
City Council

Notice of Motion

MM28.20	ACTION			Ward: 13
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Authorization to Release Section 37 Funds for Sam Ching Heritage Plaque - by Councillor Chris Moise, seconded by Deputy Mayor Ausma Malik

** Notice of this Motion has been given.*

** This Motion is subject to referral to the Executive Committee. A two-thirds vote is required to waive referral.*

Recommendations

Councillor Chris Moise, seconded by Deputy Mayor Ausma Malik, recommends that:

1. City Council increase the 2025 Operating Budget for Heritage Toronto on a one-time basis by \$10,000 gross, \$0 net, fully funded by Section 37 community benefits obtained in the development at 203 Jarvis Street (Source Account: XR3026-3701111), secured for local area streetscape improvements, for the production and installation of a heritage plaque recognizing Sam Ching at 9 Adelaide Street East (Cost Centre: HG0001).

Summary

I am writing to request support to release section 37 funds to create a heritage plaque recognizing Sam Ching at 9 Adelaide Street East.

Heritage Toronto approached my office seeking funding for several new heritage plaques in Ward 13. The City renames laneways frequently, but rarely provide context for residents as to who the person is and why they are being honored. A heritage plaque is a relatively inexpensive placemaking tool to promote our city's history and educate the general public about notable historical figures.

One of the first Chinese residents on record in Toronto was Sam Ching, the owner of Sam Ching & Co. Chinese Laundry at 9 Adelaide Street East in 1878. Ching was recorded in the 1878 Toronto directory with another Chinese man, Wo Kee, at 385 Yonge Street. Unable to join the workforce due to racist hiring practices, many Chinese men chose to open laundries — a line of business that was generally unpopular.

It was once thought Ching was the first Toronto resident of Chinese descent, however newspaper reports suggest Chinese migrants were present in Toronto as early as 1873. Ching and Kee were joined by Chinese men who migrated from western Canada after helping to build the transcontinental Canadian Pacific Railway, which was completed in 1885.

Immediately following the opening of the CPR, which was primarily built using Chinese labour in British Columbia, Canada passed a law that limited Chinese immigrants and placed a

substantial “head tax” on new arrivals. The tax increased until 1903, when it reached \$500, the equivalent of several years’ wages. In 1923, the Chinese Exclusion Act effectively banned all Chinese immigration until 1947.

The nascent Chinese community that emerged over the next decades centred around Queen and Bay Streets in the Ward and eventually grew into Toronto’s first Chinatown. Ching Lane, located near the site of Ching’s 1878 laundry, was named by the City of Toronto in 2012.

Background Information (City Council)

Member Motion MM28.20