Centres are there in Waterloo Region? Is the plan to consult them all, or only those based in Wilmot Township? We did not see any such organization listed in the 2020 Spring and

Summer Wilmot Recreation Guide, but perhaps we missed it. How will you identify who is represented by any of these organizations and which ones you will consult? How will you identify "any other impacted groups"? Are these groups who may have been negatively or positively impacted by any of our Prime Ministers, or only those in place so far, or only by Sir John A. Macdonald? Will you read the history books and scour the nation looking for them, or restrict your search to Wilmot residents? By what criteria will you measure that "a sufficient, respectful and transparent consultation process" has been "completed with accountability"? Will there be a defined timeline?

Such a vaguely worded motion leaves the project very much up in the air. It is unrealistic and unfair to expect that the organizers will be able, or will even want to pick up from where they are now after this consultation process has been completed.

**c) Purpose of the motion?**

Is the purpose of the motion to allow time to sanitize the project so that no statue will be in place if any actions of that particular Prime Minister during his or her tenure caused pain to any individual or identifiable group? That would defeat the purpose of the project. We cannot learn from history if we present only selected portions of it that are determined to have had a positive impact on all segments of society. That would present a biased and inaccurate view of our history.

Is the purpose of the motion to address the concerns of the indigenous people who were so negatively impacted by the residential school system? Putting a hold on this project does not seem like an effective means of addressing those concerns either in the immediate or longer term. Nor will it increase awareness or discussion among non-indigenous people.

Or is there some other purpose that may or may not be achieved by the acceptance of this motion?

**d) Setting the wrong precedent.**

Acceptance of this motion would set a precedent. Any individual or group who feel they have been hurt by the actions of any of our Prime Ministers could ask for and expect to have the project put on hold until they have been consulted.

**e) Pausing the expansion of the Prime Ministers Path appears to yield to the concerns of the minority, without listening to the views of the majority.**

Media accounts to date have focused primarily on the reaction of local indigenous people to the damage done to indigenous society by Sir John A. Macdonald through the establishment of the residential school system. There is no denying the harm done. Macdonald did not act alone, however, in

establishing this system. Nor was this his only achievement, negative or positive, during his long term in office. It is one part of a much larger picture. In part, it is the presence of his statue that has prompted a conversation and increased awareness of this reprehensible system. It also appears to be the catalyst that prompted this motion.

Macdonald was the first Canadian Prime Minister. To remove his statue would diminish the integrity of the project. Perhaps it would satisfy the desire of this local minority, or make them feel that they had achieved a moral victory, or erased a shameful chapter of our history. Would it lead to understanding and healing? We doubt it. Would it undo the wrongs or right the injustices of the past? Absolutely not. In fact, removal of any of the statues would eliminate a potential stimulus for sharing and learning from our past. It would likely result in resentment among many, and would divide rather than mend our community.

Pausing the installation of statues along the Prime Ministers Path while one group is consulted about the actions of one Prime Minister is not a reasonable or responsible step for Council to take.

**f) Council responsibility.**

You, the current elected leaders of this community, have an opportunity and a responsibility to help guide us through this controversy and direct the conversation that will lead us to a better future. Yielding to pressure from a vocal minority is not the leadership that is required at this time.

If this motion is passed it will cause enormous, perhaps irreparable, damage to this project. We, the people of Wilmot, will miss out on an opportunity to showcase our township and Canadian history to visitors from around the world and to school children right here in our own backyard. That would be a shame.

**Part 2: Why we support the installation of the Prime Ministers Path in Wilmot Township on the grounds of our Township Administration Office and Castle Kilbride.**

**a) A Canadian Conversation.**

The Sir John A. Macdonald statue is appropriately named *A Canadian Conversation*. Let us accept the invitation to take a seat and have a conversation with a neighbour whose life experience and view of the world are vastly different from our own. Perhaps a relative newcomer from Syria, Bosnia, Bangladesh or VietNam. Perhaps an indigenous person whose ancestors have been here for many generations. Perhaps a farmer - the seventh generation of her family to work the land in Wilmot. A conversation involves listening. If we listen carefully we have much to learn. Together let us examine the hidden symbols on the statue, and imagine what Sir John might say if we invited him to join our

conversation. Maybe none of us would like what he has to say. We might agree that he would be more appropriately situated toward the back of the grounds rather than prominently placed at the entrance. But if his statue were gone this conversation might not take place.

Let us move onto Kim Campbell or Lester Pearson. The statues are inanimate. They don't care if we like them or their actions or their policies. Our responses and reactions to them reflect our personal history and experience. The statues allow us to project our emotions, put our own family stories into context, contemplate how we arrived at our place in this society, and most importantly, begin to make change if we realize change is needed.

**b) A valuable art collection.**

The statues are works of art, created by talented Canadian artists including Wilmot's own Ruth Abernethy. The statues belong to all of us. They enhance the aesthetic beauty and are, for many, a source of pride in our community. To deface and disfigure these public works of art is a criminal act.

Modern Christians view the disciple Judas Iscariot as one who betrayed Jesus, definitely not a person to be esteemed or admired. Are Christians likely to rush to Milan to throw paint in the face of Judas in Leonardo da Vinci's famous painting of The Last Supper because they did not like his actions? One would hope not. Regardless of one's religious beliefs The Last Supper is a respected work of art. Damaging it would be criminal. Similarly, defacing a public statue of a Canadian leader because his or her actions were unpopular or caused harm is totally unacceptable.

**c. Economic stimulus.**

The statues attract tourists to Baden. As the number of statues increases, so too will the number of tourists. Visitors spend money at restaurants, coffee shops, ice cream stands, Bed and Breakfast establishments, farm markets, local stores, etc., not only in Baden but throughout the Township. As we begin to recover from the devastating economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic we need all the economic stimulus we can muster.

