

2006-08-01: Accusé de reception from Ombudsman of Montréal



August 1, 2006

Mr. Al Hayek
4545, Trenholme Avenue
Montréal (Québec)
H4B 1X8

Subject : **Your request to the OMBUDSMAN DE MONTRÉAL**
Our Ref. : **OMBUD - 1006**

Mr. Hayek,

We acknowledge receipt of your request received on August 1, 2006. Rest assured that this request will be treated in a timely manner.

The person responsible to handle your file is:

Me. Marjolaine Therrien, deputy ombudsman
OMBUDSMAN DE MONTREAL
275 Notre-Dame Est, suite R-100
Montréal (Québec) H2Y 1C6
E-mail : ombudsman@ville.montreal.qc.ca
Phone : 514 872-8999
Fax: 514 872-2379

Do not hesitate to contact that person for any information you may require pertaining to our process or to your file.

In the coming days, we will review your file and, if appropriate, we will request from the service or the borough concerned all the information we deem relevant to treat your file adequately. We may also contact you to obtain additional information or require a meeting with you, so as to ensure that we clearly understand your situation and point of view. In any such case, it will be important that you fully cooperate with our office.

Thank you for addressing your concerns to the **OMBUDSMAN DE MONTRÉAL**.

Yours truly,


Sylvie Pepin
Secretary

/sp

2006-08-01



News Release for immediate release

Montreal, August 1, 2006

Montreal trades away publicly-owned green spaces for private profit at Rapides du Cheval Blanc Ecoterritory. Green Coalition appeals to the Ombudsman.

The Green Coalition respectfully requests the Ombudsman to examine the evidence that citizens' rights have been violated by the Montreal City Council vote (*Agenda item 20.16*) to approve a land exchange permitting the realization of a large-scale residential development project at Rapides du Cheval Blanc West. Citizens have called for the conservation of this shoreline green space for forty years.

It is our strong belief that the vote at Montreal City Council on May 23, 2006 contradicts many of the policy directions adopted by this City; namely, Politique de consultation et de participation publique, Plan stratégique de développement durable, Politique de protection et mise en valeur des milieux naturels, Plan de Transport, Politique de l'arbre, and Charte Montréalaise des droits et responsabilités.

It is our strong belief that the vote on May 23 has set in motion a large-scale development project at Rapides du Cheval Blanc Ecoterritory without any prior public consultation whatsoever. Our only recourse is to appeal to the Ombudsman.

The Green Coalition formally requests the Ombudsman to overturn the May 23 vote or to facilitate an inquiry into events leading up to that vote, so that the history of public clamour to have the Rapides du Cheval Blanc waterfront land preserved, going back to the 1960s, will not have been denied. The Green Coalition also requests the Ombudsman to investigate irregularities in the procedures of the vote itself at Montreal City Council on May 23, 2006.

Attached please find the Green Coalition's submission to the Ombudsman. Also attached is an Appendix of more than 100 supporting documents that chronicle citizens demands to preserve natural green spaces in general, and Cheval Blanc in particular.

Contacts:

David Fletcher (514) 683-7864

Sylvia Oljemark (514) 332-9146

Nature lovers optimistic

West Island nature lovers celebrated last week after learning a 70-metre-wide linear park along Pierrefond's waterfront is in the works.

George Boutilier, a former Pierrefonds city councillor and environmentalist, said he was relieved to hear there was a plan for a waterfront park opposite the Cheval Blanc rapids.

The announcement made at the borough council meeting heartened residents who have been fighting to preserve the waterfront for several years.

Boutilier said residents were advised that

the plans for the park will be presented to the public in the fall.

Patricia Di Genova, an urban planner with the city of Montreal confirmed the planned park.

But Di Genova said it's unknown whether the new plan for the Cheval Blanc housing project being designed by Grilli Immobilier Inc. will include a 70-metre band between the buildings and riverbank.

However, she said, the city remains committed to seeing a regional park in the Cheval Blanc area and has input in what will ultimately be built.

