RENAMING OF FOSTER DRIVE

Mover: Councillor S. Kinach
Seconder: Councillor A. Caputo

WHEREAS Sergeant William Merrifield, VC, MM was a Canadian soldier and recipient of both the Military Medal and the Victoria Cross, the highest military decoration awarded for extraordinary bravery in the presence of the enemy; and

WHEREAS Sergeant Merrifield, VC, MM enlisted in the Canadian Expeditionary Force in September 1914 and served with distinction throughout the First World War, receiving the Military Medal for his bravery during the Battle of Passchendaele in November 1917; and

WHEREAS on October 1, 1918, during an attack near Abancourt, France, Sergeant Merrifield, VC, MM's platoon was pinned down by intense enemy machine-gun fire from two positions, and Merrifield, acting alone, advanced from shell-hole to shell-hole to eliminate the first position before continuing, despite being wounded, to eliminate the second; and

WHEREAS Sergeant Merrifield, VC, MM refused evacuation despite his injuries and continued leading his platoon until he was wounded a second time, more severely, demonstrating what his official Victoria Cross citation described as the "highest qualities of valour and leadership"; and

WHEREAS the Battle of Passchendaele, during which Sergeant Merrifield, VC, MM earned his Military Medal, stands as one of the defining moments in Canada's military history, where Canadian soldiers demonstrated extraordinary courage and sacrifice under some of the most difficult conditions of the First World War, helping forge a distinct Canadian national identity on the world stage; and

WHEREAS following the war, Sergeant Merrifield, VC, MM made Sault Ste. Marie his home, raised his family in our community, and worked for the Algoma Central Railway, becoming an important part of our city's history and its proud tradition of military service; and

WHEREAS November 11 marks Remembrance Day, when Canadians honour those who served and sacrificed in defence of our country, our freedoms, and the values we hold dear; and

WHEREAS the renaming of one of Sault Ste. Marie's most prominent civic streets, on which City Hall is located, presents a meaningful opportunity to permanently honour Sergeant Merrifield, VC, MM's extraordinary courage, sacrifice, and connection to our community;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the council of the City of Sault Ste. Marie direct that Foster Drive be renamed Merrifield, VC, MM Way and that staff take the steps necessary to effect this change, without the need for further authorizations by staff or council, other than approval of the by-law effecting said change.