**d. Support of 100 Women Who Care, Wilmot.**

In 2019 the local organization *100 Women Who Care, Wilmot* selected the Prime Ministers Path as the charity of choice at one of its quarterly meetings. Their donation of approximately \$10,000 has been put toward the development of educational resources for the Prime Ministers Path. This is an indication of grass-roots community support for this project.

**e. An educational resource.**

For many of us high school history consisted of a series of names and dates to be memorized for the exam. In direct contrast to those old text book lessons, the Prime Ministers Path helps to bring history to life for today's students. The hidden 'Easter eggs' encourage hands-on exploration. The Township website provides useful learning guides and tools for teachers and students. The lessons are not merely about the Prime Ministers themselves, but about the era in which they served. No other such venue exists in all of Canada. What a shame it would be to put it on hold, and perhaps lose it altogether.

We sometimes hear criticism that these are a 'bunch of old white guys' (okay, except for one). Well, yes. That is a part of the conversation. Why was that? What does it say about the period in which they lived? Is it the future we want? If not, how will we change it? It's a good thing Kim Campbell is already in place to show young women that they can aspire to this role. The iconic photo of our three newly-elected women councillors with Ms Campbell tells a story in itself.

Castle Kilbride was designated many years ago as a National Historic Site and is a popular tourist destination. The Prime Ministers Path adds a complementary learning opportunity to this existing resource.

As long-time, actively engaged residents of Wilmot Township we urge you to defeat this motion and allow this project to continue. The statues help us tell our stories. The stories are a catalyst for conversation. Constructive conversation may help us move forward in harmony.

## **Tracey Murray**

**From:** Kristy Sawatzky [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, July 13, 2020 9:01 AM  
**To:** clerks  
**Subject:** Support for the Removal of Sir John A MacDonald Statue

---

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open any attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

---

Good Morning,

I am writing to support the removal of the Sir John A MacDonald statue in Baden. I currently live in Blandford-Blenheim township however I lived in Wilmot Township for over 20 years and still consider it home. I am of German ancestry. I have recently graduated as a social worker and a large emphasis of my studies was on Indigenous peoples and relationships. I learned a lot about myself, and about Indigenous culture and peoples during my studies. As a result, I have had a huge shift in my perception of Indigenous peoples and now have a better understanding of the many levels of harm caused to Indigenous people over many generations. Unfortunately, it is ongoing today. The complete removal of the SJAM statue would be one small step that we as a community could take towards repairing the relationship and empathizing with an oppressed people group. We cannot repair the harm and we cannot correct the problem but we can do this one small thing to show that we are concerned about and sensitive towards a minority population that is still suffering. I believe that we need to do a better job of educating our community about the cultural genocide that was perpetrated under the leadership of SJAM. Residential schools were a large part, however there were so many other broken promises, stolen land, methods of assimilation, and deliberate killing and oppressing of Indigenous peoples during SJAM's terms as Prime Minister. As a nation and as a community we need to be informed that to erect a statue to a leader who represents this dark history is incredibly insensitive and continues to oppress those whose families and ancestors were/are victims to this abuse. We cannot lay blame solely on SJAM's shoulders, however, commemorating him with a statue is wrong.

Thank you for taking the time to read this email and for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Kristy Sawatzky  
Resident of Blandford-Blenheim Township

**Tracey Murray**

**From:** John 'Beetle' Bailey [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Sunday, July 12, 2020 10:49 PM  
**To:** Les Armstrong; Jennifer Pfenning; Jeff Gerber; Angie Hallman; Barry Fisher; Cheryl Gordijk; clerks  
**Subject:** Prime Ministers' Path - Motion to pause

---

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open any attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

---

I am writing to indicate my **STRONG** support for Councillor Hallman's motion to pause the Prime Ministers' Path project, until proper public consultation and dialogue with Indigenous representatives have been done.

Please include my statement of support in official correspondence about this matter.

Regards,  
JB

[REDACTED] - mobile



**Tracey Murray**

---

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Sunday, July 12, 2020 9:55 PM  
**To:** clerks  
**Subject:** Pause the Project

---

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open any attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

---

**I would like my email and name removed from the public record. Thank you.**

I am writing to request the pausing of the Prime Ministers Path. This project never took into account the views of its citizens and is not a true representation of the Wilmot community. The voices of the People of Colour and Indigenous are needed in consultation with council going forward.

## Tracey Murray

---

**From:** Gelayel Samii [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, July 13, 2020 3:23 AM  
**To:** Angie Hallman; Jennifer Pfenning; Jeff Gerber; Barry Fisher; Cheryl Gordijk; Les Armstrong; clerks  
**Subject:** SJAM Statue

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open any attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

## To Wilmot Township,

My name is Gelayel Samii. I'm currently a student at Conestoga College studying Architecture Construction Engineering technology. I have a BA from Wilfrid Laurier. I've been living in Kitchener-Waterloo for 10+ years. I have a passion for protecting the public and I hope to one day be a chief building official.

I make it my duty to support people within and around the surrounding communities. I like to stay informed and if I can ever offer my assistance-I undoubtedly will.

Now that you know a tiny bit about me, I'd like to address my concerns over the Sir John A. MacDonald statue in Baden, Ontario.

Over the last few weeks I have been silently following the events and keeping up-to-date in regards to the overwhelming amount of news.

I fear a lack of empathy for some of the townsfolk of Baden.

As Canadians, we remind ourselves that it is vital that we never forget the injustices of our past. Yet, here is another looming figure standing proudly on stolen land. Another reminder that we not only celebrate, but glorify him. It is an uncomfortable memento that history is not written by the victors, but by the oppressors.

It saddens me to know that a statue of a man who died years ago has more importance than people living and breathing next to you today.

