

# Information Report

**Title:** Secord Monument Public Engagement

**Report Number:** Strategic Initiatives-2024-06

**Director:** Chief Administrative Officer

**Manager:** Strategic Initiatives

**Meeting Date:**

Wednesday, March 27, 2024

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## Executive Summary:

On January 24, 2024, Council approved the resources needed to engage the community in meaningful conversations and learning, about equity, diversity and inclusion which will assist Council in its decision-making regarding the Secord Monument.

This report provides an update on the engagement process as well as the opportunity to meet with the facilitator, Dr. Laura Mae Lindo, that was chosen for the engagement process. It is important to note that the facilitator, will not making a recommendation to Council on the future of the monument. The facilitator's role is to collect and present information gathered from the community to assist Council in its decision making.

This is the first report in a series of updates to Council on the progress and information gathered from the engagement process.

## Context and Background Information:

There are two monuments in the Municipality of Kincardine dedicated to Dr. Solomon Secord. Over 110 years ago, in the years following his death, patients and friends chose to put these up in his honour.

Monument 1 is in the Kincardine Cemetery where it still stands today. Its inscription reads:

*In memoriam to Solomon Secord, M.D. Erected by his friends to a man who was unalterably opposed to all forms of insincerity cant and hypocrisy. He loved children and animals and was rich in all things worth while. His life was devoted to benevolence and charity and he still lives in the affection of the people. His last words were "give my love to everybody."*

Monument 2, a sundial, was originally installed outside the Kincardine Branch of the Bruce County Library, reads:

*I mark the Sunny Hours. To Solomon Secord, 1834-1910. Our family physician for 50 years. This memorial was erected by his loving friends. Served as surgeon with the Southern Army during the American Civil War. All that lived he loved, and without regard for fee or reward, he did his work for love of his fellows.*

Monument 2 was removed in the spring of 2023 due to the Queen Street reconstruction project. Following the construction, it was no longer possible to return the monument to its original location. Council decided to defer the placement of the Secord Monument until Council had the opportunity to disposition these issues. To assist with this understanding of issues, Council directed that an external facilitator(s) be engaged to work with the Municipality to provide opportunities for the public to explore history and impacts, share perspectives, consider new ideas, and form new relationships. This engagement process was to assist Council with decision-making about the second monument.

### **Consultation Overview:**

Staff consulted with municipalities and researched how other communities have worked through similar situations regarding public engagement on monuments. A common element to the success of the process noted was choosing the right facilitator. Advice from other municipalities about choosing a facilitator included the following:

- Does not live in the community in order to remain neutral.
- Has previous experience facilitating community conversations about monuments/and or the commemoration of people.
- Has strong facilitation experience and presentation skills.
- Will include all opinions throughout the engagement process.
- Has a positive track record in teaching inclusion and equity work.

Research was conducted on potential facilitators through municipal networks based on experience and successes and twelve facilitators were considered for this process. When choosing the facilitator (besides the criteria noted above), staff looked for experience leading discussions or educational sessions about sensitive topics like monuments and their approach to handling potentially contentious issues. This included their ability and past experience, to navigate conversations respectfully, encourage open dialogue, and address different viewpoints with sensitivity and fairness.

Dr. Laura Mae Lindo was chosen as the consultant for the engagement process. Dr. Lindo is a respected educator who holds both a Master's and PhD in education. Dr. Lindo is a knowledgeable human rights advocate, and a respected ally to vulnerable communities. Most importantly, she is a courageous public speaker, ready, willing, and able to speak to issues often left unaddressed.

It is important to note that the facilitator, will not making a recommendation to Council on the future of the monument. The facilitator's role is to collect and present information gathered from the community to assist Council in its decision making.

Council will make the decision regarding the future of the monument.

### **Key components of phase 1 engagement**

This engagement process will collect all opinions on the second Secord monument. Central to this process is to foster an environment of inclusion that creates opportunities for safe and respectful conversations about the community we all belong to.

The first phase is intended to collect information that:

- Will inform the groups that need to be engaged in the discussions about the monument
- The issues needing consideration
- The perspectives and worries from residents

A Public Survey was launched on March 12, 2024 along with a [background document](#) on both the monuments to start this engagement process. The survey has been promoted on social media, radio, newspaper, post cards, through networks etc..

The survey closes March 31, 2024 and as of March 19, there have been 342 surveys completed. Based on questions asked and comments received from the public a "Frequently Asked Questions" (FAQ) has been created and is available on the website. As the process evolves questions and answers will be added to this document as needed.

In April following the survey, community conversations will be conducted with specific groups based on the feedback collected from the survey. To date invitations for community specific interviews have been sent to; history and heritage groups, equity seeking groups and residents requesting interviews.

The goal is to present the information and discuss the public input collected to date at a community conversation in May 2024.

As we learn about the feedback throughout the process, future components and steps will be identified. A decision from Council is anticipated in August 2024.

Updates on what we learn at each phase will be shared with Council and will also be available to the public on our website at [www.kincardine.ca/Secord](http://www.kincardine.ca/Secord).

### **Origin:**

#### Council Resolution - August 7, 2023

Whereas the commemorative text on the monument contains passages that do not reflect on contributions to the Municipality of Kincardine, the Province of Ontario, or to Canada, and are not consistent with the municipality's commitment to developing and completing actions to improve inclusion, diversity, equity and access (IDEA) and that the last line be amended to remove "review its placement" and replacement "disposition these issues".

#### Council Resolution - September 13, 2023

That staff be directed to prepare a report with recommendations for Councils consideration related to the Secord Monument including possible options for public engagement.

## Council Resolution - January 24 2024

That Council direct staff to hire an external consultant(s) to provide advice on the process and to assist in the facilitation of a public engagement process regarding equity, diversity and inclusion, to assist Council in its decision-making related to the Secord Monument; and That Council approve the budget for external support for this advice and assistance with the process for an amount not to exceed \$15,000 from the contingency fund.

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### **Attachments:**

Attachment 1: Secord Monument Backgrounder

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**Submitted by:** Lorie Fioze, Manager of Strategic Initiatives