

Is anyone listening? –Howard Barza (2003-2012)

Angry years of municipal reorganization. Energy, resources and emotions sapped; an inauspicious time for citizen groups either to raise money to purchase Meadowbrook lands or to organize planning and find legal expertise to protect green spaces or establish a park. Parti Québécois loses the 2003 election, and Jean Charest's Liberals deliver the promised de-fusion on January 1, 2006. The demerged administrations of predominantly anglophone municipalities, including Côte Saint-Luc and Montreal West, regain many but not all former powers, increase taxes to absorb some of the cost of demerging. With Meadowbrook straddling two different planning and administrative jurisdictions—the demerged city of Côte Saint-Luc and the Montreal Borough of Lachine under long-term Mayor Claude Dauphin (2005-2017)—the challenge increases.

A time of contradictions. Internationally, Montreal is recognized as the seat of the Secretariat of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity. The Tremblay administration (2002-2012) establishes an Executive Committee responsible for sustainable development with a direct mandate to protect biodiversity and to increase the percentage of green space in Montreal from 5% to at least 10%, that of New York City. Montreal a signatory of the Declaration of the Island of Montreal Community in favour of biodiversity and greening.

2003



August - A golfer dies on Meadowbrook when his cart is hit by a train.

September - Resolution from the merged Côte Saint-Luc/ Hampstead/Montreal West Borough submitted to Montreal City Council calling for Meadowbrook to be declared an eco-sensitive zone and preserved as a golf course and recreational centre. The motion did not even make it on the agenda.

November - Thwarted in Côte Saint-Luc, Meadowbrook owners present 1,200 unit project on Lachine side of Meadowbrook.

March - Public forum on Meadowbrook at Montreal West Town Hall with about 200 in attendance.

"We were promised by Mayor Tremblay that the "One Island One city" concept would be beneficial to all, that intercity quarrels would be a thing of the past." Christian Fritschi, The Chronicle March 17, 2004.

"Every time I have looked out my back window, for almost nine years now, I have seen a vision of earthly beauty, lush and green. I live on Meadowbrook Golf Course and anyone who shares my experience will tell you they wouldn't want to live any place else!" Bram Eisenthal, The Chronicle, Feb 25, 2004.

"The developer's answer to emergency precautions in the event of a train derailment includes shatter-resistant glass,

2004

'1,200 coffins'

Meadowbrook development risks lives: CCA head

By Joel Goldenberg

Lack of emergency access to a potential housing development on the Lachine portion of the Meadowbrook golf course would risk

thousands of lives, architect Phyllis Lambert told a crowded public meeting on ways to preserve the 57-hectare site. "It's absolutely insensate (lacking sense) that there should be a proposal to build on

this land," Lambert told the audience of several hundred gathered in the former Montreal West town hall.

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and ventilation cut-off systems to prevent air intake of toxic fumes. What a lovely concept for family homeowners." Glenn J. Nashen, Côte Saint-Luc Councillor, The Suburban, March 10, 2004.

May - Les Amis before the Office de consultation publique de Montréal (OCPM) in an effort to get Meadowbrook (and the St. Pierre River which runs through it) listed on city's list of protected areas.

"At the time, we were a handful, I remember Jo Ann, Avrom and myself. We produced this lengthy report and presented it to the OCPM!" Wendy Dodge

June - OCPM report suggests that Meadowbrook and St. Pierre River be added to Montreal's list of "eco-territories." Demerger vote sees 15 municipalities including Montreal West and Côte Saint-Luc leave Montreal.

October - Meeting of Mayors Claude Dauphin (Lachine) and Robert Libman (Côte Saint-Luc) to discuss a compensation package for Lachine in exchange for Lachine's support in preserving Meadowbrook. Lachine looking for compensation for loss of \$34 million in revenue.

"I understand very clearly what we have to do. If I'm going to be reminded every day by people who have decided to leave Montreal what we should be doing, I think we know what we have to do!" Mayor Gerald Tremblay, following demerger

November - Montreal urban plan suggests linking Meadowbrook through Norman Street and creating a commuter train stop.

December - Meadowbrook not recognized as eco-territory in Montreal natural-spaces policy despite OCPM recommendations, because it does not conform to definition of green space.

2005

January - Les Amis bring attention to pollution of St. Pierre River.

2006

February - Railway Association of Canada and Federation of Canadian Municipalities publish Proximity Guidelines and Best Practices recommending 300-m setback from freight yard and 30-m from rail line for residential projects.

May - Kingdom Hotels International and Colony Capital owned by Saudi Prince in negotiations to acquire Meadowbrook.

