

June 8th, 2021

Mayor John Tory,

Re: Removal of Alexander Wood Statue

The Church-Wellesley Village BIA is demanding the removal of the statue of Alexander Wood, currently on the north-west corner of Alexander Street and Church Street.

It has come to light that Alexander Wood was a founding board member and for many years the Treasurer for "The Society for Converting and Civilizing the Indians and Propagating the Gospel among Destitute Settlers in Upper Canada".

The Toronto Public Library Archives contain the minutes of the meetings of this organization. They show that Alexander Wood was a founding member of the board of this organization and was a Treasurer for at least 7 years. During the time of the existence of this "Society" its main focus of work was the raising of funds and the development of "Indian Mission Schools". One such mission, which was started in Sault Saint Marie in 1832 shows a clear path from their initial school to the ultimate existence of the Shingwauk Residential School, which closed in 1978.

The recent findings at the former Kamloops Indian Residential School of 215 children in unmarked graves, has brought more awareness to the experiences of residential school survivors. We are acknowledging the truth of the role Alexander Wood and others played in the development of these schools and the trauma they caused.

Regarding the sexual assault of soldiers immortalized in the bronze plaques on the statue, and in light of sexual abuse in Canada's military- notably of senior officers using their position of power to sexually assault soldiers - it's important that we take this moment to amplify the voices of victims. Taking the power away from perpetrators of sexual assault is important in this time.

Leaving the statue in place would send a clear message to our 2-Spirit community that racism is being allowed to continue - and in fact being iconized - in Toronto.

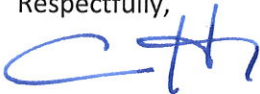
The Church-Wellesley Village BIA is taking the following actions with the understanding that the City of Toronto will support these steps both in principle and financially (as the City financially supported and shared the cost of the creation and installation of the statue in 2005):

- 1) The removal of the Alexander Wood statue immediately and without hesitation
- 2) Committing to address racism in The Village by
 - a) The full Board receiving the City of Toronto's Confronting Anti-Black Racism Training (to be completed by December 2021)

- b) The full Board to receive Indigenous teachings around the history of Anti-Indigenous racism and the treatment of Indigenous Peoples in residential schools in Canada (to be completed by February 2022)
- 3) Continue to uncover the truth of this situation and share our findings with the community (ongoing)
- 4) Publicly acknowledge the damage done to Indigenous culture and apologize for putting this monument in place
- 5) Use the space at the north west corner of Church Street and Alexander Street for a project that is 2 Spirit-advised with the cost shared by the Church-Wellesley Village BIA and The City of Toronto and begin the planning stages by October 2021
- 6) Encourage other BIAs, towns, and cities across Canada to question what is in their community and to learn about those stories in light of the truth of Canada's history
- 7) Create sexual assault and bystander intervention awareness literature to distribute and post publicly this summer

We appreciate your attention to this important and urgent matter and look forward to working with you to correct this situation.

Respectfully,



Christopher Hudspeth, Chair
Church-Wellesley Village BIA

Sagrario Castilla, Vice-Chair
Ben Nuata, Treasurer
Steve Dawson, Board Member
Steven Sauve, Board Member

CC: Councillor Wong-Tam

Indigenous Affairs Office, City of Toronto

Monuments Office and Cultural Management, City of Toronto