

From: [The Rt. Hon. Adrienne Clarkson](#)
To: [councilmeeting](#)
Cc: [Councillor Layton](#); [Mayor Tory](#); [Councillor Perks](#); [Councillor Fletcher](#); [Councillor Cressy](#); [Councillor Wongtam](#)
Subject: Item 2020.EX16.3 Dundas Street Renaming Petition - Comments to add to City Council agenda for Sept. 30, 2020
Date: September 29, 2020 11:15:37 PM
Importance: High

To the City Clerk:

Please add my comments to the agenda for the September 30, 2020 City Council meeting on item 2020.EX16.3, Responding to the Dundas Street Renaming Petition.

I understand that my comments and the personal information in this email will form part of the public record and that my name will be listed as a correspondent on agendas and minutes of City Council or its committees. Also, I understand that agendas and minutes are posted online and my name may be indexed by search engines like Google.

As I signed Andrew Lochhead's petition to change the city assets and streets bearing the name of Henry Dundas, I wanted to write to explain my support for the proposal put forth in City Manager Chris Murray's report.

I first became aware of Henry Dundas when reading the magnificent biography of William Wilberforce, the moving force behind the abolition of the slave trade and eventually of slavery written by William Hague who, besides being a brilliant historian and writer, was also the leader of the opposition for four years.

Dundas was a very important figure in William Pitt's Conservative government. He had an enormous influence on the Prime Minister as the leading politician from Scotland in the British parliament.

At no time did he ever visit or have interests in Canada in general or in Toronto or Upper Canada as it then was. He was the Home Secretary of the British government at the time that John Graves Simcoe was Governor of Upper Canada. I presume that this is the reason for which the naming of city assets occurred.

When you examine Dundas' record on everything to do with the slave trade, it becomes evident that this single politician exercised enormous responsibility for the delaying of the abolition of the slave trade by some 15 years. Years in which 600,000 human beings were enslaved in Africa and sold as property. Dundas was the politician who inserted the word 'gradual' into the proposed bill for abolition

of the slave trade which Wilberforce proposed in 1792 until 1807 therefore delaying it with cunning political maneuver.

Dundas has absolutely nothing to do with our history and our customs here. When I look at the Toronto of today and see its diversity and its striving to have equality in that diversity, I am convinced that the Dundas name should not be on any city asset.

When I was a child at public school in Ottawa, we often did essays on the names of streets, lakes, and mountains. How can you explain to a child the background of Dundas Street and the Dundas subway? The answer is that you can't. That name has no place here. That name has no relevance to our history.

I believe that certain monuments and streets can have their explanations reframed so as to continue looking at our history in a fuller way. But Dundas is not one of these.

I fully support a proposed review, beyond the Dundas name of all city assets particularly streets and public monuments to make sure that systemic racism and colonial assumptions do not play a part in their continuation.

I also believe that we must have a full and open process that will be accessible and meaningful to everybody. We must include substantial representation in the direction of this research and renaming process from those who are most deeply and daily affected by systemic racism in this city, particularly Black and Indigenous people, women, and LGBTQ.

Finally as a feminist, I find Dundas abhorrent - he married 14 year old heiress Elizabeth Rannie who came to their union with Melville Castle and a huge fortune. When he discovered she had a lover, he divorced her and under the laws of that time, he took her whole fortune including the castle, which he later used for his title Lord Melville. He never let her see her four children again but could not prevent her from marrying her lover.

Dundas is not a name that I think we should perpetuate in a city like Toronto.

Yours truly,

The Rt. Hon. Adrienne Clarkson

Nicole Sen

Executive Assistant to
The Right Honourable Adrienne Clarkson

Office of The Right Honourable Adrienne Clarkson
Toronto, Canada
adrienneclarkson.com

C.C.

councillor_layton@toronto.ca

mayor_tory@toronto.ca

councillor_perks@toronto.ca

councillor_fletcher@toronto.ca

councillor_cressy@toronto.ca

councillor_wongtam@toronto.ca