An effort must be made to understand their suffering. Let me remind you, Sir John A. Macdonald is no longer alive. Yet, there are people rallying around this statue, all the while smothering the voice of the down-trodden.

I never thought I would be so disheartened by watching someone clean a cold piece of stone. It is their ignorance that inhibits them from understanding the plight of their fellow neighbours.

Alas, I am not writing to convince the township to initiate a civil debate amongst these people or a cordial discussion. The time for that has come to pass. As the days go on, you are allowing the tension to fester and you are inviting hate groups into Baden. These are highly emotional people that cannot be reasoned with. No longer are you dealing with people who stand by the statue, but now they stand with him.

I implore you to consider removing the infamous statue and to truly speak to your community before erecting another controversial figure in our backyard.

If people want to talk about historical Canadian figures, let us talk about Terry Fox, Anne Christine Innis Dagg, Oscar Peterson, Colonel Chris Hadfield, etc. Unfortunately, this is not a debate about Canadians worthy of praise. This is a deep seeded desire to continually show superiority by reminding some of their oppression. Tell me, what better way to constantly remind them than a life-size statue of the man who initiated residential schools.

Imagine if everyone who committed genocide had a statue in Baden. What a terrible place it would be.

Maybe a question to ask yourselves is what you are doing to build a relationship with Indigenous Peoples in your locality?

Remember, we are Canadians. We don't build walls, we build longer tables.

In other words, I'm pleading with you to stop constructing statues and to redirect your efforts to inclusivity, understanding and reconciliation.

Thank you,  
- Gelayel Samii

(If you so wish, you may include my email statement of support in your official correspondence)

Sent from my iPhone

---

**Conestoga Official Disclaimer:** This email and any attachments are for the sole use of the intended recipients and may be privileged or confidential. Any distribution, printing or other use by anyone else is prohibited. If you are not an intended recipient, please contact the sender immediately, and permanently delete this email and attachments.

## Tracey Murray

---

**From:** Fiona Batte [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Sunday, July 12, 2020 10:10 PM  
**To:** Angie Hallman; Jennifer Pfenning; Jeff Gerber; Barry Fisher; Cheryl Gordijk; clerks  
**Subject:** Support for Motion to pause Prime Ministers Path project

---

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open any attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

---

To: Wilmot Township Council

The purpose of this email is to express my support for the motion to momentarily pause the Prime Ministers Path project to conduct a full and transparent discussion on the merits of this initiative in our community. Public input on this project is vital to ensuring we are representing all members in the community.

I am comfortable with this email being formally added to the correspondence in the minutes.

Regards,  
Fiona Batte

## Tracey Murray

---

**From:** Crafty Hooker [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Sunday, July 12, 2020 9:32 PM  
**To:** Angie Hallman; Jennifer Pfenning; Jeff Gerber; Barry Fisher; Cheryl Gordijk  
**Cc:** Les Armstrong; clerks  
**Subject:** John A MacDonald and the Prime Minister's Path project

---

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open any attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

---

Good evening.

I am writing to have my voice heard, and added to the group of people who are calling for the removal of the John A MacDonald statue outside Castle Kilbride in Baden and the cancellation of the prime minister's path project.

I am not writing to negate the possible educational value, but to affirm the voices of indigenous people in our community who are calling out the harm this project causes.

I want to officially add my voice to the record in asking council to put forth a motion that will halt this project and ultimately remove it to a more appropriate location where it can be viewed at the choosing of those who wish to see it, rather than honouring a man who institutionalized the genocide of a people & their culture in favour of removing the "savage" - no one should have to face that pain publically day after day. I do not feel it is my place or council's to question the legitimacy of anyone else's pain - "when someone says you hurt them, you don't get to decide that you didn't" - Louis C.K.

I also want to see addressed why the mayor and sitting council at the time thought it was fit to install this project that was known to be problematic in other areas in our region here without public consultation.

Please do include this letter in any and all official records

With respect,  
Candice Gray

[REDACTED]  
New Hamburg, ON

## Tracey Murray

---

**From:** Christian Henderson Barna [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, July 13, 2020 12:06 AM  
**To:** Angie Hallman; Jennifer Pfenning; Jeff Gerber; Barry Fisher; Cheryl Gordijk; Les Armstrong; clerks  
**Subject:** John A MacDonald Statue Removal

---

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open any attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

---

Hello,

I am emailing you to request that the John A MacDonald statue be removed. John A MacDonald is one of the key figures and perpetrators of the genocide of the indigenous peoples of Turtle Island. He absolutely should not be celebrated or memorialised in a positive way, as this statue does. John A MacDonald was a notoriously violent and racist man who cared for no one but the rich white man. By celebrating him in the form of a public statue, you make it clear that this behaviour is OK, or at least forgivable if one does something memorable. Is this really the message you want to communicate? The only path to justice for all in this country is to decolonise, and this is an easy first step. Please remove the John A MacDonald statue so that it is clear that our region is willing to take the first steps towards standing with indigenous peoples and against racism.

Sincerely,  
Christian Barna  
[REDACTED]  
Waterloo, ON  
[REDACTED]

## **Tracey Murray**

**From:** Ashley Schuitema [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Sunday, July 12, 2020 9:56 PM  
**To:** Barry Fisher  
**Cc:** Angie Hallman; Jennifer Pfenning; Jeff Gerber; Cheryl Gordijk; Les Armstrong; clerks  
**Subject:** Support for the removal of the John A. Macdonald statue

---

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open any attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

---

Dear Mr. Fisher,

My name is Ashley and I'm a Baden resident. I grew up in Baden but I've been away for a number of years. In the summer of 2019, I made the decision to move back to Baden with my family. It was a difficult decision. I had serious concerns about raising my children in Baden. I was worried about the lack of diversity and long standing issues of racism and homophobia that I knew existed from growing up here. My spouse and I ultimately decided it was the right move for our family and we moved to Baden, despite my apprehensions. Since returning I have been encouraged by some of the meaningful conversations taking place at the moment around the calls for the resignation of Mayor Armstrong and the removal of the Sir John A. Macdonald statue. I have also been deeply saddened by some of the views that members of our community still strongly hold.

