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June 8, 2026

To: Economic and Community Development Committee / City Clerk

Re: Item 2026.EC29.12 — Community Engagement Process to Assess Local Community Support for Echoes and Nighttime Closure of Barbara Hall Park

Clerk's note: Please attach this submission to Item 2026.EC29.12 and cross-post it to any new business item on The AIDS Memorial or *Echoes* that is introduced at the June 9 meeting of the Economic and Community Development Committee

Dear Councillor Bravo and Members of the Economic and Community Development Committee,

On behalf of the **Health Equity Alliance of Nova Scotia (HEAL NS)**, formerly know as the **AIDS Coalition of Nova Scotia**, I am writing to submit this public letter for distribution to the Economic and Community Development Committee as part of Item 2026.EC29.12.

The **AIDS Coalition of Nova Scotia** was formed in 1995 by the merger of two previous Nova Scotian AIDS service organizations that were formed in the mid-1980s. We changed our name in 2024 to reflect a broadening of our mandate to broader sexual health (and other intersecting aspects of health), to reflect how the work about HIV/AIDS has changed – and also to remain fiscally viable as HIV funding shrinks national and provincially (NS). However, HIV/AIDS is still at the heart of all we do.

HEAL NS endorses The AIDS Memorial Project's *Echoes* proposal because the AIDS Memorial in Barbara Hall Park is of national importance, and not just to Toronto, or Ontario.

As someone over 60 (and a long-term HIV survivor myself), I watched many friends, acquaintances and colleagues die of AIDS. As the central and largest urban centre in Canada, many people from Nova Scotia (and many other places) moved to Toronto ... and too many died there too. Some were diagnosed In Ontario and came home to die in Nova Scotia ... so national connections have always been strong and emotionally-charged despite the physical distance.

The name of my first partner (who was from Ontario and lived in Toronto for many years) is also part of the Barbara Hall Park AIDS Memorial - as are other lost friends ... and visiting that park is a personal pilgrimage whenever I find myself in Toronto.

HEAL NS urges the Committee to separate the future of The AIDS Memorial (Toronto) from the debate about fencing or nighttime closure of Barbara Hall Park.

The AIDS Memorial should be considered on its own terms: as a site of mourning, naming, public memory, dignity, and recognition for people who died of AIDS and for people living with HIV today. It should not be embedded in an agenda item framed around crime, safety, disorder, and enforcement.

This distinction matters. Even if the fence recommendation is removed, The AIDS Memorial would still remain attached in the public record to an item whose framing is fundamentally about public safety and park disorder. That is not an appropriate civic frame for a memorial to people who died of AIDS and those living with HIV.

Echoes is a community-led proposal for the restoration and expansion of The AIDS Memorial, and HEAL NS joins other AIDS service and HIV/AIDS organizations from across Ontario and Canada in supporting this initiative.

We ask the Committee to:

1. Support a new and separate business item on The AIDS Memorial and *Echoes*, introduced by a councillor other than Councillor Moise.
2. Recognize The AIDS Memorial (Toronto) as a memorial of national significance.
3. Endorse *Echoes* as the principal framework for the restoration, expansion, interpretation, and long-term recognition of The AIDS Memorial.
4. Direct the General Manager, Parks and Recreation, to continue working with the HIV-positive community to integrate *Echoes* into the final design for The AIDS Memorial at Barbara Hall Park.
5. Delete Recommendation 1 from EC29.12 so the existing item no longer uses *Echoes* or The AIDS Memorial as part of the debate over fencing and nighttime closure.
6. Reject the proposed fencing or nighttime closure of Barbara Hall Park, and reject any approach that displaces unhoused people and people experiencing mental health crises instead of addressing the conditions they face.

Councillor Moise's motion created unnecessary harm by tying a broadly supported memorial proposal to a divisive park-closure debate. The community should not now be asked to accept that framing, nor should the repair of this situation be converted into political credit for the councillor who caused the problem.

The AIDS Memorial belongs to a much larger community than one ward. It holds the names, grief, memory, and history of people from across Toronto, Ontario, and Canada.

The Committee should do the right thing: separate the memorial from the fence debate, support a new motion on *Echoes*, and **allow The AIDS Memorial to be treated with the respect it deserves.**

Sincerely,



J. Chris Aucoin
Executive Director
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