

**From:** [Mike Rice](#)  
**To:** [Natasha Salonen](#); [Clerks](#); [Steven Martin](#); [Stewart Cressman](#); [Kris Wilkinson](#); [Harvir Sidhu](#); [Lillianne Dunstall](#)  
**Cc:** [Greg Clark](#); [Ecumenical Working Group](#); [REDACTED]; [REDACTED]; [Kaitlin Bos](#); [benny.skinner](#); [Denise Soueidan-O'Leary](#)  
**Subject:** Urgent Concerns Regarding the Prime Ministers Path Project  
**Date:** May 2, 2025 1:01:42 PM

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Dear Council Members and Project Consultants,

Wilmot Township staff have raised **critical concerns** regarding the Prime Ministers Path project, highlighting its **financial strain, safety risks, and operational challenges**. Their responsible position deserves serious consideration to prevent further harm to municipal resources and community well-being.

### **Financial Burden**

The township is already under significant financial pressures, and to revive this project **worsens this dire situation**. The costs of **statue installation, maintenance, and educational programming** exceed municipal capacity and threaten essential services for residents. **Redirecting funds** toward this initiative instead of core municipal responsibilities would be both impractical and irresponsible.

Staff's report emphasizes the need for external funding and partnerships, recognizing the necessity for sustainable financial support. This reality highlights that **the project was never and cannot be self-sustaining as a tourist attraction**, contrary to how it was initially promoted as being a benefit to the township.

If Council overrides Staff's recommendations and reinstates the statues on township land, **taxpayers will bear the financial burden**. To mitigate costs, the proposed Community Steering Committee must be **required to lease the land at market rates**, helping offset expenses tied to **redundant consultations** on this contentious and polarizing Prime Ministers Path project.

### **Safety and Belonging**

Staff's own concerns of safety reflect a **long-overlooked reality**—Indigenous and community safety, and how the public's well-being was never considered as part of this project. Statues venerating **oppression and exclusion** make public spaces feel hostile rather than welcoming. If municipal staff, with workplace protections, fear harm, Indigenous residents, who historically faced systemic suffering, are at **even greater risk if they are reinstalled on public grounds**. The township must ensure public spaces are **welcoming, safe, inclusive, and free from reinforcing historical injustices**. If these statues contribute to **harm, fear, discomfort, exclusion and diminished belonging**, their placement must never again be on public lands.

## Education and Reconciliation

While municipal staff are to be highly skilled in their respective fields, they **lack formal educational accreditation and expertise** to lead reconciliation-focused educational initiatives requiring historical accuracy. **True reconciliation programming** demands deep expertise in Indigenous histories, cultures, and contemporary issues—knowledge best provided by **Indigenous educators, scholars, and Elders**. Without this specialized guidance, municipal-led efforts **risk being misinformed, inadequate, or even harmful**, rather than meaningfully contributing to education and reconciliation.

## Responsible Decision-Making

Wilmot Township staff are advocating for **responsible governance** that prioritizes **financial stability, staff well-being, and community safety** over symbolic gestures that carry substantial risk. Ignoring these concerns could lead to **greater financial instability, reduced municipal services, and compromised safety** for both staff and constituents.

By standing firm on these warnings, staff are acting as **stewards of fiscal responsibility and protectors of community well-being**. Their concerns warrant **serious consideration** to ensure township resources are allocated where they **truly serve the public's best interests**.

The failure of two key promised benefits—**the project's inability to be a financially self-sustaining tourist attraction and its failure to serve as a credible educational tool** should serve as a clear lesson for this Council. **It must not ignore historical data and risk repeating the same costly mistakes**. I hope that this council can stand with their professional municipal advisors **in service to all residents**.

Sincerely,  
Mike Rice

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Clerks, please include this email as official correspondence in the Special Council Meeting Agenda on the Prime Ministers Path Engagement on Monday, May 12, 2025