I only really learned about residential schools when I was in my second year of law school. I was embarrassed to be that far into my 20s and my formal education and to really be just learning about it. The truths and the trauma shared by residential school survivors are stories I will never forget. The lasting legacy of the cultural genocide and the inter-generational trauma inflicted on Indigenous communities as a result of residential schools is something that I think, as Canadians, we should feel deeply ashamed of. The roots of this shame are directly tied to our first Prime Minister, Sir John A. Macdonald.

I know there is a lot of debate around the meaning of a statue. For me, a statue is meant to honour someone and remind the community of the great things that person has done. I do not think Sir John A. Macdonald is worthy of a statue in our community. I also think it's impossible to merely add a plaque to try to "educate" the public on the horrific abuses of the residential school system that Macdonald is responsible for, never mind the various other tragedies that he imposed upon our First Nations during his tenure as Prime Minister.

It is of the utmost importance during this time of Reconciliation that we listen to the Indigenous members of our community. Community space is meant to be a place where all can feel welcome, without being forced to think about or triggered into re-living traumatic memories. This is particularly so if this community space is right in front of the Township building where members that want to be engaged in meetings or serve on committees would need to attend. If Indigenous members of our community are asking to have the statue removed, then I think this is the very least we can do.

I will be watching tomorrow with the hope that Council will take this important opportunity to meaningfully engage in Reconciliation and take steps to heal, apologize, and do the right thing by removing the statue.

Please feel free to use my statement of support in any official correspondence regarding tomorrow's meeting.

Sincerely,





## Tracey Murray

---

**From:** Aaron Fewkes [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Sunday, July 12, 2020 5:15 PM  
**To:** Jeff Gerber; Les Armstrong; Angie Hallman; barry.fischer@wilmot.ca; Cheryl Gordijk; clerks; Jennifer Pfenning  
**Subject:** Prime Ministers' Path

---

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open any attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

---

To be clear: I, and the Fewkes family, SUPPORT Angie Hallman's motion to PAUSE the Prime Ministers' Path.

- Aaron Fewkes

## Tracey Murray

**From:** Shoukia van Beek [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Sunday, July 12, 2020 8:45 PM  
**To:** Angie Hallman; Jennifer Pfenning; Jeff Gerber; Barry Fisher; Cheryl Gordijk; Les Armstrong; clerks  
**Cc:** Karen Redman  
**Subject:** Statue

---

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open any attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

---

Good evening,

I am emailing in regards to the Sir John A Macdonald statue and prime minister's pathway. My email may be used as a statement of support and included in the official correspondence tomorrow, but I wish to remain anonymous. Please remove any personal information, such as my name and email.

I want the Sir John A Macdonald statue to be removed along with the remainder of the path present and scheduled for construction.

I watched the council meeting when Mayor Armstrong read a prepared apology statement regarding his social media posting. Apologizing for causing hurt and inflicting trauma is not the same as believing one's actions and behaviours perpetuate deep-seated racism. There has been no indication of the latter. Not only has Mayor Armstrong not articulated any further concrete or measurable steps, but he's actively stalled many simple issues - 1) inviting Indigenous peoples for "consultation" instead of *listening* to what they have already said 2) refusing to denounce the white supremacist groups in the areas (i.e. Urban Infidels) 3) won't commit to removing the SJAM statue 4) won't resign 5) releasing a statement after a closed meeting saying "any further actions will be taken by the mayor himself" meaning there are no mechanisms of accountability.

Mayor Armstrong has apologized and says he needs to make amends, but it is not good enough to "move forward" and allow the damage to remain. A real apology means you have to do the right thing - even if it makes you uncomfortable, or some don't like it. Undo the damage. Mayor Armstrong has missed the mark of understanding why folks should not want to memorialize a historical figure who caused such violence. Do you think you could, in good faith, put up a statue of Sir John A Macdonald in a major city today? Or would it be seen, and most likely intended, as a culture war sting at Indigenous peoples and "SJW" s? If that's the case, then haven't we come to a consensus on what Sir John A Macdonald is about?

I understand that this is an ongoing discussion, but I reject that this issue comes down to a difference of opinion. Racism, both in symbolic and material form, is not a matter up for debate. It is appalling that the statue remains when it has been made clear that its presence signals that our community values an art display (that no one was even consulted about) over the lives of Indigenous peoples in our community - this is evident in how many people currently feel entitled and emboldened to share their racist views publically.

What I have taken away from the proceedings over the past couple weeks is that: this local government has a deep moral investment in Indigenous genocide and erasure by purposefully obfuscating and ignoring the violence present in this display of settler-colonialism and that you're choosing to remain willfully ignorant around the political, legal, and cultural claims Indigenous people have to this land. Please, by all means, feel free to prove me wrong.

Sincerely,

**Shoukia van Beek**

## **Tracey Murray**

**From:** Rory Farnan [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Sunday, July 12, 2020 9:28 PM  
**To:** Angie Hallman; Cheryl Gordijk; Barry Fisher; Jeff Gerber; Jenn.pfenning@wilmot.ca; Les Armstrong; clerks  
**Cc:** Dawn Mittelholtz; Sandy Jackson  
**Subject:** Pause the PM Path

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open any attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

I am writing in support of Councillor Hallman's motion to pause the PM path for the short term. It would be prudent to hit the pause button on this project. Surely the last several weeks in front of Castle Kilbride has shown that?

