

Chief Waylon Scott
Wabaseemoong Independent First Nations
General Delivery
Wabaseemoong, ON P0P

Wednesday, July 22, 2020

Aanii Boozhoo Chief Scott,

RE: MISSING AND MURDERED INDIGENOUS WOMEN AND GIRLS ONTARIO COMMEMORATION MONUMENTS (MMIWGT2S+)

The Ontario Family Members and the Ontario MMIWGT2S+ Loved Ones Commemoration Committee (OLOCC) write to share information about the provincial commemoration project as well as two planned gatherings around the unveiling ceremonies for the monument placements in memory of the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, Transgender and Two Spirited (MMIWGT2S+).

The National Inquiry released an interim report on November 2018, followed by the release of the Final Report on June 3, 2019. One of the recommendations from the interim report was the establishment of a commemoration fund. In responding to this recommendation, the Government of Canada established the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Commemoration Fund (MMIWGCF). The objectives of the Commemoration Fund are to honour the lives and legacies of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and LGBTQ2S individuals and increase awareness. The stated purpose of the fund is to support Indigenous organizations to work with families, survivors and/or communities to develop and implement commemoration initiatives to honor the lives and legacies of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls and LGBTQ2S individuals.

Many families within the province have been working together and discussing the feasibility of having a monument in Ontario to honour our loved ones. We applied for and were given a grant from the Women and Gender Equality commemoration fund. Meggie Cywink is a member of Whitefish River First Nation, who lost her sister in 1994. She is a strong advocate on behalf of MMIWG and OLOCC and is overseeing the project. With the approval of the application, OLOCC has sought additional funding that will now provide for two monuments in the province of Ontario. We hope to have one placed in the Northern region of Ontario and one in the South.

We are seeking your assistance with respect to securing the support of the Treaty 3 Chiefs. It would be greatly appreciated if you could ensure all communications from the OLOCC are shared directly with all Chiefs in Treaty 3. The OLOCC approached the City of Kenora in February to request a prominent site for the monument as many of the families feel Kenora is a hub city for the surrounding communities. In addition, we have applied for additional monument funding from the Indigenous Affairs Ontario and would like to ask that Wabaseemoong IFN act as the applicant in the contribution agreement. All funds will go directly to the monument.

On Monday, July 28th 2020, Heather Pihulak, Manager of Administration/City Clerk for Kenora, reached out to Meggie regarding a potential partnership and location within the city core. Ms. Pihulak advised that the Rotary Club of Kenora had applied for space to along the city harbourfront, located between the Bannister building and the Clarion, across from the Safeway for a *Peace Park*. After some discussion

with the Rotary Club, they are interested in partnering with OLOCC for the installation of the northern monument. Photos of the general area/location are attached as a visual for reference.

The establishment of the monuments is twofold: 1) to raise awareness about MMIWGT2S+ which will serve as a visual reminder of the crisis of violence against Indigenous women and girls in Canada; and 2) to commemorate and remember those we have lost.

The final stage of the Commemoration initiative will be the unveiling ceremonies and dedication at the two monument locations. The proposed dates for the unveiling ceremonies are Monday October 4th, 2021 for the North and Monday, February 14, 2022 for the South. The dates chosen have significance for MMIWGT2S+ families. October 4th has been acknowledged and recognized *Sisters in Spirit*, a day where we honour the lives off MMIWGT2S+ and February 14th marks the *Annual Women's Memorial March* to honour the lives of all the missing and murdered women and all the women's lives lost in the Downtown Eastside, Unceded Coast Salish Territories.

Meggie Cywink is the contact person with respect to the commemoration projects. She is representing the interests of the OLOCC and will be able to further answer any questions you may have about the project.

Thanking you in advance for your consideration and support of the Ontario Provincial MMIWGT2S+ Monument Project and this important work. The placement of the monuments is an opportunity to work towards ending gender-based violence, lifting the voices of vulnerable women and families and recognizing the current colonial harm and will ensure the monuments reflect and commemorate the loss of our loved ones, support healing, create awareness to instill change to address this national tragedy, and to advance reconciliation.

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Ontario Provincial Family Members and the Ontario MMIWGT2S+ Loved Ones Commemoration Committee (OLOCC)

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4 attachments