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April 26, 2023

To: Infrastructure and Environment Committee

**Re: Permit for Christie Pits on August 16<sup>th</sup>, 2023 for an event to commemorate the 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Anti-Semitic Race Riot**

**SUMMARY:**

The Christie Pits Riot on August 16<sup>th</sup>, 1933 remains one of the worst outbreaks of ethnic violence in Canadian history with over 10,000 participants and spectators. The riot was sparked by Nazi-inspired youth flying a swastika flag at a public baseball game to antagonize and provoke Jewish Canadians.

The event occurred after a game involving the Jewish Harbord Playground baseball team. As the game ended, members of a local anti-Semitic group flew a homemade swastika banner to cries of "Heil Hitler." Violence broke out as the Jewish players and fans battled members of the Swastika Club and it soon spilled out beyond the park as thousands of other combatants arrived. This included hundreds of similarly, long-persecuted Catholic Italian-Canadians who fought along-side the Jews.

As Toronto marks the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this seminal event that played a major role in Toronto becoming the inclusive and diverse city that it is today, members of the community are planning an event to mark this occasion where leaders of the Jewish and Italian-Canadian communities will come together to play a game of softball to commemorate the occasion and ensure its historic legacy.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The Infrastructure and Environment Committee recommends that:

1. The General Manager of Parks, Forestry and Recreation secure the necessary permits for the baseball diamond at Christie Pits Park on August 16, 2023 to facilitate this event; and
2. The General Manager of Parks, Forestry and Recreation to work with the community members to facilitate the planning and execution of the event.

Thank you,

Mike Colle  
Toronto City Councillor - Ward 8, Eglinton-Lawrence