

June 12, 2024

To whom it may concern,

Re: Letter of support for the commemorative name Asini-Aadisookaan-aki / Stone Spirit Park

I am the Anishnaabe artist who was commissioned by the City of Toronto to create a stone sculpture that I have called *Mishibizhiig: The Underwater Panther*, for the new park on St Patrick Street, south of Dundas Street West, that is part of the Relic Linear Park System. I am writing in support of the name Asini-Aadisookaan-aki / Stone Spirit Park for the new park.

By way of background, and possibly to include with any explanatory plaques that Parks may wish to install, I offer the following excerpt from my sculpture proposal for the park:

"In the Anishinaabe world view, the universe is understood to be comprised of layers; and sites that include the opposing elements of water, earth and sky, as this site does, are spiritually active places. This tiered cosmos is animated by the interaction of beings and persons both natural and spiritual. The mishibizhiig – the underwater panthers – reside in the lower realms of water, and here the granite blocks include hand-carved bas-relief images of several mishibizhiig. Blending the stone traditions of Ojibway and European cultures, the carved figures are reminiscent of the stone gargoyles also seen in western architecture."

The name Asini-Aadisookaan-aki / Stone Spirit Park expresses the intent of my work in stone. The name also acknowledges the spirit residing in the park's other carved stones, produced by anonymous artists for the city's buildings many years ago.

Michael Belmore