

To the Mayor and Members of Cambridge City Council,

I am writing to urge the City of Cambridge to re-engage with Home Depot Canada regarding the land, iconic waterfall fountain/sculptures at the corner of Hespeler Road and Pinebush Road.

As a local historian, author and heritage advocate for over 30 yrs, I have long supported the sculptures and fountain at this location. I wrote my first letter on this issue in 2014.

It is a fact that turning off the Hwy 401 at Hwy. 24 in Cambridge, Hespeler Road is the first thing people visiting Cambridge experience. Hespeler Road is a generic, placeless commercial strip that could exist in any city in North America.

This fountain has a long and meaningful history in our city. It was originally built in the mid-1980s as a landmark feature for the Knob Hill Farms Food Terminal—at the time the world's largest grocery store—and was designed specifically as a gateway to Cambridge. It operated seasonally for years and was beloved by residents. When Home Depot took over the property, the fountain fell into disrepair and has remained mostly dormant ever since.

I recognize that Council has visited this issue before. In 2018, Councillor Frank Monteiro made significant progress, bringing Home Depot Canada to the table and arriving at a tentative agreement where the company would transfer the land to the city for just two dollars. That near-breakthrough shows that a deal is achievable. I am asking Council to pick up where those talks left off.

My proposal is straightforward. The City should:

- negotiate with Home Depot to obtain the fountain land
- ideally restore the fountain to working order

In recognition of their cooperation and goodwill, Home Depot could be acknowledged with tasteful corner plaques on the fountain structure crediting their partnership with the City on this project. This gives Home Depot continued visibility at one of the most prominent intersections in Cambridge, while returning this landmark to the public as a true gateway feature.

The best-case outcome would be a fully restored, flowing fountain—a landmark that says something meaningful about who we are as a community. But even if full restoration proves too costly, there could be less costly alternatives to highlight the

sculptures. It would transform this part of Hespeler Road into a point of civic pride at the entrance one of Cambridge's busiest corridors.

Hespeler Road is widely acknowledged as one of the most challenging streetscapes in the region—heavily commercialized, difficult for pedestrians, and visually chaotic. This fountain site is a rare opportunity to insert something meaningful and distinctly Cambridge into that landscape. Other cities invest heavily to create gateway features; we already have one. We simply need the will to reclaim it.

I respectfully urge Council to move forward to re-open discussions with Home Depot Canada and explore a formal agreement along the lines described above. The groundwork has already been laid. The opportunity is there. All that is needed now is the commitment to see it through.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

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Paul Langan

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