

Secord Monument

BACKGROUND

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 up these up in his honour.

Monument 1

Kincardine Cemetery

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

Public Library (currently in storage)

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.*

Removed in the spring of 2023 due to the Queen Street reconstruction project, the second monument remains stored in a secure location. Following the construction, it is no longer possible to return the monument to its original location.

The Issue at Hand

Council's Considerations

Councils have received requests to remove the second monument due to the reference to Secord's service to the Southern (Confederate) Army during the American Civil War.

This war centered on slavery, a practice which systematically oppressed and dehumanized Black people.

The reference on the second monument, along with questions about Secord's role as a medic for the Confederate Army who fought to maintain the institute of slavery, raises concerns with members of the Kincardine community.

There has been no raising of concerns with respect to the cemetery monument where the inscription makes no reference to the American Civil War or Secord's participation.

Council has received requests to return monument 2 to outside the library. Concerns that removing the monument or amending the wording is disrespectful to Secord's service to the community are part of these requests. They also express concern for the erasing or denial of history.

With the Queen Street reconstruction project complete, Council is considering the needs and impact upon community of monument 2 due to the reference to the American Civil War.

Following a staff report, the current Council directed that an external consultant(s) be engaged to assist them with decision-making about the second monument.

Monuments Honouring Dr. Secord



Monument 1 currently located in the Kincardine Cemetery.



Monument 2 outside the Kincardine Branch of the Bruce County Library; currently in storage.

Public Engagement

Why it's important

Public engagement about monument 2 is very important to Council. Research into how other communities have worked through similar situations and the best way of moving ahead with a public engagement process was conducted. A common element to the success of the process for all of the communities interviewed was choosing the right facilitator.

Finding a Facilitator

Shared Advice

Advice from other municipalities about choosing a facilitator:

- 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.

Staff have researched potential facilitators to advise on the process as well as facilitation of the community conversations. The top candidate has now been selected.



Dr. Laura Mae Lindo

Dr. Laura Mae Lindo is the consultant for the engagement process. She will 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 will all be important to Council's decision-making 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.

A former Member of Provincial Parliament for Kitchener Centre and Ontario's Official Opposition Critic for Anti-Racism and Equity as well as Colleges and Universities, Dr. Lindo was the inaugural Chair of Ontario's first Black Caucus. She is currently an Assistant Professor in Philosophy at the University of Waterloo.

Learn more about Dr. Lindo and her work at <https://lauramaelindo.com>

Engagement Process

Key Components - Phase 1

This engagement process is looking for 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.

Public Survey - March 2024

Visit www.kincardine.ca/Secord-Survey to participate. The survey closes March 31, 2024.

Group Interviews - April 2024

Specific group interviews with community groups will take place. Results of what is heard at these interviews will be posted online at www.kincardine.ca/Secord.

Community Conversations - May 2024

Results to date will be presented at these community conversations. The community will have the opportunity to discuss the results.

Future Components

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

