

## WHAT'S IN A NAME?

The Sumach-Shuter Parkette has long been known as Stinky's park, and will soon be known as Louis March Park. JACK BOLAND/TORONTO SUN

Downtown councillor caught up in yet another rebranding controversy

JUSTIN HOLMES

They think the lack of consultation stinks.

A group of neighbours are upset that their tiny green patch at Sumach and Shuter Sts. will soon bear a name from outside their community — one, they argue, that was imposed top-down by their ward councillor, Chris Moise. And while the City of Toronto's official name makes it seem like Sumach-Shuter Parkette never had much of an identity, the locals say most people call it Stinky's park. Bill Eadie has lived on Shuter for 40 years and is one of about a dozen people in neighbourhood working together to fight the renaming. He told the Toronto Sun the process was flawed and the consultation was so "selective," city hall didn't so much as put up a sign at Stinky's park to inform the public.

"They didn't want the neighbourhood to know," Eadie said.

The Stinky's name is part of the lore of the Trefann Court neighbourhood, and predates Toronto's glassy condo era by decades. The parkette earned the name because of its proximity to a nearby business and, like a stubborn odour, Stinky's has clung to the spot since.

That name will soon give way, at least officially, to Louis March Park, as the parkette is renamed after a Toronto activist best known for his opposition to gun violence who died in July 2024.

Eadie said Louis March Park is "a good name," but March wasn't from the area and the neighbourhood has its own heroes to celebrate.

There's also the fact that honouring a community leader at this parkette is a bit, well, funky.

"I don't think anyone is trying to associate the words 'Louis March' and 'stinky,'" Eadie said.

The Louis March Park motion was put forward by Moise, the ward's councillor, who has made headlines for the renaming of another city asset in his ward: Yonge-Dundas Square, now Sankofa Square.

The name was approved in a 22-1 vote at May's city council meeting (Councillor Brad Bradford was the lone opponent). The parkette is about to reopen after a thorough redesign - at that same May meet-ing, council OK'd a donation of \$50,000 from toy maker Spin Master to enhance the new playground.

In a written statement to the Sun, Moise's office said his renaming motion came in response to a "clear and heartfelt demand for recognition" of March's legacy.

March

"worked with countless families, young people, and grassroots organizations to address the root causes of violence, particularly in historically underserved neighbourhoods like Regent Park" the statement said.

Eadie said that motion points to two of the problems.

The landslide vote meant the matter won't go before community council, which would have given residents a chance to make their case directly to councillors.

Moise also asked councillors to ignore the city's property naming policy in approving the motion. Eadie said he'd like someone to explain what was so "special" about March's

ties to the parkette that city hall would break its own rules. For some in Trefann Court with long memories, treating their neighbourhood like an extension of Regent Park, as Moise appears to do in his statement, feels like another attempt by city hall to erase it. Trefann Court was due for the wrecking ball in a time of urban renewal before the parents and grandparents of some of today's residents fought back.

Moise appears to have taken these concerns to heart.

"Councillor Moise also acknowledges the history of Trefann Court and the role of local residents in preserving this land for community use during the urban renewal battles of the 1960s. That legacy must also be honoured," his statement said.

"In response to the feedback received, we are exploring the installation of a commemorative plaque to formally recognize the historical significance of the neighbourhood and the creation of this parkette."

Badie said he finds it "really insulting" that the city would honour Trefann Court's legacy with a plaque only "as an afterthought, as an offer from Councillor Moise to try and distract, or try and, I don't know, he's trying to get us to shut up." It's a "long shot," Eadie said, but the plan is to make noise, maybe win over a councillor or two and try to get the issue back before council.

Debra Dineen is also part of Trefann Court's fight. She said the group will be knocking on doors and putting up flyers to try to win over the neighbourhood.

She started an online petition, which calls for "meaningful consultation," that as of Sunday evening had just over 350 signatures.

"This should not ever be the way a councillor works, ever,"

Dineen said.

"He could stand up and admit what he's done is wrong," she added, "but I'm very doubtful he will."

However, in his statement, Moise cited a different petition with 850 signatures, as well as a community web page with 11 votes in favour, as evidence that there is "strong support" for the new name.

The renaming of city assets has become a theme in Moise's first term on council.

In addition to Sankofa Square, the parkette renaming also closely follows the rebranding of the TTC's Dundas station, adjacent to Sankofa Square, to TMU station as part of a largely secret deal with Toronto Metropolitan University.

The TMU station approved by the TTC's board, and Moise wasn't involved. However, Moise was on that board last year when it called for a "framework for considering the naming of Dundas station and Dundas West station" and a "racial equity analysis regarding capital asset naming.

Two councillors who were at that meeting told the Sun last year that debate was at one point less than civil, but no video of the meeting exists. After a request from Moise, council was told in June 2024 a video archive wasn't saved because nobody ended the live stream and it timed out.

jholmes@postmedia.com