F **WEST** **The Gazette**

F8 Sports **F10** Police Beat **F12** Community Calendar

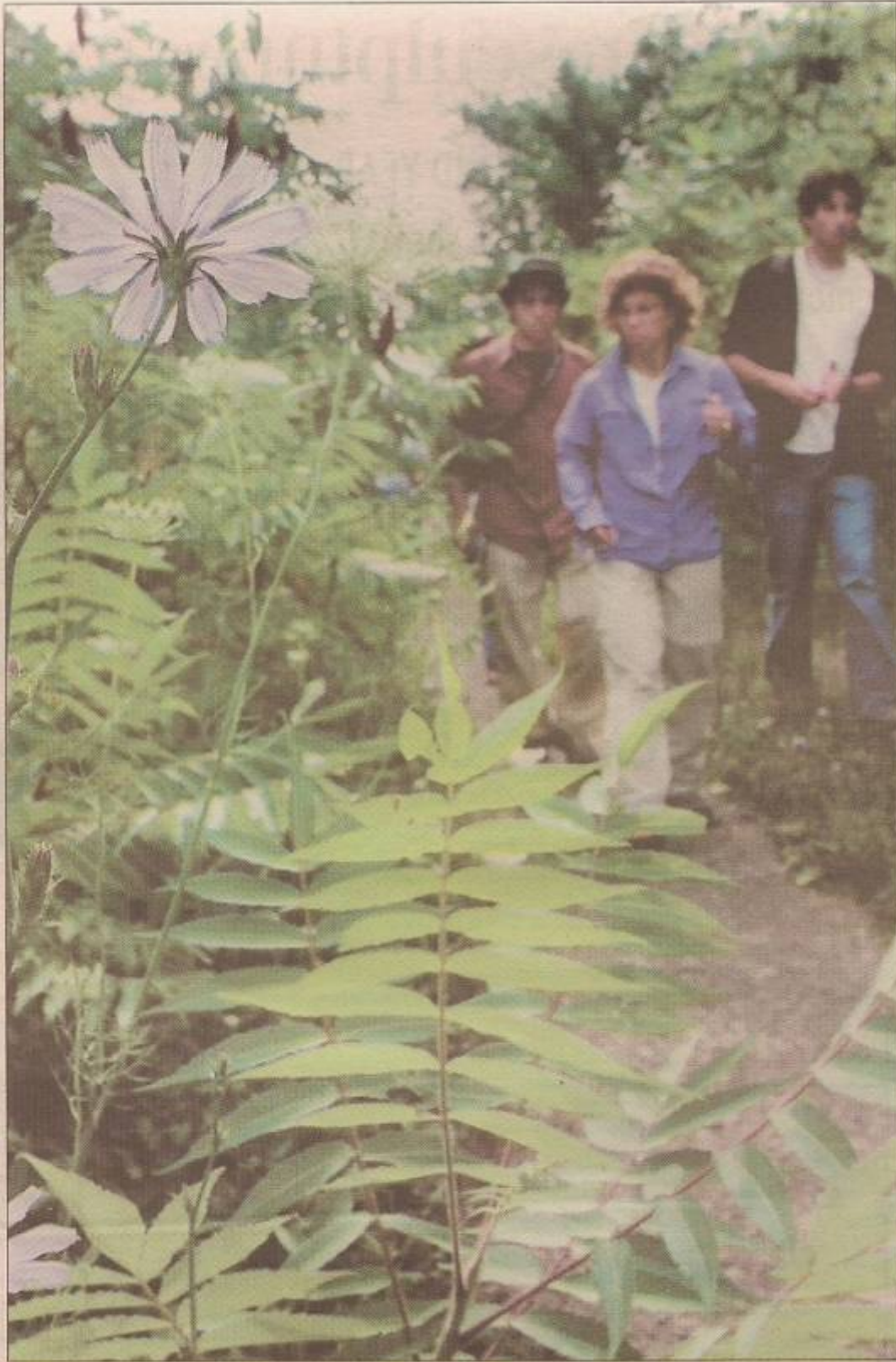
ISLAND



Cheval Blanc housing development back to drawing board, **F3**
Devoted Pointe Claire gardener creates living masterpiece, **F6**
Walking group draws strength for workout from prayer, **F15**

THE GAZETTE | MONTREAL | THURSDAY, JULY 27, 2006 | EDITOR: ALCYIA AMBROZIAK | 514 694 4982 | aambroziak@thegazette.canwest.com

**2006-07-27 : The Gazette
Housing Project Scaled Back**



JOHN KENNEY THE GAZETTE

Daniel Oyama (left), Ora Alberton and Patrick Marcoux tour the land they are fighting to save opposite the Cheval Blanc rapids in Pierrefonds Saturday.