June - Fifty-six trees, mostly cottonwood, cut down on Meadowbrook at request of Côte Saint-Luc residents.

October - Owners finally sell Meadowbrook to developer Groupe Pacific for \$3 million.

2007

June - Les Amis protest at Meadowbrook "Corporate Day" that closes golf course to golfers.

July - Les Amis and Green Coalition call for adoption of railway guidelines before Railway Safety Act Review Panel.

2008

February - Green Buildings are not Green Spaces: close to 200 citizens attend meeting at Montreal West Town Hall to organize opposition to development plans on golf course. Rainbow coalition of local, provincial and federal politicians also lending their support.

"We need to rethink urban design to place real value on natural areas. Densification of existing housing stock makes far more economic and ecological sense than turning over remnant green and natural areas to developers." Elizabeth May, Leader, Green Party of Canada

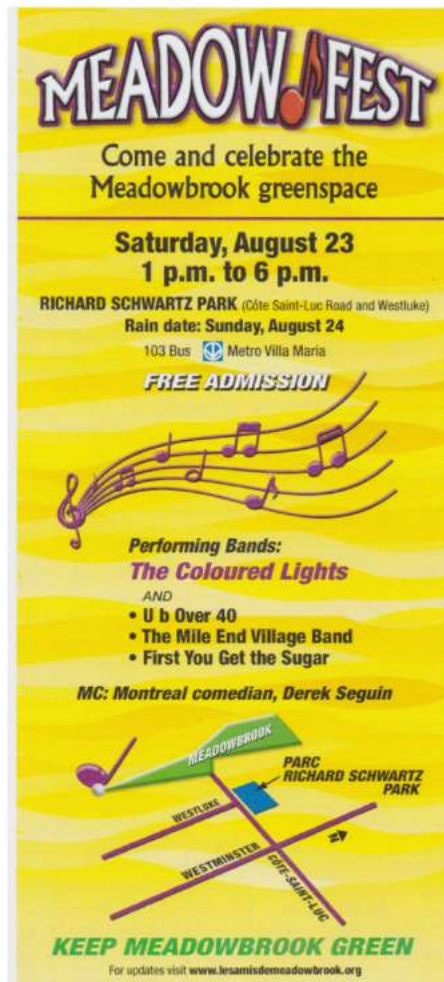
"Let us never forget that we are fighting for the rights of future generations, as well as our own, and that what is lost today can never be recovered" Thomas Mulcair, Leader, New Democratic Party

"The golf course is not really an eco-anything. It is not an ecosystem . . . It is actually a very poor example of what a green space should be!" Suzanne Deschamps, Vice-President, Groupe Pacific.

April - Public information meeting organized by Les Amis at St. Raymond Centre.

August - Les Amis organizes Meadowfest with cities of Côte Saint-Luc, Montreal West and Hampstead.

Developer Groupe Pacific proposes a "green" Petite Rivière residential development on the Lachine portion of Meadowbrook with LEED, One Planet Living (World Wildlife Federation), Zero carbon and Zero waste certifications.



2009

March - Public meeting at Edinburgh School attracts about 200 people.

April - Rally at Toe Blake Park organized by Les Amis attracts 100 people.

Motion in favour of creating eco-territory presented to Montreal Council by Projet Montréal Councillor Peter McQueen. Motion defeated.

"It is ironic that Montreal City Council voted on Earth Day not to protect one of the last available green spaces in southwestern Montreal." Peter McQueen, Councillor

Montreal signs the Declaration of the Island of Montreal Community in favour of biodiversity and greening at the Biodiversity summit held in Montreal.

See the video:

<http://lesamisdemeadowbrook.org/grassroots/thomas-mulcair-on-saving-meadowbrook/>

"I think we should all be getting a bit angrier. Not crazy angry. Angry in a reasonable sort of way. A Canadian sort of angry." Campbell Stuart

June - After public hearings, the Commission du conseil d'agglomération sur les grands équipements et les activités d'intérêt d'agglomération, also called the Labrecque Commission, recommends that Meadowbrook be preserved from development and be included in a network of green corridors linking it to the Falaise Saint-Jacques.

2010 (Year of Biodiversity)



Bulldozers poised to move onto Meadowbrook?



(From left) Campbell Stuart, Anthony Housefather, Thomas Mulcair, and Peter McQueen were among those



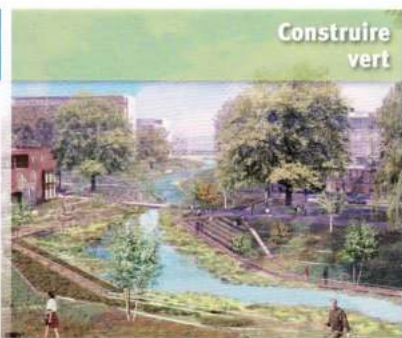
Développement de Petite Rivière: un beau projet... au mauvais endroit!