In addition to holding transparent and open public consultation on how we move forward, there is a public safety issue, and an issue with Township liability, that needs to be addressed.

I am neither for or against the project at this time, although I had originally thought it was beneficial. That said, there is a divide taking place in our community, on the footsteps of our council chambers, and it needs to be addressed.

Thanks,  
Rory

Sent from my iPhone on the Rogers network.

## Tracey Murray

---

**From:** noreply@esolutionsgroup.ca on behalf of Robert Roth [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Sunday, July 12, 2020 10:37 PM  
**To:** Tracey Murray  
**Subject:** July 13 meeting and Prime Ministers Path  
**Attachments:** Resume Wilmot Township, Robert Roth3629a31 b-04cb-4f5f-9a78-75e6c1abedaO.pdf

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open any attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

To mayor and council:

In the event the Township plans to set up an advisory committee to investigate the future of the Prime Ministers Path, I would be interested in serving on such a body. I believe my deep pioneer roots in the area, combined with my expertise in communications and education could be of some benefit as the township tackles this important matter. As my attached resume will attest, I have substantial experience in community and stakeholder outreach and have served on several government and non-governmental Boards. As a former municipal councillor, myself, I can fully appreciate what council is going through as it tries to resolve several conflicting positions on the future of the Prime Ministers Path. If I can be of service on any advisory body, please do not hesitate to contact me at my email address or at [REDACTED]

Sincerely  
Robert Roth

Origin: <https://www.wilmot.ca/en/township-office/Appear-as-a-Delegation-at-Council.aspx>

This email was sent to you by Robert Roth<[REDACTED]> through <https://www.wilmot.ca/>.

## Tracey Murray

---

**From:** Murray Huber [REDACTED] >  
**Sent:** Sunday, July 12, 2020 5:11 PM  
**To:** John Jordan  
**Cc:** Angie Hallman; jenn.pfenning@wilmot.ca; Jeff Gerber; Barry Fisher; Cheryl Gordijk; Les Armstrong; clerks  
**Subject:** Re: Support for Councillor Hallman's motion

---

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open any attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

---

I also support Councilor Hallman's motion . Murray Huber

On Sun, Jul 12, 2020, 5:05 PM [REDACTED] - [REDACTED] wrote:

I support Councillor Hallman's motion to momentarily pause the Prime Minister's Path and I support a fully transparent and beneficial discussion with all involved which is undertaken in her motion.

I would like this email to form part of the official correspondence regarding this matter.

Kind regards,

[REDACTED]

To Wilmot Township Council,  
60 Snyder's Road West,  
Baden, ON N3A 1A1

July 11, 2020

To: Wilmot Township Mayor Armstrong,  
Wilmot Township Councillors Fisher, Gerber, Gordijk, Hallman and  
Pfenning.

CC: Dawn Mittelholtz, Municipal Clerk,  
Tracey Murray, Deputy Clerk

FROM: Lynn and Marilyn Sararus

Re: Our opposition to the motion "to pause any further investment and expansion of the PRIME MINISTERS PATH immediately until we consult with First Nations groups and Friendship Centers in Waterloo region and any other impacted groups until a sufficient, respectful and transparent consultation process is completed with accountability...."

We are proud to live in Canada and do not take for granted the privileges we have to live here. The Prime Ministers Path project has been a very unique opportunity for Wilmot Township at Castle Kilbride. We have been excited and delighted to have this developing, for the past number of years, under the capable and creative organization of Createscape and the Prime Ministers Path Committee. We excitedly look forward to the planned additional sculptures to complete the Path. This is a great opportunity to educate and expand our knowledge of the development of our country to what it has become today.

To work together to the completion of this project will be a growing, learning and lasting experience for residents in Wilmot and the Country.

To pause this project, at this time, will discourage continued conversation, rob residents of the completion of the path, education will be halted and dissention may create more animosity than growth.

Please consider not supporting this motion.

## Tracey Murray

---

**From:** Kathie Jordan Design <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Sunday, July 12, 2020 10:03 PM  
**To:** Angie Hallman; jenn.pfenning@wilmot.ca; Jeff Gerber; Barry Fisher; Cheryl Gordijk; Les Armstrong; clerks  
**Subject:** Councillor Hallman Motion regarding Pausing the Statues

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open any attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

I support Councillor Hallman's motion to momentarily pause the Prime Minister's Path and I support a fully transparent and beneficial discussion with all involved which is undertaken in her motion.

I would like this email to form part of the official correspondence regarding this matter.

Regards,

Kathie Jordan



## Tracey Murray

---

**From:** John Jordan <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Sunday, July 12, 2020 5:04 PM  
**To:** Angie Hallman; jenn.pfenning@wilmot.ca; Jeff Gerber; Barry Fisher; Cheryl Gordijk; Les Armstrong; clerks  
**Subject:** Support for Councillor Hallman's motion

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open any attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

I support Councillor Hallman's motion to momentarily pause the Prime Minister's Path and I support a fully transparent and beneficial discussion with all involved which is undertaken in her motion.

I would like this email to form part of the official correspondence regarding this matter.

Kind regards,

John Jordan

## Tracey Murray

---

**From:** David Martin [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Sunday, July 12, 2020 10:19 PM  
**To:** Barry Fisher  
**Cc:** Angie Hallman; Jennifer Pfenning; Jeff Gerber; Cheryl Gordijk; Les Armstrong; clerks  
**Subject:** Support for the removal of John A. Macdonald Statue

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open any attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Mr. Fischer,

I wanted to write to you to express my thoughts on the John A. Macdonald statue.

