



## Member Motion

### City Council

#### Notice of Motion

MM31.35	ACTION			Ward: 13
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#### **Assessing Provincial Interest in the First Parliament Site - by Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam, seconded by Councillor Joe Cressy**

*\* Notice of this Motion has been given.*

*\* This Motion is subject to referral to the General Government and Licensing Committee. A two-thirds vote is required to waive referral.*

#### **Recommendations**

Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam, seconded by Councillor Joe Cressy recommends that:

1. City Council direct the Executive Director, Transit Expansion Office along with the Executive Director, Corporate Real Estate Management, the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning and the Chief Executive Officer, CreateTO to report as soon as possible or to the June 8, 2021 meeting of City Council on any communication with Metrolinx and the Province of Ontario about ongoing real estate negotiations for the City-owned First Parliament lands located at 271 Front Street East and 25 Berkeley Street.

#### **Summary**

The historic First Parliament site holds the foundational elements of democracy and nation-building in what was once known as Upper Canada and the beginning of a united Canada. It is located at the intersection of Front Street East and Parliament Street, bounded on the west by Berkeley Street and on the south by Parliament Square Park, spanning a full city block.

The northwestern portion of the block is owned by the Province through the Ontario Heritage Trust. The remainder, municipally known as 271 Front Street East and 25 Berkeley Street, is entirely owned by the City of Toronto following a land-swap that the late Councillor McConnell and City staff negotiated in 2012 to allow for complete public-ownership of the block.

The First Parliament Site is currently undergoing a Master Plan revitalization strategy to create a vision, guiding planning principles and a plan to develop the site over the next 10 to 20 years. Since 2017, the City has led numerous community engagement activities ranging from public meetings and workshops to a public lecture, an on-line survey and a walking tour. There have been many community-originated recommendations for the site, including a new public library, interpretive centre, affordable housing, parkland, additional open space, and much more.

The Master Planning process follows an extensive Heritage Interpretation Strategy that seeks to

stitch together hundreds of years of history, from Indigenous stories, Upper Canada's first purpose-built parliament buildings, the Home District Gaol and its final use as part of the Consumers' Gas Company complex. 265-271 Front Street and 25 Berkeley Street are designated under the Ontario Heritage Act based on the historical value or interest of the First Parliament Site, and the First Parliament archaeological site is registered with the Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries.

Ahead of a planned Master Plan meeting, Metrolinx sent letters notifying the City of its intent to seek full expropriation and ownership of all of the City-owned First Parliament lands, for the construction of a future Ontario Line station. Further communication from Metrolinx with the local Councillor's office and City staff expressed sentiments that Metrolinx was premature in sending pre-notice of intention to expropriate. Metrolinx maintains that it still wants to negotiate an "amicable agreement" with the City and continue to seek the sale and ownership transfer of the City-owned First Parliament lands to the Province. The earliest communications between City staff, the local Councillor and Metrolinx have raised unanswered questions, including why the Province, through its agency, requires full ownership and all future control of the entire First Parliament site by August 2021.

The First Parliament site is of both national and local significance. Discussions regarding ownership and land access are currently occurring without any public knowledge or instructions from City Council. It is the best interest of the City and the Province to be as transparent as possible over what is occurring. City Council should therefore support obtaining a report from City staff outlining what recent communications the Province and/or Metrolinx has provided in regards to real estate negotiations for the First Parliament Site, and to ensure all proposals being tabled by the Province and Metrolinx are available to the general public and City Council.

### **Background Information (City Council)**

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