L'ombre d'une pancarte de chantier provoque parfois des levées de bouilliers de la part de citoyens et de groupes d'intérêt. Le projet de développement de Petite Rivière, situé dans un espace vert au cœur de Montréal, est l'un de ces projets controversés tenus sur une corde raide. Voyons quels sont les éléments où le bât blesse.

Par Sophie Lévesque

Le projet Petite Rivière a de quoi faire rêver: 1 500 unités en copropriété absolues dans un décor vert à quelques minutes du centre de Montréal. Le promoteur entend créer une communauté durable, s'inspirant de projets phares comme ViaNova en Allemagne, Redford à Londres et Hammarby à Stockholm. Le projet verra la création d'un parc public et la réhabilitation du seul tronçon de la rivière St-Pierre qui n'est pas canalisé (la même rivière où les premiers colons français se sont installés dans le Vieux-Montréal).

Le promoteur Groupe Pacific envisage la création d'une véritable communauté, qui ferait la part belle aux vélos et aux pédoncles, réduisant la dépendance à l'automobile. Des commerces de proximité et un marché public devraient se y élever. Le site bénéficie d'un bon ensoleillement et de très belles vues sur le centre-ville de Montréal, de jardins communautaires et même d'aménagement paysager comestible.



«Petite Rivière est avant tout une réponse à l'écologie urbaine, annonce Suzanne Deschamps, vice-présidente au développement et aux affaires juridiques de Groupe Pacific. Nous pourrions même aménager la plus grande ferme urbaine en plein cœur de Montréal. Le train de banlieue pourrait y arriver.»

«Le projet serait réalisé sur six ans. Les constructeurs seraient invités à réaliser les unités selon le plan établi», note la vice-présidente. Outi mais voilà, il y a aussi la présence de trois voies ferrées et de deux gares de triage, d'un parc industriel moribond, et tout ça dans un territoire couvrant un aménagement et trois municipalités qui ne voient pas tous la chose du même œil.

Le projet de Petite Rivière mettrait en valeur une partie du golf Meadowbrook, un terrain de 57 hectares réparti entre la ville de Côte-Saint-Luc et l'aménagement de Lachine, bordé au nord par la ville de Montréal-Ouest. À noter que Côte-Saint-Luc et Montréal-Ouest sont deux villes de banlieue recomposées après la décession de 2006.

Ce n'est pas la première fois qu'un promoteur a des visées sur ce terrain. Acheté par le chemin de fer Canadien Pacifique (CP) qui en a fait des installations résidentielles pour ses employés en 1917, le lieu a été transformé en terrain de golf en 1949. Lorsque CP s'est départi de son aire immobilière, le terrain s'est retrouvé sous le giron de HIB (Hawthorn Inc and Boscum), son allié immobilier, qui a ouvert un salon de la maison en valeur et a fini par le vendre en désespoir de cause à Groupe Pacific en 2006.

«Le site est plus intéressant pour sa valeur sociale que pour sa valeur immobilière, par les services socio-culturels qu'il peut offrir», soutient des voix phénix, telles que celles de l'Institut de l'écologie.

Dans le coin droit: le promoteur, Groupe Pacific

Peu connu au Québec, Groupe Pacific a néanmoins fait ses débuts dans la construction résidentielle en 1993 en banlieue montréalaise. L'entreprise détient toujours des terrains à Laval et à Châteauguay. Constructeur commercial et résidentiel, ce promoteur a réussi plus récemment à Miami où il a la réputation de trouver des solutions originales pour mettre en valeur des terrains difficiles, voire même contaminés.

«Groupe Pacific offre un produit de moyenne gamme qui n'a rien à envier aux produits haut de

LIVING BUILDING CHALLENGE

Mise au point par le Cascadia Green Building Council, cette certification va au-delà de LEED, proposant 20 impératifs répartis en sept catégories, soit le site, l'eau, l'énergie, la santé, les matériaux, l'équité et la beauté. Elle intègre plusieurs notions comme la compensation carbone, l'agriculture urbaine et la biodiversité.

<http://lbc.org/lbc/voices/gvp>

Under the title "329 days of silence" - referring to the silence of the Montreal administration following the Labrecque commission report - three bus-loads of citizens from Côte Saint-Luc and Montreal West congregate at Montreal City Hall for Council meeting.

