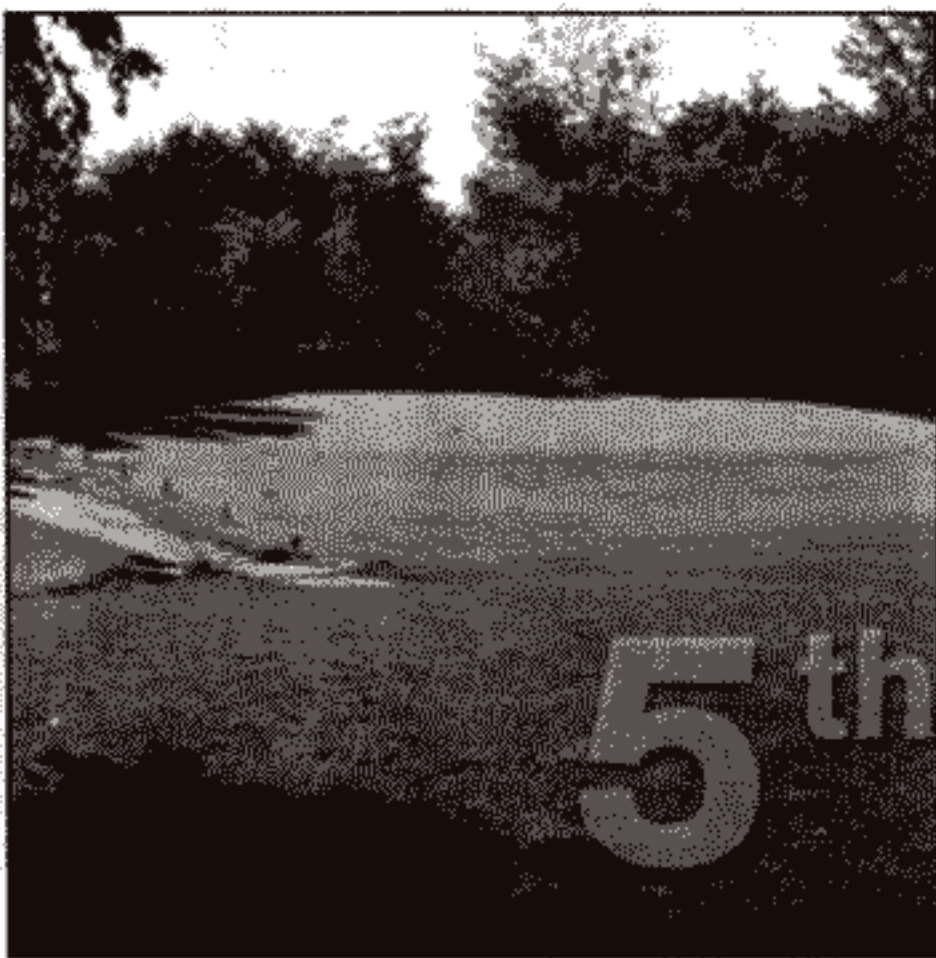


The Jewel of The West End Meadowbrook, A Private Community

by Irwin Rapoport
Times

More than 30 West End residents and noted environmentalists gathered at Sheraton Park in Montreal West last Wednesday at 8:30 am in response to the Corporate Day being held at the Meadowbrook Golf Club, a meeting they fear is the first step towards developing the Lachine (City of Montreal) half of the 40-hectare public golf course into housing.



The 5th hole at meadowbrook Golf Course

Several months ago the golf club was sold by Fairmont Hotels and Resorts to Meadowbrook Groupe Pacific Inc. for \$3 million, despite the land being evaluated at approximately \$10 million.

idential development of Meadowbrook and are lobbying for the purchase of the green space as a regional park.

"We have so little green fields and natural spaces left on the island that we have to conserve what we have left," said David Fletcher, the vice president of the Green Coalition. "Meadowbrook is the only available large green space in the West End that is basically untouched by development and while used as a golf course, has a thriving eco-system that is home to many plant and animals species that are declining elsewhere on the island."

Avrom Shtern, a spokesperson for Les Amis de Meadowbrook, says that the Agglomeration Council has to purchase the land.

"Given the fact that all 40 hectares were purchased for \$3 million, the current owners would not be in a position to complain about an expropriation for the price that they paid to Fairmont," he said. "The bar has been set and we need the political will and leadership from all political sides to come to a mutual beneficial decision to conserve the land in perpetuity."

Shtern noted that the Railway Association of Canada (RAC) and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) issued a research report entitled Proximity Guidelines and Best Practices in February 2006, which states:

- The recommended minimum vibration influence area is 75 meters from a railway corridor or railway yard.
- Development review of residential or other sensitive land uses proposed within these influence areas should include noise and vibration studies to assess the suitability of the proposed use and to recommend mitigation requirements.
- For a rail freight yard, there is a 300-meter setback for residential uses (and) for mainline, a 30-meter minimum setback from the property line.

Other recommendations include a three-meter mini-

ing West End residents to speak up for Meadowbrook's preservation and to lobby local and City of Montreal officials, the provincial government, the federal government and the two major railway companies to have the RAC and FCM recommendations become law and that all parties work together to fund the purchase of the golf course as a regional park.

"This is the pride and joy of the West End, including N.D.G. where I live," he said. "We need everybody to get involved. We must protect our remaining green space. Steps are being taken to preserve Angell Woods in Beaconsfield. We must do our part in the West End with Meadowbrook."

Several months ago the golf club was sold by Fairmont Hotels and Resorts to Meadowbrook Groupe Pacific Inc. for \$3 million, despite the land being evaluated at approximately \$10 million.

Recently a sign was placed at the golf course that says "Meadowbrook, a private community". As well, what appears to be a newly painted sales office is being made ready.

The golf course was closed for the day and golfers arriving to play a round, were turned away by a security guard.

While no speeches were given at the gathering, it was an opportunity for members of Les Amis de Meadowbrook, the Green Coalition and area residents to express their concerns and to begin preparations for a renewed battle to save the green space that serves as a buffer zone between an industrialized section of Lachine, mainline railway tracks and yards and residential districts of Cote Saint Luc and Montreal West.

The golf course is split between C.S.L. and Lachine. C.S.L.'s section is zoned for golf and commercial/recreational, while Lachine's half is zoned residential, with an emphasis towards high-density units. Should Lachine allow development on its half, the only access for the residents would be by Cote Saint Luc Road and the possibility of forcing Montreal West to allow an access road to be built through Toe Blake Park. While in Lachine technically, the residents would have no direct access to Lachine itself unless a bridge was built across the railway tracks towards Highway 20.

The proposed area for development is surrounded on all three sides by railway tracks. Both C.S.L. and Montreal West oppose any res-

For a rail freight yard, there is a 500-meter setback for residential uses (and) for mainline, a 30-meter minimum setback from the property line.

Other recommendations include a three-meter minimum height acoustical fence and a 2.5-meter earth berm, as well as foundation isolation for residential structures.

"Given the fact that there are two rail yards adjacent to Meadowbrook, one being Sortin and the other, St. Luc," he said, "and should these recommendations be enacted in Quebec, then development would be impossible on the site."

Al Hayak, the president of the Green Coalition, is urg-