

Petition launched to reopen BMX track

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Tim's family and friends completed the track in the fall of 2006. It was only opened for about two months last year and never christened with an actual competition.

The family and OCA has launched an on-line petition to have the track reopened and a permit granted. So far they have collected about 1,800 signatures. They also intend to be at the next NEC meeting to be held in Tobermory May 14 to plead their case.

"I think if we had to level it and start all over, the emotional attachment to it goes away, since this was Tim's track. I don't see why it should be taken away from us, and there's no guarantee that they will approve it down the road," said Tim's sister, Jessica Medeiros.

Nicky Pearson, BMX co-ordinator for the OCA, said it would be "an absolute travesty" if they are forced to level the track.

"This family's already gone through enough with losing a son and then putting so much effort into completing his dream. To ask them to go through that again, is just wrong," said Pearson.

"This is a pile of dirt on a man's land who wants to help amateur sport," she said.

The OCA would like to see the track reopen and be used for a weekly race series for kids and an annual provincial series, said Pearson.

She stressed BMX bikes are non-motorized and provide a great way for kids to become more active, fit and spend time with their families.

Megan Krueger of Halton Place said, "the family and the Ontario Cycling Association are leading the effort to keep the track alive. We as Halton Place are supporting their efforts."

Krueger said the provincial government is encouraging children and adults to become more active and the BMX track at Halton Place provides a great opportunity for that.

She added the track "is a way to keep them

(BMX cyclists) out of the natural landscape."

When asked why Halton Place didn't apply for a permit for the track, Krueger said, "it's not always clear what an agricultural landowner is able to do or not allowed to do." She said they believed the track was no different than a riding ring.

Krueger said their intention, if the family continues to want the track to remain, is to apply for a Niagara Escarpment Plan Amendment to permit the track.

NEC planner David Johnston said NEC staff doesn't believe a BMX track is related to an equestrian or agricultural use and staff would not have recommended approval of the track if an application for a permit had come in, however, the decision would have been up to the NEC.

In a staff report authored by Johnston, and accepted by the NEC at its April 17 meeting, it's stated the Commission isn't prepared to deal with the development permit application for an addition to the existing residence at Halton Place until the BMX bike track issue is resolved to its satisfaction.

Johnson said, the NEC has said, "Enough's enough."

"It's out there without a permit. It's a concern to the neighbours, it's a concern to the Niagara Escarpment Commission. Let's do something about it," said Johnston.

The report also says the NEC wouldn't object to the installation of a memorial cairn or other marker after the track is taken down and the site rehabilitated.

The report also recommends approval of Halton Place's application for six equestrian events at the farm this summer, subject to several conditions, including site plan approval from the Town of Halton Hills, before a development permit is issued and prior to any of the events being held.



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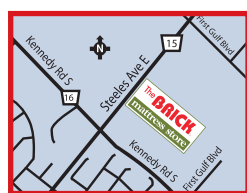
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