

Ward 27, Toronto Centre-Rosedale
City Hall, 100 Queen Street West
2nd Floor, Suite A5
Toronto, Ontario M5H 2N2

Tel: 416-392-7903
Fax: 416-696-4300
Councillor_wongtam@toronto.ca

May 13, 2014
Roz Dyers, Clerk
Toronto East York Community Council
City Hall, 100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

To: Toronto and East York Community Council

Re: Renaming of Cawthra Square Park to Barbara Hall Park

Barbara Hall was the 61st Mayor of Toronto. She served on Toronto City Council from 1985 – 1994 as City Councillor for Ward 7, where she sat as Budget Chief and also led initiatives on homelessness and worked with housing advocates for supportive and affordable housing for AIDS patients. She was a staunch housing advocate and fought hard for improved policies for co-operative housing and by-laws affecting tenants.

For almost 40 years, Ms. Hall has been a public, visible and committed champion of human rights. As a community activist in the 1980s, she forged a close relationship with the gay and lesbian community and worked with a group of criminal defence lawyers, founding the Right to Privacy Committee following the devastating Toronto bath house raids in 1981. As a member of the Toronto Board of Health, she championed funding for programming to residents living with HIV/AIDS and helped to confront fear and misunderstanding of the disease in Toronto.

In 1994 when Ms. Hall was elected as Mayor of Toronto, she became the first big-city mayor to march in a Gay Pride Parade. Her prominent support for LGBTQ2S people helped set a new standard of acceptance for a community that was once shunned. She was a force of progressive social change in a city that was becoming one of the most diversely composited in the world.

Ms. Hall served as the first chair of The 519 Church Street Community Centre's capital campaign when it began its ambitious expansion plans for new additions. She was instrumental in rallying the support of prominent donors to ensure The 519's fundraising efforts were successful. The expansion enabled Canada's LGBTQ2S community centre to dramatically expand its services.

Ms. Hall currently sits as the Chief Commissioner of the Ontario Human Rights Commission, a position she has held since 2005. She recently launched changes to the Code by ensuring that "Gender Identity and Gender Expression" are now prohibitive grounds for discrimination.

With this extensive record and dedication to human rights, notably LGBTQ2S rights in Toronto, I am requesting that Council approve the renaming of Cawthra Square park in Barbara Hall's honour and to ensure that the name change be approved by Council in 2014 to commemorate the 33rd anniversary of the Bath House raids. Attached to this letter is further background on Ms. Hall's incredible career and accomplishments.

Recommendation:

- 1) That City Council approve the renaming of Cawthra Square Park to "Barbara Hall Park".

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam
Ward 27 Toronto Centre-Rosedale