

February 27, 2013

To: Members,  
Community and Protective Services Committee

Re: Regina Indian Industrial School Cemetery

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**RECOMMENDATION OF THE MUNICIPAL HERITAGE ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
- FEBRUARY 11, 2013**

That the Community and Protective Services Committee ask City Administration to formally engage with stakeholders and seek the creation of a covenant that will ensure suitable and appropriate protection and recognition for the site of the Regina Indian Industrial School cemetery based on the following principles:

- Respect for the memory of the First Nations and Métis children buried there.
- Respect for the memory of the children of Rev. McLeod buried there.
- Respect for the true legacy of the Regina Indian Industrial School.
- Respect for First Nations beliefs.
- Respect for Christian beliefs.
- Respect for the rights of the current property owners.

*MUNICIPAL HERITAGE ADVISORY COMMITTEE – FEBRUARY 11, 2013*

The Committee adopted a resolution to concur in the recommendation contained in the report.

Councillor John Findura, Donald Black, May P. Chan, Bianca Currie-Poirier, Ken Lozinsky, Ray Plosker, David McLennan, Ingrid Thiessen, Victor Thomas and Robert Truszkowski were present during consideration of this report by the Municipal Heritage Advisory Committee.

The Municipal Heritage Advisory Committee, at its meeting held on February 11, 2013, considered the following report from Donald Black:

**RECOMMENDATION**

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- Respect for Christian beliefs.
- Respect for the rights of the current property owners.

## CONCLUSION

Although there are no current development applications for the site, located at 701 Pinkie Road, (Appendix 'A') the land that the cemetery occupies is designated for future development in the

City's *West Industrial Lands Secondary Plan*. The site of the Regina Indian Industrial School's Cemetery will be afforded a degree of protection by the creation of a principle-based covenant amongst stakeholders.

## BACKGROUND

The Municipal Heritage Advisory Committee (MHAC) 2012 work plan directs that the Committee is responsible for participating in and taking the lead to develop recommendations for suitable and appropriate recognition for the cemetery. A working group was established and met several times during 2012. On May 28<sup>th</sup>, 2012, City administration wrote to the property owners in Markham, Ontario to inform them of the existence of the cemetery and outline options for them to consider should they wish to appropriately recognize the cemetery.

The property owners' representative, Mr. Nadeem ul Islam, is aware of the cemetery and fully respects the heritage value and sacred nature of the site. He indicates that the owners wish, at some point, to develop their land, while fully respecting the cemetery, in accordance with the city's future vision for the site.

Administration prepared an extensive report for MHAC on the cemetery on June 4<sup>th</sup>, 2012 including a review of discussions with the officials from the Ministry of First Nations and Métis Relations and an overview of a presentation to MHAC on February 6<sup>th</sup> by Carlos Germann, director of Heritage Resources for the Ministry of Parks, Culture and Sport.

On June 27<sup>th</sup>, 2012 members of the working group visited the site with employees of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). The TRC stressed the need for a proper investigation of the site to accurately determine the number of burials on the site, but estimated, based on their experience with a similar school in Nova Scotia, that there could be as many as 50 unmarked graves of students who died while attending the Regina school.

At the July 30<sup>th</sup> MHAC meeting, members of the working group provided an update to MHAC which resulted in stories about the cemetery appearing in the local media. Subsequently, members of the public with knowledge of the cemetery contacted working group members to share their knowledge about the cemetery and express their strong desire that the site should be honoured and protected.

In October, archaeologists from Stantec Ltd. contacted the working group and agreed to undertake a survey of the cemetery on a *pro bono* basis, once permission for the survey was obtained from the property owners. During an informal meeting with the working group, attended by Lisa Hein, Stantec's Physical Archaeologist, permission was given to undertake the survey work by Mr. ul Islam. This work was completed by a team from Stantec on November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2012. An initial report was provided by Ms. Hein to the working committee, Mr. ul Islam, and Nathan Friesen, Senior Archaeologist with the Saskatchewan Ministry of Parks, Culture and Sport on November 29<sup>th</sup>, 2012. Ms. Hein presented her full report at the December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2012

meeting of the Municipal Heritage Advisory Committee. Mr. ul Islam was in attendance at that meeting and participated in the presentation and subsequent discussion.

