From: andrew wiersema
To: Cody Vangel
Subject: [External] Colonization Road
Date: Wednesday, March 10, 2021 10:40:06 PM

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For consideration in the matter or renaming Colonization Roads:

I grew up in this community, in fact, I caught the bus everyday on Colonization Rd. I now consider myself privileged for never having any context to what the term "colonization" meant to some.

I have spent the last several years listening, independently reading, and having difficult and at times uncomfortable discourse around this subject. From those conversations, I have learned to stop and consider other lived experiences outside of my own.

In the last 5 years, I have had 3 different instances where friends have come to visit from away, and not only noticed, but commented on the fact that we have a street named Colonization Road. I have felt a real sense of conflict while attempting to show the beauty of my town, to then only stumble over explaining what is clearly an overt display of disrespect towards the surrounding Indigenous communities. I am embarrassed to admit, but I too was ignorant to the context of their comments when first mentioned, but have since taken the time to reflect and learn about the impact of what that word and means and represents for others.

I want to express my support to Town Council in changing the name of both Colonization Roads. I believe there is an obligation to do what is right, and do it for the right reasons. I believe you must not give consideration to ignorant, racist, and distractive ramblings.

I believe the new name needs to reflect, distinctly, why the town decided to take this action. Let the new name stand as a reminder to those who opposed it out of ignorance, apathy, or racism. A person's opinion on the matter, while they may be entitled to it, does not negate the obligations imposed under the highest law of the land; the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Let those who disagree because it is their opinion, research the charter, read it, understand it; or not. Their ignorance should not equate to a justifiable position, only because they decided to express themselves.

I struggle to comprehend that if we, as a community, cannot collectively understand (let alone agree) to change the name of a road as a gesture of respect between friends, how are we ever supposed to begin to overcome generations of destructive laws, policies, and attitudes in any meaningful way.

Those who will legitimately struggle to change their address deserve assistance, there's there no argument there. I cannot imagine there are so many that a group of volunteers could not be quickly assembled to assist where there is genuine need. Please count me in as a volunteer for such a worthy endeavor. Otherwise, this change of address argument is simply an excuse to avoid inconvenience.

I believe you all know what is the right thing to do; other communities have already demonstrated it for you. Please change the name. It is time.

It's the name of a road, they change sometimes. Reconciliation Road, that's what I would like to see as a reminder to everyone. Don't hide it in obscurity, make it meaningful. Peoples' perspectives, attitudes, understanding, and relationships can change for a lifetime. That is what is at stake here.

Thank you all for your time and careful consideration in this matter,

Andrew Wiersema