



October 12, 2021.

Dear Councillor Fleury,

We are writing this letter in support of the application to rename Sir Wilfrid Laurier Park in Sandy Hill. As our neighbourhood already has both a street and a museum named after Laurier, renaming this park will not risk diminishing the historical significance of the former prime minister. Instead, the proposed new name – one that aims to honour a local Sandy Hill resident who has worked to advance equality and reduce discrimination – will better reflect those who live, work, and play in our neighbourhood. After all, place names are a visible link to those individuals we collectively deem worthy to commemorate and as such they ought to reflect who we are and what we value in society.

Our support for this name change is grounded in our own mission statement: to support and defend Sandy Hill as a diverse, historic, and green community within a vibrant neighbourhood which welcomes people from all walks of life. As such, we wish to honour an individual with a long record of extraordinary community service and accomplishments that made Sandy Hill a better and more welcoming neighbourhood.

Cindy Mitchell has been an advocate for inclusion and equity in the field of childcare, removing accessibility barriers for children with special needs and for low-income households. At Bettye Hyde Co-operative Early Learning Centre (BHCELC), Cindy instilled a sense of civic duty in the toddlers and preschoolers by holding an annual food drive – something she continues to do through retirement. Most recently, throughout the pandemic, Cindy worked with others to create masks that helped raise money for the Ottawa Food Bank. Perhaps most significantly, Cindy was a founding member of Everyone's Sister, a refugee sponsor group that helps women and LGBTQ+ refugees to settle in Canada by supporting them with housing, language training, education, work opportunities, and citizenship. This renaming would also recognize Cindy's work in advancing the status of these groups.

Further, we are cognizant of the fact that most places in our city and country are named after men. The achievements of women – caregivers in particular – have not been fully appreciated. Early childhood educators (ECEs) are among the undervalued within society. Yet, it is they who we trust with our most precious possession: our children; they are the ones who teach future generations about the importance of learning and fun, and of sharing and cooperation; and they are the ones who make it possible for parents to return to work. They also have a positive effect on women's career prospects and pay. Like healthcare workers, ECEs have been essential through the ups and

downs of the pandemic. Although the backbone of our working society, ECEs were not included in the first eligible group for vaccinations. As a result, many contracted COVID-19 and various childcare centres in Ottawa experienced outbreaks. Having a park named after Cindy, a former ECE, along with a new bench featuring plaque that commemorates the contributions of all caregivers during the pandemic, would be a wonderful way to demonstrate our collective appreciation and gratitude.

Action Sandy Hill cannot think of a more fitting location for this tribute to Cindy Mitchell than the park that was adjacent to the original location of BHCELC when it was in the basement of all Saints Church and one that is still used by all Sandy Hill daycares. The Park is also special to the community as it is the location of Sandy Hill's sole splash pad as well as the only park to have a fully fenced perimeter. These attributes make it a popular destination for all those with wandering tots. We would be delighted to see this community gem renamed after someone who advanced the interests of local families and who represents the very best of Canadian values.

Action Sandy Hill thanks you for considering this request.

Susan Khazaeli, PhD
Action Sandy Hill, President