## DISCUSSION

Based on the Stantec survey (Appendix B) and historical records (Appendix C) it is estimated that well in excess of 22 burials are located on the cemetery site. A simple marker for John and Robert McLeod, infant children of Rev. A. J. McLeod, the school's first principal, and his wife Lillie, exists in the north-east corner of the cemetery (Appendix D). The remnants of the wooden fence that demarcates the cemetery was apparently built by the R.M of Sherwood to replace a steel fence, which replaced the original wooden fence that was destroyed by a prairie fire. That fire also eradicated any wooden crosses that may have marked the graves of the children.

The legacy of the Regina Indian Industrial School is not a happy one. However, it is incumbent upon us to ensure that the value system that led to the creation of the residential school system and that is so evocatively represented by the people buried in the cemetery is not forgotten. The cemetery site must stand as powerful testimony to that chapter in Regina's history.

Indeed, if it is treated with the respect and honour that it deserves, the cemetery has the potential to be one of the city's most significant archaeological, cultural and heritage sites.

While it would be a relatively straight forward task to simply erect a suitable marker on the site, members of MHAC believe that much more is called for. Although further formal, structured recognition and protection of the cemetery site is crucial, it is felt that such an endeavour exceeds the current mandate of the committee. A formal process with full involvement by stakeholders including, but not limited to, appropriate First Nations and Métis groups, appropriate churches including the United Church of Canada, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the property owners, the provincial government, and the City of Regina is required.

A somewhat similar situation happened in Red Deer. There, a two-year process of suitably honouring the cemetery and the children buried in it was led by the United Church, with full involvement by First Nations and Métis groups, the property owners, and the city of Red Deer (Appendix E). The working group feels that the Red Deer experience may provide a 'road map' for similar endeavours in Regina.

## RECOMMENDATION IMPLICATIONS

### Financial Implications

None with respect to this report.

### Environmental Implications

None with respect to this report.

### Strategic Implications

None with respect to this report.

Accessibility Implications

None with respect to this report.

COMMUNICATIONS

There has been media interest in the site of the cemetery and it is probable that once the details of the Stantec report, and the existence of so many burials become public, that further media and/or public interest will occur.

DELEGATED AUTHORITY

The disposition of this report is within the authority of the Community and Protective Services Committee.