I feel very strongly that it should be removed. By having this statue on display, we are celebrating and honouring the man responsible for the cultural genocide and generational trauma of Indigenous people. I'm aware that there's some debate about whether a statue exists to honour historical figures or educate people about history. I would say it's hard to argue the statue doesn't exist to honour John A. Macdonald, as the plaque accompanying the statue is an overwhelmingly positive account of his accomplishments. There's no mention at all of residential schools or any other atrocity imposed on Indigenous people he was responsible for. We should be condemning and making amends for the actions of this man, as the consequences of these actions are still clearly affecting the lives of Indigenous people today.

I feel especially strongly about this now, in the wake of Mayor Les Armstrong spreading negative propaganda about the Black Lives Matter movement via social media. If now, in the midst of all this controversy, the council chooses not to remove the statue, you would effectively be doubling down on the message that our community is ignorant and actively resisting positive changes for racialized communities.

The council has been given an opportunity to regain some of the trust of oppressed people, as well as people like myself. I'm not a member of any racialized minority, but I am finding myself grappling with the idea of raising my children and growing my businesses here if ignorant and hateful values continue to be projected into the community. Taking this statue down might seem like a small step, but it would send a powerful message that we do care about moving humanity in a more positive direction.

Thank you for reading. I would like my email included in the official correspondence tomorrow if you feel inclined to use it.

David Martin

## Tracey Murray

---

**From:** Dave Merner <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Monday, July 13, 2020 9:43 AM  
**To:** Angie Hallman; Jennifer Pfenning; Jeff Gerber; Barry Fisher; Cheryl Gordijk; Les Armstrong; clerks  
**Cc:** Dave Merner  
**Subject:** Support for removal of Sir John A. MacDor,iald statue...

---

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open any attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

---

Good Morning,

I writing to all of council to express my concern over what I have perceived as a lack of understanding in Wilmot Township and in Canada in general. Specifically in regards to the Sir John A. MacDonald statue in Baden.

As a lifetime, 50 year resident of New Hamburg, I watched the news of the past few weeks with disbelief that some of the residents I call neighbours refuse to walk into these discussions with an open mind. When the statues were erected a number of years ago I had an uneasy feeling that what we were doing was wrong. The idea that celebrating men, while accomplishing great things for our country, have caused an incredible amount of pain and suffering to so many people. I can't imagine what goes through someone's mind who is directly affected by it, when they see a constant reminder in public view in a celebrated manner.

I have spoken with people on many sides of this debate.

I spoke with a former residential school teacher. At the time of her employment, she had no idea the full ramifications of what was indeed going on. Today she speaks of the extreme guilt and horror at the pain the system caused so many people. She's never forgiven herself, speaks of the time rarely, but in the few times I have had her open up to me she expresses the sadness and guilt that she can never make proper amends. The statue bothers her every time she sees or hears about it.

My adopted daughter, who is indigenous, has a grandmother that was a student at the Hamilton residential school. Over the years I have heard about such horrible stories that were a direct response to the 're-educating' and driving their heritage away. It has taken a toll on her. It's so disheartening to hear that someone's life from a very young age was torn from them, never to be recovered. And she was a lucky one.

I have spoken with residents that had no idea the full history behind our first Prime Minister, but after engaging in discussion they come away with a realization that everything they were taught in schools never touched on the subject. A very dark period swept under the rug, to move on without addressing the full history. It is encouraging to see people bringing their children to the statue to hear the history not taught in the classrooms. Let's continue this- but in the proper environment.

All in all there are good, honest people in the area. I just hope that better educating the residents will start to make them realize that all the protests and rallies are not trying to erase what MacDonald had accomplished, but putting the statue and any other monuments to this time in a proper setting so that the full history can be explored. The front lawn of the township offices might not be the best place when it causes people hurt and painful reminder? to what has happened. And still happens today. We need to be empathetic to the people hurting in this community.

What is being proposed today isn't that difficult. A motion for a new consultation process to explore what should be done going forward. I feel at the very least having a better understanding of public input is never a bad thing. It also puts forth the notion that at least the council has an open mind and will hear from its constituents. A few council meetings over zoom does not fully encompass or give the proper indication how many people feel strongly about removal of the statue or at least discussing it.

It's easy to sweep this all under the rug. The protests won't go away in doing so either I'd imagine. Show the residents of Wilmot Township that you are open to at least listen to the community. Give them the consultation period that wasn't available to them when the statues came.

While I wish that the statues will be removed, at the very least I hope you will consider passing the Notion of Motion to begin the consultation phase of the statue project. Please show that Wilmot residents can be understanding and are willing to listen.

Please include this email in the official correspondence for tonight's meeting if possible.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Dave Merner  
New Hamburg

## Tracey Murray

**From:** · Brent Cornwall [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, July 13, 2020 11:50 AM  
**To:** Angie Hallman; Jennifer Pfenning; Jeff Gerber; Barry Fisher; Cheryl Gordijk; Les Armstrong; clerks  
**Subject:** Supporting the motion to pause the Prime Minister's Path

---

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open any attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

---

Hi,

I am writing in favor of councilor Hallman's motion to pause the Prime Ministers Path project. The entire project was not given public consultation, and I feel that was a terrible overstep on the part of council when this project was allowed to be placed at Castle Kilbride.

The issue I have is that these statues represent people who committed some of the worst human rights abuses in Canadian history, and that part of the history on these individuals was conveniently left off the path. You cannot tell the story when it is one sided, as per the MacDonald plaques, and that makes me question the entire validity of the project.

In the same vein that confederate statues in the US were installed to only tell one side of the story, as well as being placed at a time of civil rights advancements, these statues were also placed in this community well after information about the human rights abuses these people committed was known to the public and groups had taken offense to statues of these people across Canada. It was shameful to take in a project, that was already rejected twice because of the controversy surrounding the individuals. It also shows an absolute disregard for the victims of their crimes, and those who lived after them who would have been subjected to them. This is one of the reasons why people in the community have raised concerns of actions of some members of council, only seeing it through their perspective and not through the eyes of somebody who has lived these issues. Its time for Wilmot Township to correct this mistake.

