

Etobicoke Coat of Arms Displayed in Etobicoke Civic Centre

Date: November 21, 2023

To: Executive Committee

From: City Manager

Wards: Ward 1 - Etobicoke North, Ward 2 - Etobicoke Centre, Ward 3 - Etobicoke Lakeshore, Ward 5 - York South-Weston, Ward 7 - Humber River-Black Creek

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to provide information about the Coat of Arms of the former City of Etobicoke.

City divisions were made aware of concerns relating to the Etobicoke Coat of Arms dating back to 2018. Taking the next steps towards the removal of the Coat of Arms aligns with the City's commitments to truth, justice, and reconciliation in the [Reconciliation Action Plan 2022-2032](#) and is important for creating a safe and inclusive working environment for City staff, free of harmful imagery.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Manager recommends that:

1. The Executive Committee receives this report for information.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There are no financial impact arising from the provided information.

The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer has reviewed this report and agrees with the information as presented in the Financial Impact Section.

DECISION HISTORY

At the November 8 and 9, 2023 meeting, City Council referred [Motion MM12.6](#) to the Executive Committee for consideration.

[Agenda Item History - 2023.MM12.6 \(toronto.ca\)](#)

COMMENTS

History of the Former Etobicoke Coat of Arms

The then Etobicoke Borough Council adopted a Coat of Arms, Badge, and Flag on July 18, 1977, until amalgamation in 1998, at which time it ceased to have legal meaning as it represented a former municipality.

According to Etobicoke policy, the Coat of Arms appeared on the corporate seal and Chain of Office and was widely used by elected representatives, department heads and deputies on stationery and business cards, by boards, agencies, and committees, in proclamations, on licenses, permits and certificates, on official notices, on buildings, vehicles, and on mementoes and long service awards.

The symbol is currently displayed in the Etobicoke Civic Centre Council Chamber and on one glass transom above a door to a boardroom.

Concerns Regarding the Coat of Arms of the Former City of Etobicoke

Concerns regarding the continued display of the Coat of Arms of the former City of Etobicoke in the Etobicoke Civic Centre, a City of Toronto facility, have been raised with the City by staff and the public from at least 2018. These concerns relate to the use of stereotypical and offensive Indigenous imagery and language in the Coat of Arms. The City has listened to these concerns and in consultation with the Human Rights Office and Indigenous Affairs Office has determined that the Coat of Arms does not reflect its values of reconciliation and inclusion. As a result, the City is taking the next steps towards the removal of the Coat of Arms of the former City of Etobicoke.

Application of City's Human Rights Policy

For confidentiality reasons, the City cannot share details related to concerns raised to protect the identity of those who came forward as well as the integrity of the complaints process under the City's Human Rights and Anti-Harassment/Discrimination Policy. It is important to note that individuals who were negatively impacted by the Coat of Arms may not have raised concerns because they felt uncomfortable doing so or did not know where to address their concerns.

City of Toronto's Commitments to Indigenous People

Toronto has one of the largest urban Indigenous populations in Canada, estimating between 70,000-100,000 First Nation, Métis, and Inuit living in the city. The City of

Toronto is making concerted efforts to build relationships with the urban Indigenous communities, as well as treaty and territorial partners. In 2022, the City of Toronto adopted the [Reconciliation Action Plan](#) (RAP). It builds on the City's existing commitments to Indigenous Peoples and takes them even further through 28 meaningful actions across five themes: Actions to restore truth; Actions to right relations and share power; Actions for justice; Actions to make financial reparations; Actions for the Indigenous Affairs Office.

Taking the next steps towards removal of the Etobicoke Coat of Arms aligns with multiple actions in the RAP, including Action 22 Enhance Indigenous recruitment and retention within the Toronto Public Service; Action 9 Address Racism, and Action 5 Improve Relationships with Treaty and Territorial Partners. The City of Toronto has built a relationship with the Mississauga's of the Credit First Nation (MCFN), as exemplified through continuous open dialogue, attendance of events and collaborative development on numerous City infrastructure projects.

This is one action the City is taking to advance its commitments to truth, justice and reconciliation. This action aligns with other City policies, including prohibiting Indigenous-themed imagery and names from non-Indigenous sports teams at City facilities in order to promote a positive and inclusive experience and to protect the dignity and well-being of Indigenous communities.

Commemorating the former Etobicoke Coat of Arms

Various divisions, including Economic Development and Culture and City Clerks are exploring possible exhibits and opportunities to recognize and commemorate the former Coat of Arms and history of Etobicoke.

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SIGNATURE

Paul Johnson
City Manager