

- As a native and proud Montrealer and Governor of Les Amis de la Montagne, I have closely followed the evolution of the project and wish to ensure that facts are well understood and respected.

- Furthermore, I believe it is important to understand the issues surrounding the Priests of Saint Sulpice and the extent of their decision-making process.

- While most protectionists and conservationists groups would seek to oppose development of any kind on Mount Royal, to preserve green space, I believe that it is important to proceed with projects as long as the development is properly organized, executed and is respectful of the environment. Furthermore, in order to avoid vacant and abandoned buildings/ structures that are left to decay, one must ensure that developers and subsequently property owners undertake to maintain properties intact. Once a decision is made by current owners, i.e. The Sulpicians who decided to dispose of their properties which in this case happens to be located on Mount Royal, it is my opinion that they should take every measure to optimize the value and seek a win-win situation.

MEMOIRE

PREAMBULE:

- It is a well-known fact that most religious congregations and the Roman Catholic dioceses are facing important decisions predicated on declining memberships and incomes and this for over the past decade. The congregations and dioceses have accumulated substantial investments in real estate over the past 50-100 years. In order to ensure their livelihoods and well-being of their fellow members, most organizations have conducted several studies including actuarial and property valuations, aimed at maximizing returns while respecting fundamental values of a religious nature and preservation of historical property.
- Attempting to retain properties, ensure their maintenance and also derive sufficient income flow is often, if almost never, impossible to achieve.
- For these reasons, the congregations and dioceses have been forced to dispose of their pride possessions.
- We must recognize their dilemmas and consider them not as ordinary sellers, as such, the manner by which they conduct themselves through the process will be different and be more complex.
- In this case, the Priests of Saint-Sulpice undertook over several years a detailed and often dedicate procedure to search for a buyer willing to meet their Christian Mission and whose project will respect community goals.

Thus, my main preoccupation and concern is to determine if the Sulpicians took into consideration the HERITAGE VALUE of the old Seminary of Philosophy when they decided to sell the property?

I have researched this issue and provide the following facts:

- i. The Priests of Saint Sulpice ordered studies of the Patrimonial and Ecological value of the site;
- ii. The Priests of Saint-Sulpice signed a patrimonial pact with the Town of Montreal, within the framework of the Plan de Protection et de mise en valeur du Mont-Royal, and this pact related only to the conservation of the wooded areas of the property;

- iii. The Priests of Saint-Sulpice joined the studies and pact to the Tender documents;
- iv. They invited private, public and/or semi-public organizations to present an offer to purchase. As we have been confirmed, only private organizations presented offers leaving us to deduct that their property meets neither location, nor spatial, nor architectural needs of today's institutions and that its HERITAGE VALUE is neither important nor imperative enough to justify its acquisition by a government, whether municipal, provincial, nor federal, nor by a heritage trust;
- v. The Priests of Saint-Sulpice accepted the proposal of a purchaser who ultimately offered the best combination of preservation of value, price and in accordance with many recommendations of the various studies which accompanied the Tender documents.

Additional research reveals the following interesting facts:

- The City of Montreal and the Ministry of Culture collaborated with the Priests of Saint-Sulpice in the study of the HERITAGE VALUE of the property and concluded that this value was not high enough to warrant a special patrimonial status;
- The preparation of the Plan de Protection et de mise en valeur du Mont-Royal involved many groups and concerned Montrealers;
- The proposed by-law ensures the preservation of the elements which are essential to the recollection and a sense of the history of the site;
- The possibility of new buildings in precise locations of lesser impact on the property should generate the economic means that the private owners will need to renovate the old seminary and maintain the property according to the parameters as set forth in the by-law.

In conclusion, it is obvious that given the limited financial resources to support the many projects and needs of our community, governments at every level cannot devote the funds necessary to acquire, maintain and/or restore property of the religious institutions which face serious issues to protect their membership well-being.

To expect religious orders to “donate” the properties in light of the known facts would be unfair and exaggerated.

Should the community at large expect government intervention to acquire and dedicate resources to properties held by religious orders appears also to ask for very special concessions and considerations.

Thus, it appears only reasonable that we allow the disposition of important property to private developers and ultimately private owners so that sufficient revenues are derived to maintain the essential HERITAGE VALUE.

I am of the opinion that the Priests of Saint-Sulpice acted responsibly and took several measures to ensure “optimization” of a very difficult and serious decision to dispose of a special property and piece of its history and diligently chose reputable developers to carry out this transition.

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