

Walter, Penny

Subject: FW: Email - Communication - Led Butler - Heritage Designation Request - Marquis Downs - CK 710-1

From: Web NoReply <web-noreply@Saskatoon.ca>

Sent: June 12, 2021 1:17 PM

To: City Council <City.Council@Saskatoon.ca>

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--- Replies to this email will go to [REDACTED] ---

Submitted on Saturday, June 12, 2021 - 13:17

Submitted by user: [REDACTED]

Submitted values are:

Date Saturday, June 12, 2021

To His Worship the Mayor and Members of City Council

First Name Les

Last Name Butler

Phone Number

Email [REDACTED]

Address [REDACTED] Amelia Avenue Unit [REDACTED]

City Sidney

Province British Columbia

Postal Code [REDACTED]

Name of the organization or agency you are representing (if applicable)

Subject Heritage Designation Request: Marquis Downs

Meeting (if known) SPC - PDCS

Comments

His Worship the Mayor and City Council,

It would be my pleasure to assist the Saskatchewan Jockey Club in the development of local skills and knowledge to operate profitable, sustainable, pari-mutuel horse racing at Marquis Downs in Saskatoon that serves all stakeholders, and to assist in the development and growth of a healthy industry that reconciles itself within the shifting perception of horse racing, which in recent decades has shifted to focus primarily on the health and safety of both horses and humans.

I would assist in implementing the necessary policies, procedures, and practices that ensure compliance with industry standards. I could also assist the local management group in establishing the contacts within the horse racing world that are essential for successful integration into the international racetrack business network.

For the Marquis Downs racetrack to be competitive in the local market, and the non-local markets in which it must also compete, its operation and market position must incorporate the many perspectives constituting the mainstream. This includes the thoughts, preferences, and consumer appetites across all demographics.

Originally a trainer and owner, I have been employed at seven racetracks in Western Canada. At six of those, I was employed in a management capacity. Most significantly, I was the Vice-President of Northlands Park, and as such was

responsible for horse racing, casino gaming, community lottery programs, and security for 14 years. During those 14 years the purses for horse racing, generated from operations, increased consecutively year-over-year for the last 13 years. Also during that time, Northlands spent \$50 million on capital improvement, this construction was fully funded by revenue from the Racing business unit. Northlands Park was the first racetrack in North America to implement wagering between racetracks utilizing an internet protocol and the first racetrack in North America to provide print-on-demand past performance programs at off-track sites.

In addition to my experience in horse racing, I managed several casino gaming operations. As Manager of the first unionized casino in Canada and first full-time casino with a requirement to be staffed with 50 percent First Nations employees, net revenues rose in the two years I was there from \$700,000 to \$3,820,000.

I served as Executive Vice-President of Racetracks of Canada during the most dramatic and dynamic political times in Canadian horse racing. I represented the Canadian horse racing industry at the Parliamentary Committee Hearings on the implementation of the GST. As a result, horse racing was exempted from the GST being applied to pari-mutuel wagers – the only industry to receive such an exemption. In this same capacity, I lobbied the Federal Government and cooperated in writing the regulations increasing the number of allowable foreign races Canadians could wager on from 42 to unlimited. Similarly, I lobbied and participated in the writing of the regulations that allowed all forms of off-track wagering in Canada. I have served on many national and international committees, including the committee of four that brought the Breeders' Cup to Canada, and the committee of six that established the international standards for totalizator suppliers – odds and prices computer programs – to facilitate widespread inter-track and off-track wagering.

One advantage that Marquis Downs has over other racetracks in Western Canada is its central location within city limits. It is easily accessible by public transportation, bike, car, or foot. Its geographical location and unique offering as the only racetrack in Saskatchewan means that it attracts fans from all over the province; in fact, Marquis Downs is envied by other racetracks in Western Canada for its large local appeal and consequent ability to consistently draw large crowds.

Importantly, Marquis Downs has proven itself to be resilient throughout its long and sometimes turbulent history. The people of the racetrack and its fans emerge from these trying times with the same passion and drive as before and continue on into the future. My hope is that the City of Saskatoon will consider the strength, passion, and determination that the horse racing community has demonstrated throughout the past 100 years and give it a chance to continue horse racing at Marquis Downs as a testament to the hard work and resiliency that characterizes life on the Saskatchewan prairies.

Respectfully,
Les Butler