

Letter of Support > BRIGHTSIDE PARK

Subject: Brightside Park-Correspondence for facility naming committee

I'd like to extend sincere thanks to Councillor Nrinder Nann and Daniela Giulietti, her executive assistant, for their efforts to name the new greenspace to be located on the former Glassworks property to be named Brightside Park.

I was fortunate to be born and raised in that sector of the north end of Hamilton on Gage Ave North. It was adjacent to several industries; mainly Stelco, ArcelorMittal, International Harvester, Proctor and Gamble and right in the midst of the residential area - Homer and Wilson. The families living there until 1967, when their homes were expropriated, worked in those nearby factories. Most wage earners did not drive in the early 1920's so they walked or biked to work.

The families of these workers were neighbors as well as friends. It was this friendship that bound us together at school, church and free time. Their homes were clean and well maintained with vegetable and flower gardens. They were hard-working members of the community and helped build this country.

Help us to pay tribute to them for raising the next generation of Hamiltonians and those afar. We, the children of these Brightsiders, are now seniors but we still socialize with each other and reminisce about our many connections over the years ... school, religion, graduations, marriages and then our children's births.

Some of us have met several times with Simon Orpana, Nancy Bouchier and Matt McInnes to bring to light our unique experiences captured digitally using both audio and video formats. We have earned some recognition in Nancy Bouchier and Ken Cruikshank's book "People on the Bay" and "Reclaiming Hamilton" by Paul Weinberg.

In conclusion, I'm pleased to support the naming of Hamilton's newest park -Brightside Park.

Regards.

Diane Adoranti Morelli

Subject: Renaming Stadium Precinct Park

Dear Sir/Madam:

I understand that the site of the Old Dominion Glass is to become a park, currently named the Stadium Precinct Park. I understand that the park will be called Brightside Park. Why Brightside?

Brightside was a thriving community back in the 1920's to 1970's, from the CNR tracks to the Steel Company of Canada; and Wilcox Street to Plymouth Street. It took the shape of a parallelogram. The area had a lot of history, as has been written. The park would commemorate the people who settled there and raised families over the years, from 1920 to 1970. During the late 50's, 60's and 70's many of the homes were being bought up and torn down for industrial parking.

The parents and people in the area worked hard in nearby factories (Stelco, Dofasco, Proctor & Gamble, Dominion Glass, International Harvester, etc.) in the early years so the young men and women would pursue their education and become successful in the various professions such as doctors, lawyers, teachers, nurses, government officials, company executives, secretaries, business owners etc. Also included in this group were the athletes who made it professionally in many sports. Not excluded, were the housewives who stayed home to cook and clean, did laundry and kept the children safe and happy.

The park needs to have information, plaques or notices of why the park is called "Brightside Park". The younger generation visiting the park should have some idea of the people who lived in Brightside and how they lived. For example, if a skating pad or rink is included, it can be called "Laylaws" (Laidlaw), the skating pond that was frequented near Birmingham Street, near the CNR tracks. When the young people were growing up they played sports in any small area that was called a field, which was located between Leeds Street and Birmingham Street.

We need to mention why it is called "Brightside Park". In 1977 a Brightside Reunion was held with over 1,000 attending. In 1983 another Brightside Reunion was held with about 800 to 900 people and a Reunion booklet was produced. It has pictures and stories of Brightside over the years. If the booklet was displayed, I am sure it would give the visitors some insight into what Brightside was about.

Another thing that can be included are street names. One or two of the laneways can be given the old street names from Brightside like (Leeds, Lancaster, Gage, etc.) There needs to be some association with the park and Brightside or it would not mean anything to the younger generation.

These are a few ideas that I have listed. I believe the park and green space for this part of Hamilton is wonderful, and it would complement Tim Horton's Field and Bernie Morelli Recreation Centre as a start.

Thank You for accepting some notes and ideas about "Brightside Park"

My name is John Fioravanti currently living in Burlington.