Respectfully submitted,

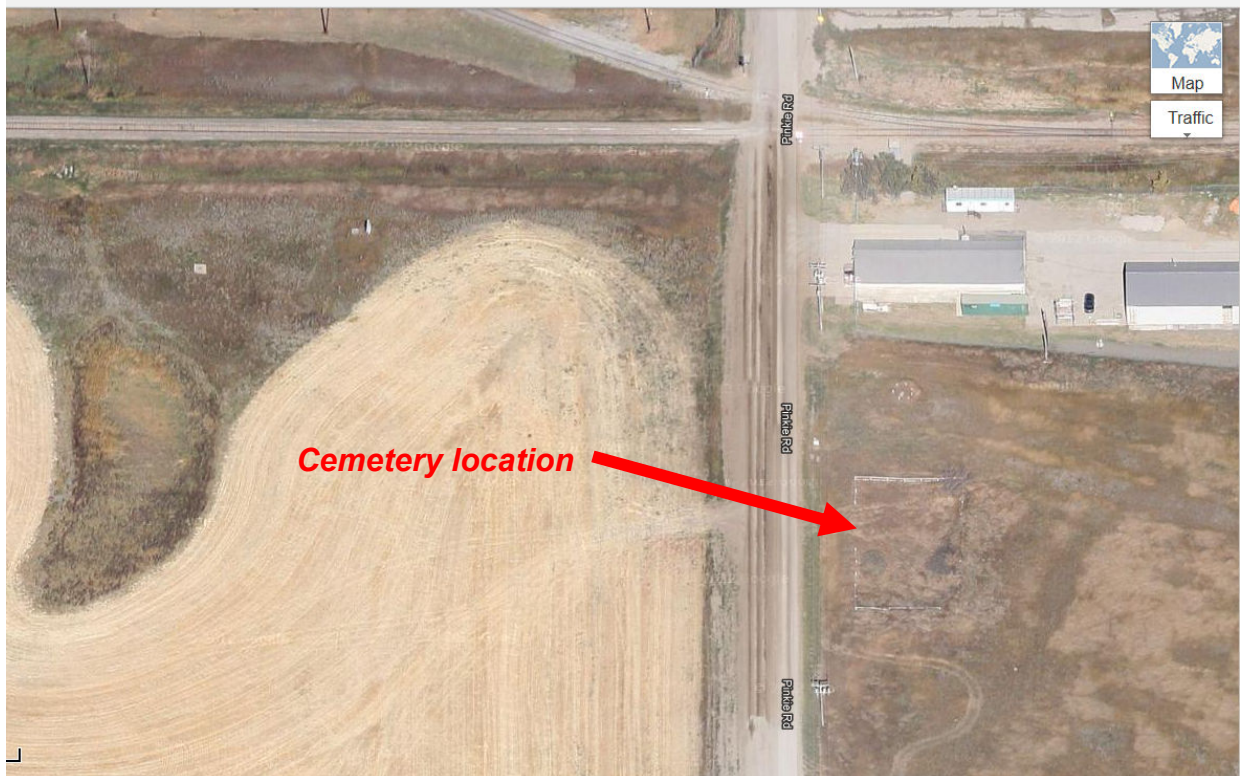
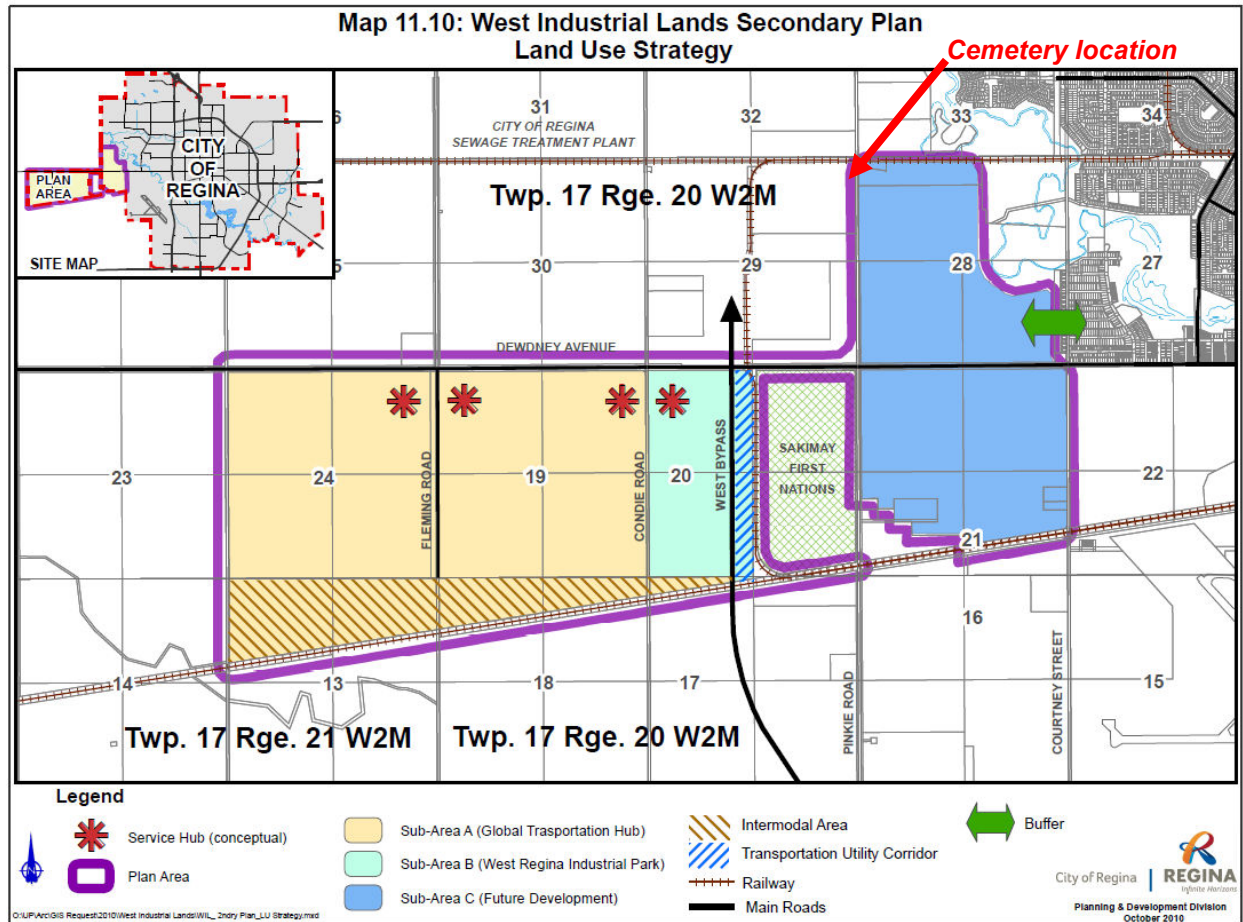
MUNICIPAL HERITAGE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Linda Leeks".

