HAMILTON HISTORICAL BOARD
JOINT PLAQUING SUB-COMMITTEE
REPORT 05-004(HHB)

Members of the Community Services Standing Committee:

The Hamilton Historical Board having met on November 8, 2005 presents Report No. 05-004(HHB) and respectfully recommends:

(a) that the wording for the Jockey Club plaque, hereto attached and marked as Appendix A to Report No. 05-004(HHB), be approved.

Financial / Staffing / Legal Implications:

(a) The Hamilton Historical Board received an allocation of $5760 from the Volunteer Committee budget for City of Hamilton commemorative plaques as approved in by Council September 14, 2005 – Corporate Administration Committee Report 05-012. These funds will be used for the manufacture, installation and dedication of the Jockey Club plaque.

Background:

(a) City Council approved the inclusion of the Jockey Club plaque on the Priority List for City of Hamilton Commemorative Plaques at its meeting of September 14, 2005 – Community Services Committee Report 05-009.

The attached wording was approved by the Hamilton Historical Board at their meeting on 08 November 2005.

The plaque will be installed at the former location of the Jockey Club on the northeast corner of Barton Street and Ottawa Street. The dedication ceremony is planned for the Summer of 2006.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Walter Peace, Chair
Hamilton Historical Board
Hamilton Jockey Club

The Hamilton Jockey Club opened here in 1893 in the eastern outskirts of the city, on land purchased from the Gage family. By then horse racing was a popular sport in Hamilton. As early as 1835, local gentry held steeplechases in summer and races on the frozen Bay in winter. Circa 1846, a permanent steeplechase, “the Beasley racecourse”, was laid out on the city’s western outskirts at the northeast corner of Dundurn and Aberdeen. Twenty years later, R.R. Wadell operated a one-mile track near the Delta.

John Dickenson, an ardent Hamilton sportsman, spearheaded the building of the Hamilton Jockey Club, which included a grandstand, clubhouse, betting ring, paddocks, stables, and two oval tracks -- an inner one-mile trotting course and an outer nine-furlong turfed steeplechase with water jumps.

The Club was extensively renovated in 1911 to include a ladies' tearoom, roof for the grandstand, cement sidewalk from the main gate, steel and concrete betting ring, and extensive white picket fences bordering cultivated flower beds. That same year the refurbished grandstand was destroyed by fire.

After World War I, the popularity of steeplechasing declined. In 1931 the water jumps were removed and the turf converted to a dirt track. In 1952 due to the growth of the city after World War II, increasing traffic congestion, and lack of space for expansion, the Club was sold to become the site for the Greater Hamilton Shopping Centre, now Centre Mall.

Hamilton Historical Board 2006
City of Hamilton

247 words

Bibliography

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