

May 6, 2025

Dear Mayor Salonen and Wilmot Councillors,

Thank you for the opportunity to make some comments regarding the future of the PMP. LURA came up with some good ideas to get community involvement. I wanted all voices to be heard and documented ... No Path, Pro Path and Pro Path with Context/Indigenous Support. I wasn't expecting the lack of documenting or scrapping of PMP suggestions that happened along the way.

"Scrapping" of PMP Suggestions

I am hoping the Staff Report on the Prime Ministers Path dated May 12, 2025 will not be "scrapped".

There are others (many perhaps) who agree with the Staff Report that putting the statues back up will require resources, funding, people and time, which are beyond the current capabilities of Wilmot Staff and/or Wilmot Township. This was mentioned by others and myself at Tea Circles and Facebook posts. I wrote it in emails to the consultants. I answered surveys indicating this and others told me they did too. Others and myself gave many suggestions on what to do with the statues that to the best of my knowledge were not documented or got "scrapped".

Here are a few excerpts of what I wrote in an email to PMP@wilmot.ca sent on March 7, 2025 (after Community Gathering #2):

"I took pictures of the 6 boards of draft recommendations and the 1 board of what to do with the statues and when I look over them, I am still perplexed (and concerned and frustrated).

Where is the representation of those who have indicated on the survey or otherwise (including the indigenous who feel this way) that they think the statue path project should be retired/scrapped in Wilmot Township?

My understanding is Wilmot Council wants options from all sides."

Here are some excerpts from a LURA consultant's email to me on March 10, 2025 that informed me as to why some input from others and myself has been "scrapped":

"The Township is looking for recommendations as to how to proceed with the Prime Ministers Path project. They have asked for these recommendations to consider all the feedback and opinions that have been collected from the community, which involves balancing the underlying sentiments of the diverse perspectives that exist. For example, if folks do not want the statues, our job has been to gather not just the "yes" or "no," but to gather the 'why?' and make sure that is heard. This is how we will be most likely to find compromise and ultimately, recommendations that 'most people can live with'.

Once we put together our recommendations formally, there will be a list of the 'what to do with the statues' ideas that are viable based on the Working Group's assessment of the situation. This list will be passed along to the next Task Force/Steering Committee for their consideration. Everyone's data is being recorded and considered by the Working Group as intended.

If some of the ideas do not feel feasible – for example, if the Working Group acknowledges that donating the statues (or, getting rid of them) would cause for too much inflammation, and therefore cause even more fracture and/or racist behaviour in the community – then we would have to scrap ideas that get rid of the statues in order to have the best outcome for the process."

Regarding the survey that came with the interim tax bill, my guess is the consultants and/or the working committee felt it was better to “scrap” the results and not have transparency and not let the residents of Wilmot Township and/or Wilmot Council know what reality is.

Are there indigenous people who do not want these statues back up period, regardless of the Working Group Recommendations, or have their opinions been “scrapped” too. It would not surprise me if the statues will be vandalized if they are put back up since it could be their way of dealing with the hurt and/or trying to get people to listen.

I wonder how the 12 on the working committee currently feel or do their individual opinions get “scrapped” too? Do any of the 12 feel the Working Group Recommendations will require resources, funding, people and time, which are beyond the current capabilities of Wilmot Staff and/or Wilmot Township? I think Council should consider getting individual feedback from the 12 that would allow them to express what their current opinions are and why.

LURA's Costs

In the Staff Report on the Prime Ministers Path dated May 12, 2025 it states the Current Engagement with LURA is \$102,367. The expected budget for the current engagement was \$60,000. I am asking Council to please let Wilmot taxpayers know who authorized the increase to \$102,367 and why Wilmot taxpayers have not been made aware of exceeding the \$60,000 budgeted amount earlier? Costs could have been cut by not having things on display boards, etc.

Please let Wilmot taxpayers know if the \$102,367 is capped. If not, and LURA fees are ongoing, I am asking Council to consider discontinuing with the LURA consultants immediately.

Castle Kilbride Costs

Castle Kilbride is special but costly. I mentioned to the consultants that I thought it would be helpful for everyone to have the facts regarding Castle Kilbride's operation and maintenance costs when deciding on what to do with the PMP. I also sent an email on March 27 to PMP@wilmot.ca to try to get this information going back 5 years so I could provide it to Council before the May 12th meeting. To date this information has not been provided to me.

I noticed in the May 1, 2025 edition of The Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette an article entitled “Wilmot seeks local backing for Castle Kilbride artwork restoration”. Apparently, Wilmot Township has not been able to access a grant that would have paid 50% of the approximately \$50,000 costs because Wilmot Township did not have a 50% (\$25,000) down payment to proceed with the grant application. The extra above budget (\$42,367) that has been paid to LURA so far could have more than paid this \$25,000.

Closing

Since February 2025, I have sent a number of emails with PMP concerns to PMP@wilmot.ca. and the consultants. Some of my questions in these emails have been answered and others have not. If any Council members are interested in seeing these emails please let me know.

Thank you for reading this.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Doehn