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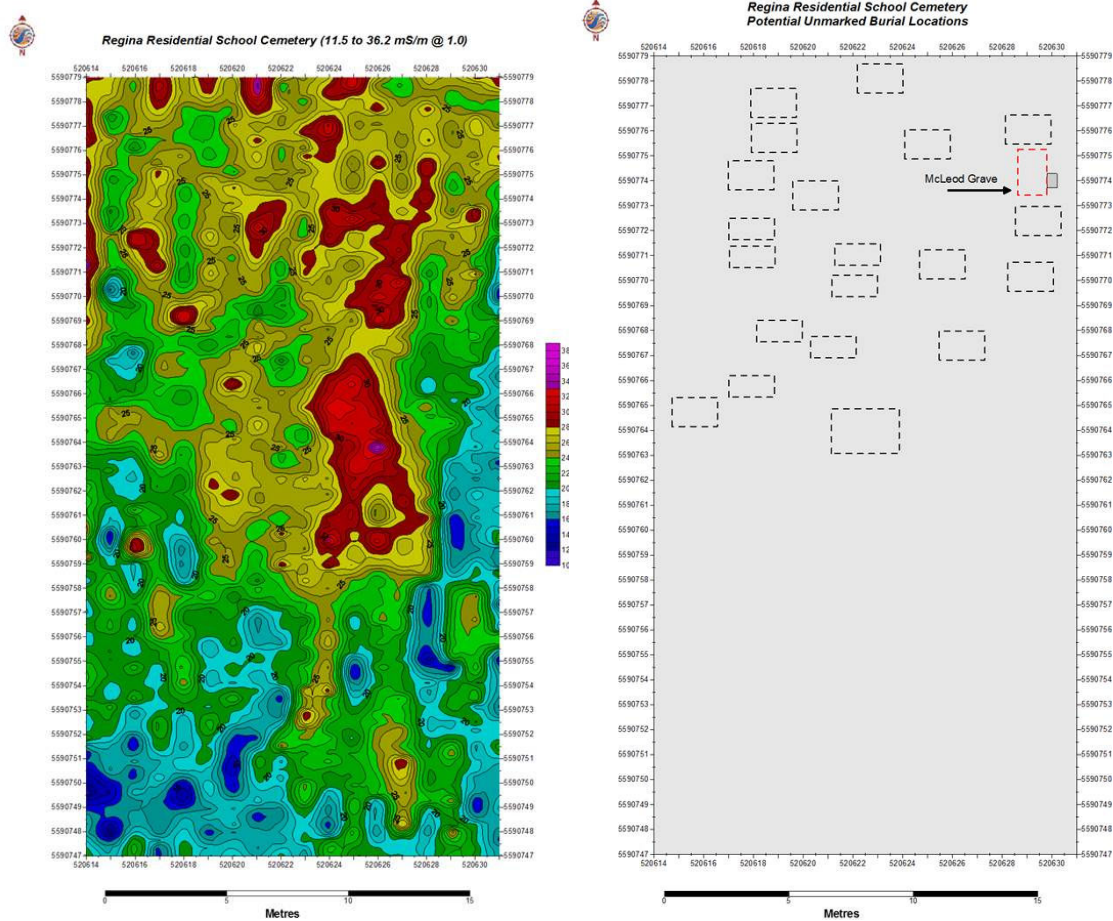
Linda Leeks, Secretary