Housing project scaled back

CONSERVATIONISTS FIGHT TO SAVE WATERFRONT SITE

Groups don't put much faith in public consultations: 'They listen to complaints and adopt whatever they have planned'

CHERYL CORNACCHIA
THE GAZETTE

Conservationists opposed to the Cheval Blanc housing development on Pierrefonds' waterfront were cautiously optimistic this week.

This month's announcement by the Metropolitan Transportation Agency that there won't be a new station between the existing Roxboro-Pierrefonds and Île Bigras stations on the Deux Montagnes commuter line has given them more time to lobby.

The train station was to be a focal point of the \$12-million housing development, but, instead, it has killed the original plan, which called for 650 waterfront housing units.

The project will now go back to the drawing board, said Bert Ward, a bor-

"For 40 years, citizens have been fighting to preserve that shoreline and we're not giving up."

SYLVIA OLJEMARK

ough councillor in Pierrefonds-Roxboro.

Ward said new plans for a scaled-back residential development - about 300 units in four-storey buildings - will be drafted by developer Grilli Immobilier Inc.

After that plan is approved by a borough committee, Ward said, it will be presented at a public consultation in September.

Montreal's Green Coalition and the Comité pour la sauvegarde des espaces verts entourant les rapides du Cheval Blanc welcomed the news but expressed some reservations.

Carmen Vrana, a member of the Comité said that in the past, "public consultation" has only meant public information.

"They listen to our complaints then start the regular council meeting and adopt whatever they have planned," Vrana said.

Nonetheless, Vrana and others said

they will continue to protest the housing project.

"For 40 years, citizens have been fighting to preserve that shoreline and we're not giving up," said Sylvia Oljemark, founding president of Montreal's Green Coalition.

The collection of wetlands, meadows and shoreline is home to many endangered species including the map turtle, brown snake and easternmill snake, Oljemark said.

"It's the only remaining natural shoreline on the Island that can be protected," she said.

The threatened land has been declared one of 10 ecoterritories on the island, which the city of Montreal pledged to protect, Oljemark said.

With the development going back to the drawing board, David Fletcher of the Green Coalition said the borough must be pressured to do more to protect the waterfront.

"They have the option to stop now," Fletcher said.

But Pierrefonds officials have said they are already protecting the waterfront.

Ward said the housing development called for 30 per cent of the area to be set aside as park land.

"The environmentalists just want it their way or no way," Ward said, noting the borough has other interests at stake.

"We are trying to increase revenues," he said.

The 650-unit Cheval Blanc plan would have generated about \$1 million annually in tax revenue.

But if money is such a big issue, Vrana said, why did the borough give the developer waterfront land at a discount price.

She said Grilli Immobilier Inc. received land west of Riviera Place evaluated at \$230,000 in exchange for waterfront property the company couldn't develop.

She said the numbers don't add up when compared to a similar land exchange three years ago between Pierrefonds and another developer.

That developer, she said, received a lot in Old Montreal, which was evaluated at \$2.8 million, in exchange for his Pierrefonds property.

NATIONAL

Canadian cities asked to back Kyoto

By Rich Maerov
News Reporter

Whitehorse has been asked to join other cities in an effort to bolster Canadian support for the Kyoto Protocol on climate change.

Monday, council was asked to pass a resolution formalizing its commitment to Kyoto's environmental standards by the Montreal-based environmental group Green Coalition.

"I would ask you to consider this resolution," said coalition board member Don Hobus.