A very quick recap of some of the issues with former Prime Ministers -

- Mackenzie King was closely aligned with Nazi Germany, and held anti-semitic views. At one point, he told the UK that Canada would support the Nazi regime in a continental war within Europe and would only come to the aid of the UK if Germany threatened invasion. Canada only allowed 5000 Jewish people, less than one a day, under MacKenzie Kings tenure from the mid 30s to the mid 40s. Mackenzie King personally stepped in to send a boat of over 900 German Jews back to Europe, where 254 of them died in holocaust camps. Mackenzie King also signed off on the harsh treatment that Japanese Canadians received in concentration camps across the country.

- Laurier was outright racist towards the Black community, with multiple occasions of him going beyond what was even acceptable in his time. Numerous press articles were published at the time in regards to his hostile treatment of the Black community. Laurier banned Black people from entering Canada for a period of one year, many who were trying to escape the unjust treatment they received in the USA, because their skin was not suited to the culture of Canada, and that they could not handle the climate of the country; both statements that are abhorrent.

- MacDonald is well known for his treatment of Indigenous people. In 2008, Stephen Harper apologized to the Indigenous community for the residential school system and parts of the Indian Act which were both MacDonald designed. In 2013, a book was published, which used documents found in the official Canadian archives, which found MacDonald personally signed off on starving and poisoning the Indigenous population to clear a path for his railroad project. Estimates vary that between 50,000 and 100,000 Indigenous people died in this ethnic cleansing and genocide. The book, Clearing The Plains, ironically enough, won the Sir John A MacDonald Prize in 2014, which was given out for the best scholarly book in Canada. In 2018, historians around the country voted 121 to 11 to remove MacDonalds name from the prize, and rebrand the award. If Canada's best historians believe that MacDonald didn't deserve to be recognized for his crimes, we should really reconsider his prominence on public space in our community.

And these are only some of the issues that people will have with this path. As archives continue to be looked through, we find more and more troubling things from Canada's past.

If Wilmot Township wants to shed the perception that it harbors racism, this would be a logical first step in removing that label. I can guarantee that if Wilmot Township rejects this proposal to pause the path, it will only further cement that this township is being led around by people who only see things from one perspective, and in this day and age, people around the world will read about it. It is not a look any community wants, and as long as these statues remain on public space in this township, it is a perspective that will stick.

I would like this included in the Official Correspondence about this matter.

Thank You,

Brent Cornwall  
New Hamburg, Ontario

## Tracey Murray

---

**From:** David Alton < [REDACTED] >  
**Sent:** Monday, July 13, 2020 12:23 PM  
**To:** Angie Hallman; Jennifer Pfenning; Jeff Gerber; Barry Fisher; Cheryl Gordijk; Les Armstrong; clerks  
**Subject:** Support for motions 14.2 and 14.2 at July 13 meeting

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open any attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hello,

My name is David Alton and I live at [REDACTED], in Baden. I

am imploring you to pass motions 14.1 and 14.2 at tonight's meeting.

Professionally, I am a community planner and facilitator who specializes in therapeutic approaches to community engagement and community conflict resolution. There are many people in our community who have deep trauma from council's continued refusal to recognize the dignity of LGBT people, indigenous people, and people of colour. This trauma has only grown with the words, actions and decisions council and staff have made as of late.

Without intervention this trauma will fester and impact all aspects of our community. People are choosing not to live or work in Wilmot. People are choosing to leave. It is breeding distrust in our institutions. It is interrupting the day to day lives and operation of our community.

Ignoring this trauma will not make it go away. It will continue to grow until there is a thorough conflict resolution and reconciliation process. Motions 14.1 and 14.2 are a first step to acknowledge that this trauma exists and to show people that Wilmot sees them as valuable members of the community. There is much more to be done to transform our community from trauma to growth.

If you need any help developing or refining a community conflict resolution process, I am happy to donate my time and knowledge. Either way I implore you to recognize the significance of the situation and the long term costs it is having on our community.

Personally, I am a queer person with a multi-racial family. Your actions as of late have scared my partner into wanting to leave the community. They are questioning whether we belong. When I was a teenager growing up in Baden, it would have made a significant impact to see my township standing alongside me. For all the queer, Indigenous and POC youth in our community today I hope you begin to take action to heal some of these wounds.

I strongly encourage you to approve the following motions:

14.1 Whereas we stand in solidarity with all residents whose rights have been disrespected, and; Whereas it is a simple gesture that communicates that support and solidarity, and; Therefore, be it resolved that the Pride flag shall be flown on all Township of Wilmot facility flagpoles for the month of June each year.

14\_2 That we pause any further investment and expansion of the Prime Ministers Path immediately until we consult with First Nations groups and Friendship Centers in Waterloo Region and any other impacted groups until a sufficient, respectful and transparent consultation process is completed with accountability; Further, I ask that this conversation include at least two members of counciltbe part of this ongoing process and discussion.

-David



## Tracey Murray

---

**From:** James Spencer [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, July 13, 2020 12:59 PM  
**To:** Angie Hallman; Jenn.Pfenning@wilmot.ca; Jeff Gerber; Cheryl Gordijk; Les Armstrong; clerks; Barry Fisher  
**Subject:** Halt Installation of the Statue Project

---

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open any attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

---

To Whom it May Concern,

I am writing to support Councillor Hallman's motion to pause the installation of the Statue Project. I believe the community must be consulted about whether Baden's public space is best used by this project, and whether the project is in line with the community's values.

