

City Council

Notice of Motion

MM6.22	ACTION			Ward: 10
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Recognizing the Importance of Queer History and the Ongoing Two-Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer (2SLGBTQ+) Community Presence at Hanlan’s Point Beach and Surrounding Area, Ward 10 - by Councillor Ausma Malik, seconded by Councillor Chris Moise

** Notice of this Motion has been given.
* This Motion is subject to referral to the Executive Committee. A two-thirds vote is required to waive referral.
Communications have been submitted on this Item.
A Revised Member Motion was posted on May 10, 2023.*

Recommendations

Councillor Ausma Malik, seconded by Councillor Chris Moise, recommends that:

1. City Council recognize over eight decades of queer history, community, and the importance of placekeeping at Hanlan’s Point Beach and surrounding area.
2. City Council direct the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation in consultation with City Planning, Toronto and Region Conservation Authority and other relevant City Divisions and Agencies to engage with and incorporate feedback from the community advocacy group Friends of Hanlan’s about the queer history of Hanlan’s Point Beach and surrounding areas, with the support of The 519 Community Centre and Pride Toronto where appropriate.

Summary

The City of Toronto is home to strong and diverse 2SLGBTQ+ communities, cultures, and histories. To help our City’s queer community thrive in the present, we must first acknowledge the deep roots of queer history that exist here. 2SLGBTQ+ history needs to be actively preserved to prevent its erasure. Because queer history often overlaps with periods where discretion and hiding were necessary means of survival, queer history can often be difficult to find and even more difficult to pass on, making it imperative to preserve what we can before it is lost forever.

For eight continuous decades, and potentially longer, queer people in Toronto have used Hanlan’s Point Beach & surrounding area as a community hub and place of fellowship. This is an unparalleled timeline in Canada, making Hanlan’s Point Beach not just Toronto’s oldest surviving queer space, but also Canada’s oldest surviving queer space and one of the ten oldest surviving queer spaces around the globe.

Queer people gathered at Hanlan's Point Beach & surrounding area through the many decades when homosexual activity and queer life were criminalized in this country. Queer people gathered at Hanlan's Point Beach & surrounding area to ask for their rights when it was the site of Canada's first ever 2SLGBTQ+ Pride celebration in 1971. The queer community continued to gather at Hanlan's Point Beach & surrounding area despite the mass arrests of queer people throughout the 1970s and the height of the AIDS crisis in the 1980s and 1990s.

Queer people and allies have successfully defended this space and its rare ecology from drastic proposed changes time and time again. In the present day, even as Hanlan's Point has seen rising incidences of anti-queer violence and harassment of marginalized people, and queer spaces around the world face increased bigotry, hatred, and erasure, members of Toronto's queer community continue to gather here in this precious space that has been shaped by the 2SLGBTQ+ people who came before them.

The City of Toronto recognizes Hanlan's Point as a Historically Queer Space, acknowledges the never-ending resilience of the queer community's placekeeping at Hanlan's Point over the last eight decades, and supports efforts to preserve the queer history and unique culture at Hanlan's Point. The City of Toronto also acknowledges the work that community advocacy group Friends of Hanlan's has done to elevate concerns around queer history, community safety, and the rare ecology at Hanlan's Point, and thanks them for their efforts.

Background Information (City Council)

Revised Member Motion MM6.22

Communications (City Council)

(May 8, 2023) Letter from Paul Jonathan Saguil, Chair, Board of Management, The 519 (MM.Supp)

<https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2023/mm/comm/communicationfile-169365.pdf>