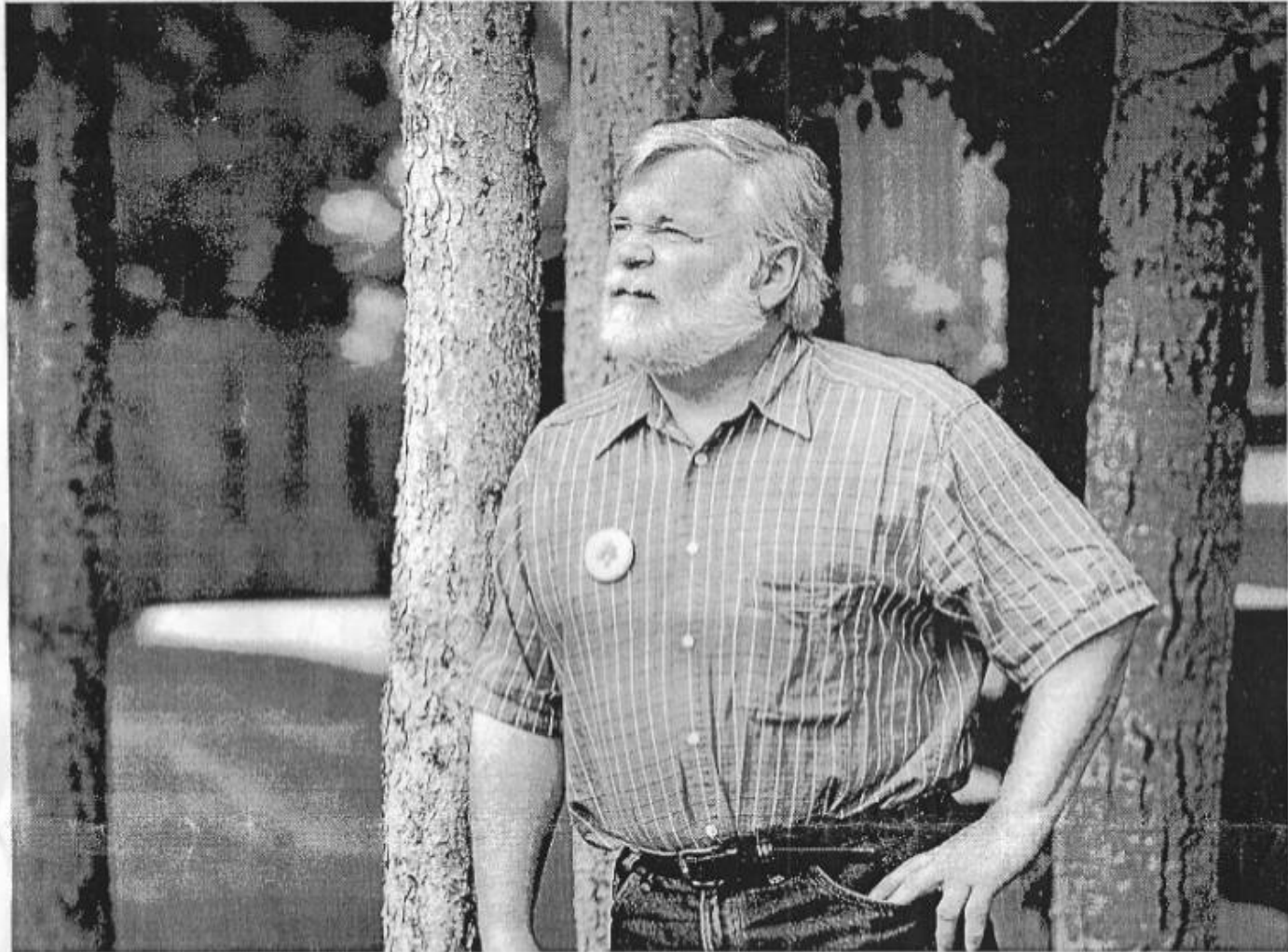
"It's a resolution that supports Kyoto — one that is patterned after the resolution that the mayor of Seattle put forth."

In February 2005, as the Kyoto Protocol was being implemented by most of the industrialized world, Seattle mayor Greg Nickels was frustrated to see the US sitting on the sidelines.

So he introduced the US Mayors' Climate Protection Agreement, calling on municipalities to meet Kyoto's targets and put pressure on Washington to ratify it.

"If the White House isn't going to make it happen from the top down, America's cities can and will make it happen from the ground up," said Nickels.

Since then, 266 US mayors representing more than 47 mil-



Mike Thomas/Yukon News

mayors Climate Protection Agreement, calling on municipalities to meet Kyoto's targets and put pressure on Washington to ratify it.

"If the White House isn't going to make it happen from the top down, America's cities can and will make it happen from the ground up," said Nickels.

Since then, 266 US mayors representing more than 47 million Americans have passed the agreement.

Now that Canada's new federal government has begun to back out of its Kyoto commitments, the Green Coalition has decided to follow Nickel's grassroots strategy.

