

NOTICE OF MOTION

Authorization to Release Section 37 Funds to Heritage Toronto for Production and Installation of a Plaque Commemorating Monica Lewis

Moved by: Councillor

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Seconded by: Councillor

SUMMARY:

In the late 1960's, Monica Lewis and her husband George bought a property at 1553 Eglinton West and began a lifetime of serving the Caribbean community in Toronto and most of Southern Ontario.

The couple migrated from England as skilled workers with a British education. Lewis' business, known as Monica's, first opened as a record store, selling vinyl records, record players, CDs, posters and other electronics. It became a community hub for music enthusiasts and collectors as the store's collection included sounds popular in the UK.

In the 1980s, Monica's became a beauty and cosmetics salon and store that still sold the occasional record. It remained a hub for the community and drew women from all around Southern Ontario as it was one of the few Black hair stores catering to the ever-growing Black population.

Although it closed due to the pandemic and economic pressures from disruptive LRT construction, a visit to Monica's is a fond memory for many residents and frequent visitors of the community. Many recall visiting for a record or just some conversation with Miss Monica, as she was often known.

Monica Lewis died May 20, 2026. The Heritage Toronto plaque will commemorate the cultural and community significance of Lewis' business to Little Jamaica and beyond.

RECOMMENDATIONS: [leave this heading in the Motion]

1. City Council increase the 2026 Operating Budget for Heritage Toronto on a one-time basis by \$10,000.00 gross, \$0 net, fully funded by Section 37 community benefits obtained from the development at 1603 Eglinton Avenue West (Source Account: XR3026-3700865), secured for community benefits, for the production and installation of a plaque commemorating the entrepreneur Monica Lewis in the Little Jamaica neighbourhood (Cost Centre: HG0001).

July 29, 2026