



PRESS RELEASE
For immediate publication

RÉAL MÉNARD'S WAR ON THE ENVIRONMENT

MONTREAL, November 12, 2014 – Réal Ménard, the Coderre administration's head of parks and green spaces on the Island of Montreal, is waging war on the environment and on the City's public institutions.

Instead of protecting and promoting parks and green spaces, Mr. Ménard is spearheading private discussions with the developer Groupe Pacific for the construction on Meadowbrook of high-rise buildings with up to 700 residences. Les Amis du Parc Meadowbrook has learned that these discussions are based on a very detailed and very secret development scenario.

"It's outrageous that Mr. Ménard, the City's champion for green spaces and the environment, is instead imposing his own pro-development agenda on Meadowbrook." stated Campbell Stuart, spokesperson for Les Amis du Parc Meadowbrook. "Not only is he in conflict of interest with respect to his mandate, he is also undermining the City's democratic processes and the public commissions which have consistently stated that Meadowbrook should be preserved, not developed."

Mr. Ménard's private negotiations with the developer are taking place despite uniform recommendations over the past 10 years by the City's own public commissions, that Meadowbrook be protected from development and turned into a public park – including the Office de Consultation Publique de Montréal (OCPM) in 2004, the Commission permanente du conseil d'agglomération sur les grands équipements et des activités d'intérêt d'agglomération (the Labrecque Commission) in 2009, and the OCPM again in 2014.

In addition, Mr. Ménard's negotiations are undermining the deliberations of the current Commission on the Montréal Urban Agglomeration Land Use and Development Plan. This Commission has been mandated, among other things, to make recommendations on the appropriate land-use of Meadowbrook and other green spaces under the City's new Urban Plan. If Mr. Ménard is permitted to continue, the Commission will have nothing to rule on and every citizen who in good faith makes presentations on this issue will be cheated.

Mr. Ménard is also flouting unanimous resolutions of Montreal City Council and the Agglomeration Council which require that the new Urban Plan incorporate safety setbacks around rail lines and marshalling yards. These resolutions were adopted in fall 2013 in the wake of the Lac Mégantic rail disaster. Any construction on Meadowbrook will be well within the danger zone delineated by these safe setbacks. Mr. Ménard is not acting in the interest of public safety in this matter. Nor is he acting consistently with Mayor Coderre's clear commitment to protect more green space on the island.

Worse still, these private discussions are taking place with Suzanne Deschamps, V-P Legal of the developer Groupe Pacific. Both Deschamps and Groupe Pacific were found by the Quebec Lobbying Commissioner to have engaged in multiple cases of illegal lobbying with City of Montreal officials since at least as early as 2007. They also covered up Ms. Deschamps' conflict of interest as the former head of the Société de développement de Montréal. Mr. Ménard, an official with clear fiduciary duties to the public, should know better than to negotiate with them.

Mr. Ménard's initiative also contradicts Montreal's defence against the lawsuit filed against it by Groupe Pacific, in which Montreal clearly states that development of Meadowbrook is not in the City's best interest.

Mr. Ménard is a member of the Executive Committee and holds the portfolio for Sustainable Development, Environment, Parks and Green Spaces. Previously, he presided over the stripping of money from the City's green fund to spend on infrastructure projects, and has unilaterally reinterpreted the City's existing Policy on the Protection and Enhancement of Natural Habitats to exclude the acquisition of any new green spaces. It is time for Mr. Ménard to step down and for Mayor Coderre to appoint someone who will advocate for the environment.

- 30 -

About Les Amis du Parc Meadowbrook: *Les Amis du Parc Meadowbrook* is an organization of volunteers from all parts of the Island of Montreal who have been working for over 25 years to preserve this green space and make it a new 57-hectare nature park, open and accessible to all residents of the Island, linked by a green belt to a network of parks including, in particular, the falaise St-Jacques.

SOURCE: Les Amis du Parc Meadowbrook

For further information, or to arrange interviews, please contact:

Mr. Campbell Stuart
Tel. (514) 927-7802

Website: www.lesamisdemeadowbrook.org

Facebook: SOSMeadowbrook