

Attention: Committee members and Chair, CPSC

I am requesting that I be scheduled to address this committee on the issue of removing the name of Paul Haggis from Haggis Park.

While it is tempting to merely say that a "rose by any other name is still a rose" I fear that may sound facetious, albeit accurate. People do not bring their children to the park to be exposed to contact with Mr. Haggis. The park will offer the same pleasures and safety, despite its name and will not pose any additional risks just because of its name. Intended as an honor and may end up dishonoring our city if Mr. Haggis should prove his innocence.

Further the issue of monetary damages to Mr. Haggis is something that should be in the forefront of the minds of those who are engaged in consequential reasoning.

Committee member Mr. Salih has made numerous public statements that - cumulatively - suggest that to leave the name of Paul Haggis as that of the Park presents a risk to children and/or parents. Mr. Salih is refusing to wait for our (western civilization's) long standing respect for the judicial system to work through this issue and exercise its detailed examination of any litigation that may arise. He says in one statement that it takes too long to wait for legal issues to work their way through the courts. But such is the nature of legal proceedings which is why we place judicial process in such high regard.

Mr. Salih has also stated that no one person has the right to name the park but Mr. Salih's statements and their intent appear to add up to his retaining to himself the right to unilaterally lead the charge to rename the park that carries an implicit condemnation of Mr. Haggis.

To take such an action that precludes the judicial process that has been a cornerstone of western justice, fairness and faith in equality before the eyes of the law and public is, I believe, arrogant even if its intent is well meaning.

Mr. Haggis is without question entitled to be tried by a court imbued with the legal and moral authority to do justice and render a verdict. To judge him in a court of public opinion, on the public's behalf, even though the public has not been formally consulted, is not compatible with western civilization's way of determining such behaviors. The public is being whipped up by a politician and his followers just before an election with legitimate questions that merit greater concern and may be of dubious, if not shameful, conduct. It demonstrates how ambition can run away with one's better judgement.

To assign to one's self such powers may also imply that some, who are now in Canada of relatively short duration but granted powers that do not represent a more full understanding of our Canadian heritage. Punishment without due process violates our most treasured freedoms, rights and our most hard fought for protections.

I would like the Committee to consider the possibility that, particularly if Mr. Haggis should be found innocent but his career still suffers, **Mr. Haggis may hold the city liable for damages to his profession and reputation.**

In fact, those damages may already have prejudiced Mr. Haggis' access to a fully objective hearing and trial if it should become known that he is being denounced and degraded by his own home town. In this case, fortunately London, Ontario, does not normally make the world sit up and take notice of happens in our pleasant and moderate city.

I thus request the opportunity to address this Committee and urge a cautionary rejection of the renaming of Haggis Park. I'd even suggest that a qualified apology may be appropriate especially since the outcome may well prove Mr. Haggis innocent. And that is why we must wait for the parties to follow their rights to due process through the judicial system. We do not have the right to prejudge Mr. Haggis on the basis of unknown details of potentially anonymous allegations.

I fear it is easy temptation to seek public attention before an election and jump on the #MeToo bandwagon that sometimes is no better than juvenile assaults on men's reputations must for whatever gains or revenge may be the motive. We should not sully our city and our involvement must be stopped unless the women can offer credible and recent information that justifies a court hearing. And I stress the need for an objective forum such as a court hearing.

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