I am 85 years old. My wife Mary is 84. We were both born in Brightside and lived in Hamilton until 3 years ago. We still consider ourselves Hamiltonians and Brightsiders!

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Thank you for the opportunity of addressing the "Brightside Park" development.

As a 72 year old product of Steeltown, I am often amazed at how often I reflect upon being born and raised in Brightside.

The old original Blueprints of Brightside show it in its diamond shape, at the foot of the Bay's north east end. However to those of us who grew up there, found our character and voices there, found our grit and determination there, that diamond in the rough held up the City of Hamilton and put it upon our shoulders.

It was a neighbourhood of many firsts:

- it played a key role in the formation of organized labour in Canada
- from the streets of Brightside emerged many professional athletes
- from the doors of Brightside came the workforce that sustained the growth of The Steel Company of Canada, Dominion Foundries and Steel, National Steel Car, International Harvester, Canadian Liquid Air and many others.

From the families of Brightside came the children that populated the Professional ranks; Lawyers, Chartered Accountants, Doctors, Engineers and Educators, all of whom felt and kept a close association to the neighbourhood that propelled them to contribute greatly to the prosperity of Hamilton.

As a society, we are all custodians of History and Brightside, although fallen to the industrialization of the 50's and 60's, holds a history that is cherished in the memories of many generations of Hamiltonians. This history must not be lost to future generations.

The City of Hamilton recognizes history through its revitalization of the James Street North and Bay front developments.

It was with great delight that I learned of the possibility of naming a 10 acre park after the Brightside neighbourhood. It caused me to reflect on how many times over the decades I have driven down to what remains, showing my children where I had grown up, sharing with them the happiness and closeness that came from being part of a truly great community.

Thank you for your consideration.

Joseph Bartolacci
Formerly of 42 Leeds Street, Hamilton

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Brightside Park – Correspondence for Facility Naming Committee/GIC

I am writing with enthusiastic support for naming our newest lower-city green space project, Brightside Park. The historical significance of this name goes a long way in recognizing the efforts of many to honour the memory of a vibrant nearby neighbourhood which no longer exists. The name itself will commemorate a hopeful community that endeavoured to afford their children a better future. That same hope will live on in this new parkland, a playground for young and old in a much needed and long overdue area of our beautiful city.

Brightside was a special neighbourhood. It thrived in the shadows of gritty, belching steel mills and yet managed to produce a bevy of outstanding citizens, not the least of which was Quinto Martini, Member of Parliament. From internationally renowned doctors like Dr. Victor Cecilioni to outstanding lawyers like Roger Yachetti and well known sports figures like John Michaluk, Brightside has proven time and again that an enclave of blue-collar, hard-working citizens can rise up and contribute to this city's success. The new Brightside Park can serve its nearby residents with pride in its history and hope for its future. The children of Stipley neighbourhood will have much finer amenities than the Brightside kids ever did or could have hoped for. With the foresight of the City of Hamilton, this neighbourhood can grow to appreciate the children that came before them. Brightside Park will help them to recognize the well-earned achievements that under-privileged kids from Brightside have brought to Hamilton.

With a multi-use sports field, playgrounds and picnic areas, Brightside Park will not only meet the needs of the existing local community, but will bring pride to a dedicated group of former Brightsiders and their descendants who have lobbied hard for years to earn a place of distinction for their former much-loved neighbourhood. A re-claimed vibrant parkland in the middle of what once was a heavy industrialized area will be the catalyst that binds this neighbourhood together, provides hope and shows the path to success, just like the kids from Brightside learned, many decades ago.

My name is Stephen Lechniak. I curate and maintain a Facebook Page dedicated solely to the memory of Brightside. "Brightside Memories" has 627 followers, dozens of first-hand stories and approximately 1500 photos; most of them user-contributed and many not published anywhere else.

Brightside lives on!

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