



Date: October 2, 2025
To: Members of Etobicoke York Community Council
From: Councillor Stephen Holyday
Subject: Proposed Naming of the north west baseball diamond at Martingrove Gardens Park to “Jim Horton Baseball Diamond”

I would like to request that the following item be added to the Etobicoke York Community Council Agenda.

SUMMARY:

I am writing to formally propose naming the north west baseball diamond at Martingrove Gardens Park (located at 31 Lavington Road) to “Jim Horton Baseball Diamond” in honour of the late Jim Horton, who passed away on February 6, 2025, at the age of 76.

Jim Horton started coaching in 1987 and was known as “Mr. Everything” for Martingrove Baseball and was a life member. In 2011, he received Etobicoke Baseball’s Lifetime of Excellence Volunteer Award for his outstanding dedication to the sport of baseball in the city.

Upon learning of his passing, many Etobicoke baseball families shared stories about him, including his dedication to supporting children and youth, as well as fostering community health and well-being through the sport. Jim’s contributions went far beyond coaching. He served as an Executive Member of the Martingrove Baseball for more than thirty-five consecutive years, including many years as President, and was ultimately recognized as a life member of the organization. Over the years, he held nearly every executive role, including President, Vice-President, Equipment Manager, Umpire-in-Chief, Treasurer, and continued to assist the current Treasurer.

When it came to building and enhancing the game of baseball, Jim was a driving force behind the construction of the Centennial Park baseball diamond in Etobicoke. Jim was instrumental in securing the City’s commitment to build and the Optimist Club’s funding of the project at a cost of \$100,000. As it stands, the Centennial Park Optimist Diamond is still a jewel of ballparks in the West End of Toronto, located at the corner of Eglinton and Centennial Park Blvd.

On September 22, 2025, a property naming application was submitted to the City’s Strategic Partnerships Office requesting to name a baseball diamond at Martingrove Gardens Park in honour of Jim Horton. In 2008, City Council adopted item 2008.EY19.31 to rename the east baseball diamond at Martingrove Gardens Park in honour of Lloyd McConnie. The naming application and this motion seek to name the remaining diamond.

Staff have confirmed that the proposed naming aligns with the City of Toronto's Guiding Principles for Commemoration. The application demonstrates strong and positive community support, including a petition with 328 signatures from local residents and members of surrounding Greater Toronto Area communities, as well as letters of support and testimonials from members of the baseball community who knew Jim Horton.

Considering Jim Horton's contribution to our community, and with the support of his family, it is appropriate that the City recognize his impact by naming the north west baseball diamond in Martingrove Gardens in his honour.

The motion is necessary since the City's policy only pertains to naming real estate assets or a building, and an exemption allows for a ball diamond to be considered. As well, it allows for naming to be considered prior to the two-year grace period for recently deceased individuals.

Staff from Parks and Recreation confirm that costs associated with the production and installation of the new park sign will be accommodated within the 2025 Approved Operating Budget for Parks and Recreation.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Despite the provisions of the City of Toronto Property Naming Policy, City Council approve the naming of the north west baseball diamond in Martingrove Gardens Park to "Jim Horton Baseball Diamond".

Yours Sincerely,



Stephen Holyday
Councillor, Ward 2
Etobicoke Centre