

May 8th, 2023

RE: MM6.22 - 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.

On behalf of the Board of Management of The 519 Community Centre, I am pleased to provide our support to *MM6.22 - Recognizing the Importance of Queer History and the Ongoing Two-Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer (2SLGBTQ+) Community Presence at Hanlan's Point.*

As a City of Toronto Agency committed to the health, happiness, and full participation of 2SLGBTQ+ communities, The 519 recognizes the vital historical and present-day role that Hanlan's Point plays in the lives of 2SLGBTQ+ people in Toronto and beyond. We commit to working with all relevant City Divisions and community stakeholders on this issue of significant importance to many in the 2SLGBTQ+ community.

Dedicated historians and community-based organizations have done, and continue to do, tremendous work shining a light on Toronto's 2SLGBTQ+ history. However, much of our community's past remains untold. It has been lost to the erasure of queer, trans, and 2 Spirit stories from official accounts through acts of bigotry, ignorance, and inaction. The act of preserving and elevating the history of 2SLGBTQ+ Torontonians deepens our shared understanding of who we are as a city. It creates opportunities for 2SLGBTQ+ residents to see themselves reflected in the city that they call home, and affirms the ways in which 2SLGBTQ+ communities make *Diversity our Strength* not just a motto, but a reality.

As the Member's Motion makes clear, Hanlan's Point is a uniquely Toronto institution and the oldest surviving queer space in Canada. That it has persisted as a queer gathering place for over eight decades is a testament to our community's collective strength. The outpouring of support for this space we've seen in recent months is proof of that strength in action and the central Hanlan's Point plays in the daily life of 2SLGBTQ+ communities.

Crucially, the importance of Hanlan's Point is not a historical artefact. This is a continuously queer space with a living culture and thriving community. It is as important now as it was over 80 years ago, acting as a vital space for 2SLGBTQ+ people to come together and celebrate, socialize, and find safety and comfort within community.

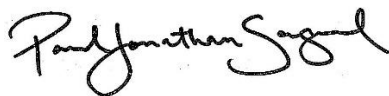
We are currently experiencing an unprecedented wave of reactionary anti-trans and anti-queer hate throughout North America. Toronto is no exception, and Hanlan's Point itself has seen increasing instances of discrimination, harassment, and violence towards the people who gather there. Seeing the limited spaces where 2SLGBTQ+ people experience joy and community come under renewed threat shows how imperative their continued existence and preservation is.

As research by the Economic Development and Culture Division¹ states, "LGBTQ2S spaces continue to be in danger of closing in Toronto. These spaces are meaningful to the LGBTQ2S community, a historically marginalized group, being important to their sense of safety, community, and belonging... it is essential to make the protection of LGBTQ2S+ spaces a priority." Hanlan's point provides an extraordinary opportunity to act on this insight by leveraging City-owned assets to preserve, protect, and expand 2SLGBTQ+ spaces.

By protecting Hanlan's Point today, we can guarantee the continued existence of this historic space. This means act immediately to protect the physical space at Hanlan's Point from erosion and other concerns and engaging in a community-driven process to develop an actionable long term strategy to protect this significant 2SLGBTQ+ space and the queer, trans, and 2 Spirit people who use it.

Just as the generations who came before did for us, we have a shared responsibility to steward Hanlan's Point for the generations to come. We are committed to the preservation of this space and look forward to working with Parks, Forestry and Recreation, Friends of Hanlan's, community partners, and 2SLGBTQ+ advocates on this important issue.

Sincerely,



Paul Jonathan Saguil
He/Him
Chair of The Board of Management
The 519

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¹ <https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2021/qs/bgrd/backgroundfile-168435.pdf>