

Walter, Penny

Subject: FW: Email - Communication - Sheridan Lehouillier - Heritage Designation Request - Marquis Downs - CK 710-1

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

Sent: June 13, 2021 9:30 PM

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

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

Submitted on Sunday, June 13, 2021 - 21:30

Submitted by user: [REDACTED]

Submitted values are:

Date Sunday, June 13, 2021

To His Worship the Mayor and Members of City Council

First Name Sheridan

Last Name Lehouillier

Phone Number [REDACTED]

Email [REDACTED]

Address Box [REDACTED]

City Spiritwood

Province Saskatchewan

Postal Code [REDACTED]

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

Subject Heritage Designation Request: Marquis Downs

Meeting (if known)

Comments

His Worship and City Council,

My name is Sheridan Lehouillier. I have been involved in horse racing as a member of both the Horsemen's Benevolent and Protective Association of SK and the Canadian Thoroughbred Horse Society (SK Division) for the past two decades.

The Saskatchewan horse racing industry is made of breeders, owners, trainers, grooms, exercise riders, pony riders, gate crew, backstretch and maintenance staff, as well as other industry stakeholders such as farriers, farmers, feed suppliers, tack and equipment stores, and the University of Saskatchewan Western College of Veterinary Medicine.

These individuals come from all corners of the province and differ from each other in age, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status, but together, the industry focuses on a common goal – the betterment of thoroughbred racing in Saskatchewan. Together, this agriculture-heavy industry works 365 days of the year, caring for our equine athletes or working in auxiliary industries that support those athletes; as such, we are committed to the future of horse racing in this great province.

As a heritage site, the Marquis Downs race facility would become a living legacy to all those who have come before us; a

testament to the hard work and dedication of those who have made Saskatchewan what it is today through agriculture. The facility would be operated by the Saskatchewan Jockey Club, with a similar structure to the Manitoba Jockey Club that operates Assiniboia Downs in Winnipeg, and Horse Racing Alberta that manages race operations at Alberta's six race tracks.

The Saskatchewan Jockey Club will be a private not-for-profit corporation with representatives from all segments of the industry to act as an independent organization that is open, transparent, and accountable to the industry, the City of Saskatoon, and the province.

The not-for-profit corporation trustees will include representatives from the City of Saskatoon, SLGA, FSIN, HBPA, Canadian Thoroughbred Horse Society (SK), the Operator/Lease Operator of Marquis Downs, and two public representatives with in-depth knowledge of horse racing.

The mandate of the Saskatchewan Jockey Club will be to lead and enable a healthy, vibrant, and progressive racing industry to function in the province of Saskatchewan with high integrity and self-regulated responsibility.

The Saskatchewan Jockey Club wants to ensure jobs are not lost, that the residents of Saskatchewan remain employed and tax-paying, and are given a chance to maintain their livelihood, all the while ensuring respect for the Indigenous community and Calls to Action on Treaty Six land, on which Marquis Downs is situated. Horse racing has been a part of Saskatchewan's heritage since 1884. It generates economic spinoff for agriculture and other industries, gives our youth opportunities to learn new skills, develop a work ethic and responsibility, and build confidence. The plan for the industry supports positive relationship building between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities, who work together in a historic industry, nurturing it to continue to thrive and grow under a new plan for its future.

Through the Saskatchewan Jockey Club, the horse racing industry would like to be a part of that future of Marquis Downs while preserving its tangible and intangible history. We would welcome the opportunity to participate in a discussion that deals with how the living legacy of Marquis Downs could be preserved. While there is a current lease between the City of Saskatoon and Saskatoon Prairieland Park Corporation, it is common for new agreements to be made based on changing circumstances, and we would embrace the chance to be a part of an agreement that sees Marquis Downs given the chance to thrive under new management. This would keep the equestrian community at the centre of the city at Prairieland Park, accessible to all, and would maintain the employment, tourism, and social and economic benefits that Marquis Downs has brought to the City of Saskatoon's residents for over 50 years.

There is an opportunity to preserve all of these very important aspects of our collective history; unfortunately, we have come to the City of Saskatoon without the support of Prairieland Park. The Saskatchewan horse racing industry has reached out to the CEO on multiple occasions with the intent to reduce the hardship being faced by the horse racing community this year, and have received no response. Meanwhile, Prairieland Park has invited the Manitoba Harness Association to the track to race in the fall. This demonstrates the lack of transparency with Prairieland Park; we cannot look to them to preserve the long-term interests of the equestrian community within the City and have therefore come to this Committee with the goal of forging ahead in the most open and transparent way possible. There is great success demonstrated by our neighbouring racetracks in Alberta and Manitoba and shows that this can be a successful venture both in an economic sense and as it pertains to furthering the social and cultural significance of this operational facility.

We know there are other discussions underway, but all of the infrastructure already exists here, within the city, where it has stood in some form or another for over 100 years. Designating Marquis Downs as a heritage site is a clear path forward to preserving the tangible and intangible history of the site and allowing it to operate as a living legacy to our province's agricultural roots. As horse racing is comprised of over 50 percent First Nations peoples, heritage designation would be a positive and long-term step towards furthering Truth and Reconciliation efforts by building meaningful relationships with Indigenous communities.

Although there may be some activities being piecemealed together at Prairieland right now, we're looking at the long-term vision and ensuring the site's long-term sustainability. We want to partner with the city on this work.

We are big and small, young and old, a diverse group of people from throughout Saskatchewan that join together through our love of horses and our passion for the sport of horse racing.

We are the horse people of Saskatchewan.

Sincerely,
Sheridan Lehouillier