"We look at this resolution as a way of saying, 'Well, if the federal government will not support this then we have to bring it down a level and go to the people and say it's your responsibility ultimately to take care of this,'" Hobus told council.

In 2002, Canada, which produces about two per cent of the world's greenhouse gases, ratified the Kyoto protocol, committing to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions to six per cent below 1990 levels by 2012.

Some estimates peg Canada's emission levels now to be 30 per cent higher than they were in 1990.

Harper has said the 2012 target is impossible, and since taking office in January, has begun dismantling almost all of Ottawa's green initiatives.

He says he wants to replace Kyoto with a "made in Canada" plan, the details of which are set to be released in October, according to the Globe and Mail.

The Green Coalition's resolution urges municipalities to meet



Mike Thomas/Yukon News

CLIMATE CHANGE... Don Hobus of the Green Coalition is in Whitehorse promoting the Kyoto Protocol.

or exceed Kyoto targets for reducing global warming pollution by taking actions such as expanding renewable energy sources and public transit, creating new efficiency standards for vehicles and buildings, adopting land-use policies that preserve green space and increasing recycling.

At the beginning of June, the group presented the resolution at the annual convention of the Canadian Federation of Municipalities.

Since then, Hobus has fired it off to 60 towns and cities across the country, and another 120 French versions are to be distributed to municipalities in Quebec.

He has been lobbying mayors in his immediate region of Boies-Filion, Quebec, and so far two towns, Rosemere and Blainville, have passed the resolution.

Several other mayors have agreed to pass it by the end of the summer, he said.

"I've met nothing but positive results so far."

Hobus was in Whitehorse this week visiting family and took the opportunity to float the resolution in person.

"The territories are probably seeing the impact of global

warming first, so I think it's in their interest," Hobus said in an interview.

"And it's a way for them to pass the message to the rest of the country that this is not a joke, this is not a hoax, it's actually happening and we're seeing it firsthand."

He says the popularity of former US Vice-President Al Gore's documentary film *An Inconvenient Truth* has helped raise awareness of the global warming issue and he plans to add copies of the DVD to his campaign materials once it is released.

Hobus hopes he'll have a decent response by mid November, when Canada chairs the next annual UN climate change conference in Nairobi, Kenya.

Conservative Environment Minister Rona Ambrose will preside over the conference, during which the Kyoto signatories are to decide on targets for after 2012.

"If Canada pulls out, imagine the message it's sending to everybody," said Hobus.

At the 2005 UN climate change conference in Montreal, mayor Nickels headed a special delegation, one separate from the

official delegation sent by the Bush administration.

This alternate delegation was in favour of Kyoto and included mayors from across the US, including smaller middle-American communities.

"The (US mayor) movement has been an incredible success, and it just keeps growing," said Nickel's spokesperson Marty McOmber in an interview yesterday.

"They're agreeing to take this issue and make their voice heard on a state and federal level to encourage action that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

"I don't know if it will work the same way in Canada or not, but if the model works there that would be wonderful, because what it does is engage people in their own home towns and allow them to address what is a global issue."

The initiative taken by the US mayors is a powerful rejection of President Bush's narrow-mindedness on climate change, said Canadian broadcaster and environmental activist David Suzuki in an e-mail to The News.

"It should be embarrassing to him but I believe that in Canada too, it will be action at the grass-

roots level, by citizens, municipalities and provinces that should make our prime minister face up to the fact that Canada is especially vulnerable," Suzuki wrote.

"People in the North, like Yukon citizens, know full well that global warming is happening and upsetting ecological systems.

"I hope the action of the mayors will make our federal government pay attention and act as most citizens of the country want."

City administrators will present the Green Coalition's resolution to council and seek its direction on the initiative, said city manager Dennis Shewfelt.

"We have the sample resolution that was provided," Shewfelt said. "Council can adopt that or they can amend it to their liking."

"It'll be brought up and I'm quite sure we'll take the steps that we need to support what this guy is doing," said acting mayor Dave Austin.

"Let's face it, Canada's backed off on the thing, so in the grand scheme of things, Whitehorse is not going to have a great deal of effect," he said.

"But what the heck, eh?" "I don't have a problem with supporting it at all."

Contact Rich Maerov at richm@yukon-news.com.