Appendix 'A' – location of the Regina Indian Industrial School cemetery.





**Appendix 'B'** – Results of Stantec EM (electromagnetic) 38 survey of cemetery site. The EM38 measures the electrical conductivity or salinity of the soil and detects disturbances to the soil caused, in this case, by burial shafts.



A large amount of blow dirt covers the southern portion of the cemetery. The blow dirt hampers the effectiveness of the EM38 instrument. Further physical work is required to examine that part of the site. The area immediately outside the boundary of the existing fence should also be surveyed since it is possible that the fence may not accurately define the original boundaries of the cemetery.

Appendix 'C' - Copy of a letter written in 1921 by Mrs. Jen. McAra (wife of former Regina Mayor Peter McAra) to the federal government seeking some level of care for the site of the cemetery, or the transfer of the site to the care of the church. Note that 35 - 40 burials are referenced by Mrs. McAra.

WOMEN'S MISSIONARY SOCIETY  
of the  
Presbyterian Church in Canada  
Saskatchewan.

2013 Victoria Ave. Regina.  
Nov. 14th, 1921.

W.M. Graham, Esq.,  
Commissioner of Indian Affairs,  
Regina, Sask.

Dear Sir;

The following is a copy of a motion that was passed  
unanimously at our last Provincial Executive Meeting, (Nov. 4th)  
Moved by Mrs. Sinclair and seconded by Mrs. Gillespie,

"That Mrs. McAra write Commissioner Graham, asking if  
something definite cannot be done in regard to the  
cemetery at the old Regina Industrial School, that he  
petition the Federal Government to put it in good order,  
that it may be kept sacred to the memory of the Indians  
and a lasting memorial to the memory of our beloved  
Missionary, Rev. A.J. McLeod, who found the school,  
whose children lie in this little plot, side by side with  
the Indian children."

This plot of ground, we are informed, is now part of a field,  
that is or has been used as a pasture field. The fence has  
entirely disappeared, having been burned by Prairie fire, the  
cattle have trampled all over the little mounds, flattening them  
out, and destroying the little wooden crosses that marked the  
last resting places of some thirty-five or forty of our little  
Indian children; also the granite slab, placed there by Mr.  
and Mrs. McLeod, in loving memory of their dear ones.

Perhaps the desecration and neglect of this "God's acre"  
is felt more keenly by the mover and seconder of the above  
motion, than by other members of the Executive. Mrs. Sinclair is  
the widow of the late Rev. J.A. Sinclair, who was successor to the  
late Rev. J.A. McLeod, as Principal of this Indian school. Mr. and  
Mrs. Sinclair took a great deal of pleasure and pride, in teaching  
and assisting the children to care for, and hold sacred the  
graves of their little playmates. Mrs. Gillespie, the seconder,  
was a life long friend of the McLeod family, being closely  
associated with them, both in their school and private life.

This land, we understand, is still the property of the Federal  
Government, and we feel confident that if we leave this matter  
with you, that our wish will be granted, that it be put in good  
order, and a deed of this small portion of land be given to  
the Presbyterian Church of Canada.

We would ask for your sympathetic co-operation in this  
endeavor, knowing, as we do, the kindly interest you have always  
manifested, in all that pleases and pertains to the welfare of  
the Indians. Trusting that you will give this matter your  
earliest consideration.