See the video

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7vnCBrd9Gk&feature=related>

"Eighty phone calls + 50 emails = 144 very enthusiastic bus riders with posters, banners, hats and caps! We were impressive, a force to be reckoned with, so much so that the security guards locked the front doors once they had let about 100 in to watch the question period on the large screen." Barbara Tekker Brzezinski, organizer

Resolution adopted by Montreal West to preserve Meadowbrook.

May - Campbell Stuart files complaint at Quebec Lobby Commission against Suzanne Deschamps, Vice-President of Development and Legal affairs, Groupe Pacific for lobbying without proper registration.

"We know, in our hearts of hearts, that someday our children will ask the equivalent of 'What did you do during the war Daddy?'" Campbell Stuart, Green Coalition AGM, May 2010

"We are all for having families in the city, and we are all for development, but in the right place, not on land that is valuable for all Montrealers and for the future of nature." Luc Ferrandez, Plateau Borough Mayor

See the video:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FpDo47KruuE>

June - Both opposition parties on Montreal Council, Vision Montreal represented by François Croteau and Projet Montreal represented by Luc Ferrandez, support the transformation of Meadowbrook into a park.

Letter to Mayor Gerald Tremblay, see:

http://lesamisdemeadowbrook.org/documents/Les_Amis_de_Meadowbrook-lettre_au_Maire_Tremblay-9_juin_2010%20fr.pdf

October - Public meeting and fundraiser "Visions of Meadowbrook Park/Perspectives pour le parc Meadowbrook" organized by Les Amis at Royal West Academy; 250 in attendance.

At Montreal City Council question period, Herzliah High School student Maya Fedida presses Acting Mayor Alan de Sousa to admit that the Groupe Pacific project has been rejected by Montreal.

November - Les Amis launches letter-writing campaign to Mayor Tremblay supported by David Suzuki Foundation, Sierra Club Québec, Bird Protection Québec, Greenpeace, Green Coalition, Conseil régional de l'environnement Montreal and Dr. David Bird of McGill University.

"It is wrong to destroy green spaces to build green housing" Bernice Goldsmith, letter to The Gazette

AMT announces plans for Lachine maintenance centre in CP's Sortin Yards adjacent to Meadowbrook at a cost of \$120 million,

Meadowbrook saved because of costs?

Bergeron says \$150 million too much to develop site

Last week, acting Montreal Mayor Alan Bergeron announced that the City had turned down an application to develop 1,500 residential units on the Meadowbrook Golf

John Symon
Special
Times

Course. Environmentalist Patrick Asch told us, however, that it was a little too early to cry victory on saving the 57 hectare site as green space. But over the weekend, another top municipal politician predicted that the residential project will never go ahead. Richard Bergeron, leader of the Projet Montreal opposition party and member of the Montreal Executive Committee where he is responsible for urban planning, spoke at a party gathering at the St. Pierre Centre downtown.



costly to build the infrastructure there," predicted Bergeron, citing an estimated cost of \$150 million for roads, bridges, water mains, and sewer lines before any units

structure investments. Access into the Meadowbrook Golf Course is especially complicated with only one current road access available from Côte St-Luc Rd. Montreal would presumably have to build a bridge from Norman Drive in Lachine to provide a second access. Because such a bridge would have to span multiple mainline train tracks used to carry piggybacked (double-high) freight cars, it would have to be very long and thus quite expensive. The proposed residential development is in Lachine's territory and Lachine is part of Montreal.

Bergeron has previously spoken against the residential development at Meadowbrook. Although he sits on Montreal's Executive Committee, Bergeron is with Projet Montreal, an opposition party at City Hall. His views therefore do not necessarily reflect those of Mayor Gen-
eral Tremblay's urban future.

2011



with federal and provincial funding.

December - Agora Citoyenne sur l'aménagement et le développement de la région métropolitaine de Montréal.

"Why destroy a beautiful green space for an environmentally friendly development when there are brown lands nearby that could be used instead?" – Jo Ann Goldwater

February - Urban Planning Department at McGill University organizes public forum on new approaches to sustainable urban development; showcases Petite Rivière project to vocal opposition from Les Amis members.

"Nous avons été à l'écoute du terrain et cela nous a forcés à faire quelque chose d'exceptionnel pour la collectivité. Si nous réussissons, la barre sera plus haute pour les autres promoteurs privés. Mais si nous échouons, aucun autre ne voudra faire preuve de leadership" – Suzanne Deschamps, Groupe Pacific

October - Les Amis present brief at public hearings by Montreal Metropolitan Community into the Plan métropolitain d'aménagement et de développement (PMAD). Coalition of environmental groups supports the creation of a green and blue belt around Montreal.