Given Canada's sordid history with indigenous people and the role that the Prime Minister's office has historically played in that dynamic, I strongly feel that if the community were properly asked whether they support the Statue Project, the answer would be a resounding no.

Please include my emailed statement in the official correspondence for today's council meeting. I will be giving more of my thoughts as a delegation at that time.

Thank you,  
James Spencer

## Tracey Murray

---

**From:** Gwyneth [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, July 13, 2020 1:19 PM  
**To:** Angie Hallman; Jennifer Pfenning; Jeff Gerber; Barry Fisher; Cheryl Gordijk; Les Armstrong; clerks  
**Subject:** John A. MacDonald Statue

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open any attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hello, my name is Gwyneth Mitchell and I live in Kitchener.

I have been following the news surrounding the statue of John A. MacDonald.

I would like to express my support in the removal of this statue and the halt of the rest of the project. I would like this correspondence to be included in the official correspondence of today's meeting (July 13th 2020).

Removing the statue in question is not erasing history as some would argue. Supporters of it's removal know history and this is why a monument to such a person is inappropriate.

In Kitchener there was major backlash when the suggestion of this statue and the other statues were proposed to be installed in Victoria Park. The community spoke and fortunately, we were heard. The statue was not placed in Victoria Park. Once again there was outrage over the statue when it was placed on the grounds of Wilfred Laurier. Thankfully it was removed.

To listen to community members and reject this statue was the right decision.

Glorifying a man who did so much harm to the indigenous community is unacceptable. I hope that this statue will be removed as part of ongoing reconciliation with our indigenous communities.

I care for and respect the people in our communities who the presence of this statue causes pain.

This ongoing conversation objecting to the statue has attracted hate groups. Very frightening and upsetting.

Everyone in our community deserves to feel safe and welcome. This statue is a symbol of hate.

I respectfully ask for it's removal.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Gwyneth Mitchell

July 13, 2020

Dear Wilmot Township Councillors,

I write to you today, as a resident of Waterloo Region, in support of the call to remove the John A. MacDonald statue from the public space in Baden. I am also in support of the Notice of Motion to put an official halt on the Prime Ministers' path project. Please include this letter in the official correspondence about this matter for the July 13<sup>th</sup> Council meeting.

I have demonstrated my support for this call by attending the peaceful sit-ins, where during the Jun 27<sup>th</sup> sit-in, I was struck at by a man who was attempting to silence one of the Indigenous organizers while she was addressing the crowd. When I began video recording the man's loud and verbally aggressive behaviour, he took a swing at me in an attempt to knock my phone out of my hand. He then swung a water bottle at another person video recording the incident. That day I also video recorded two women, who are part of the Urban Infidels, as they circled us in an attempt to intimidate us.

I was very disturbed to witness the blatant attempts to continue to silence Indigenous voices from being heard, which is the impetus behind the demand to remove the statue from public space. The celebration of John A. MacDonald invisibilizes the death and destruction he caused Indigenous peoples through his implementation of the Residential School System wherein 150,000 Indigenous children were kidnapped from their parents and forced to live in boarding schools. The goal of the schools was to "kill the Indian in the child," which led to the literal death and disappearance of approximately 6,000 children<sup>1</sup>. Similarly, the horrific abuses that children experienced at the hands of those in charge of these institutions include physical, emotional, spiritual, cultural, and sexual abuse. Some schools had a 100% rate of sexual abuse<sup>2</sup>. The last of these "schools" closed in 1996.

Through my advocacy for criminalized women over the past 12 years, I have supported many Indigenous women who are residential school survivors, as well as those whose parents and grandparents were survivors. The stories they told me about their treatment during their years imprisoned in these schools would give you nightmares, and will not be repeated here. The long-term impacts of these schools include hundreds of missing and murdered Indigenous women as well as the significant overrepresentation of Indigenous peoples in prisons – 42% of women in federal prisons for women are Indigenous<sup>3</sup>. These impacts can be directly tied to the

---

<sup>1</sup> Joseph, R. P. (2018). *21 Things you may not know about the Indian act*. Port Coquitlam, BC: Indigenous Relations Press.

<sup>2</sup> Monchalin, L. (2016). *The colonial problem: An Indigenous perspective on crime and injustice in Canada*. University of Toronto Press.

<sup>3</sup> Office of the Correctional Investigator. (2019). *Annual report of the Office of the Correctional Investigator, 2018–2019*. Ottawa, ON. Retrieved from <https://www.oci-bec.gc.ca/cnt/rpt/pdf/annrpt/annrpt20172018-eng.pdf>

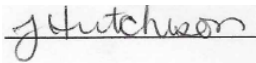
residential schools as they tore families and communities apart, and traumatized those who were abused in these schools, which has caused intergenerational trauma and suffering.

The placement of John A. MacDonald's statue in a public space in Baden results in Indigenous community members being forced to see, on a regular basis, the man who was responsible for the kidnapping and murder of their family members and ancestors. It signals to Indigenous community members that the Township of Wilmot does not take seriously the harms John A. MacDonald caused them. To not listen to the Indigenous leaders in your community who are calling for the removal of the statue from public space only continues the centuries of dismissal, disrespect, and silencing of Indigenous people's voices.

Therefore, I am in full support of the call to remove his statue from the public space, and to halt the implementation of the remainder of the Prime Ministers' path. These statues can be placed in a museum where people can make an informed choice to visit, and they can learn about the full legacy of John A. MacDonald, and other Prime Ministers.

I urge you to be on the right side of history and meet the organizers' demands. While you contemplate your decision, I leave you with one question. If a man was responsible for orchestrating the kidnapping and killing of your family, would you want a statue of him in your town?

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "j. Hutchison". The signature is written in black ink on a white background.

Jessica Hutchison  
PhD Student, FSW, WLU  
Resident of Waterloo Region

---