Very sincerely,

( Mrs. P ) Jen. McAra.

Corr. Sec'y Prov. W.M.S. Board.

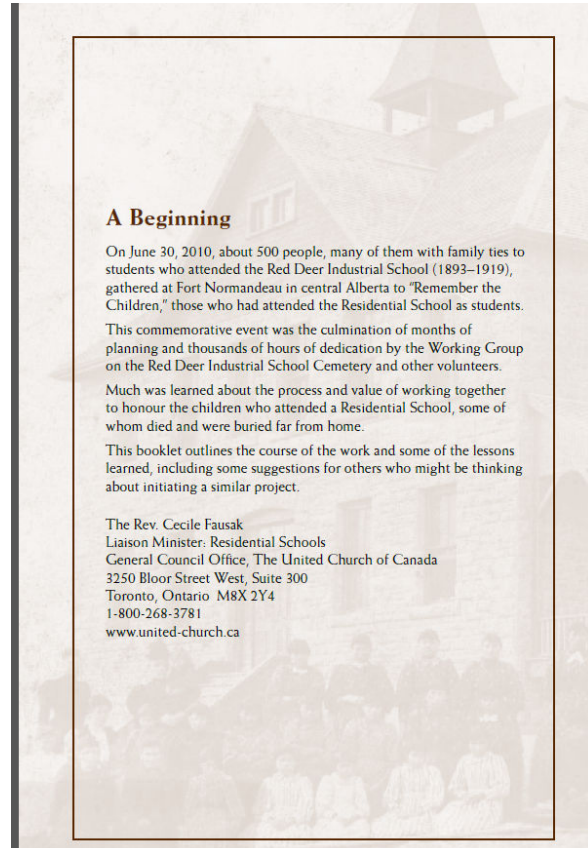
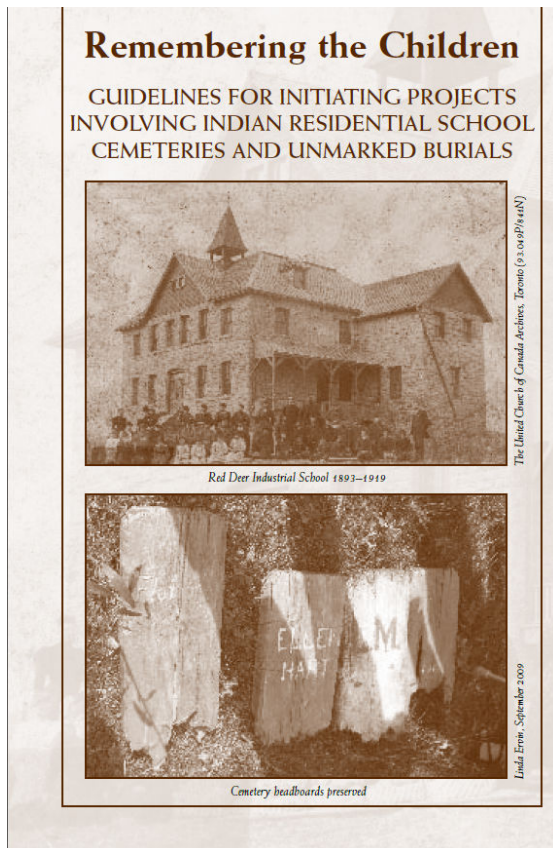


**Appendix 'D'** – Pictures of the marker for the children of Rev. McLeod, the school's first principal.





**Appendix 'E'** – A 'road map' may be found in the following booklet produced by the United Church of Canada detailing the process utilized in Red Deer.



The Regina Indian Industrial School was located on the site of the current Paul Dojack Centre. It served as a school in between 1891 and 1910. From 1910 – 1919 the building housed the jail for the city of Regina. In 1919 it became the provincial home for delinquent and dependent youth. It burned to the ground on January 26<sup>th</sup>, 1948. Photo taken ca. 1905.