

Preamble.

My education is a Bachelor of Science in Biology, specializing in Plant Ecology, which also included a course in biology of pollutants. In addition, I have attended CRAPAUD's «L'école d'été agriurbaine» at UQAM. Most recently, I have taken a course at MacDonald College in Organic Soil Fertilization. I have researched starting an organic farm in Eastern Ontario.

I want to remind the people who run the Ville de Montreal that when you are in the Mairie in Old Montreal, you can see stained glass windows above the council's chairs. These windows celebrate the educational, industrial, artistic, cultural, and agricultural heritage of Montreal. The one for agriculture might as well have had rocks thrown through it from within the council chamber, for all the respect the development of Montreal and the political control that should have safeguarded agriculture for its own sake. I hope that you realize this.

When I attended a borough meeting on March the 1st, 2011, I raised the following four inquiries to the council. Here is a transcript of the inquiry:

8)Madame Jane Sorenson 11-38267 CA 1er mars 2011

Demande d'étudier la possibilité de permettre la garde de poules et demande de commencer par permettre les poules dans les jardins communautaires et au parc Angrignon et demande si la ferme Angrignon sera rouverte. Elle demande un rendez-vous afin de présenter sa requête plus amplement car celle-ci touche aussi le réaménagement des écuries de la rue Basin. Elle souligne que l'entreprise Berger Blanc retenue pour le contrat de service animalier n'est pas accessible et que plusieurs plaintes ont été déposées sur le traitement des animaux.

Le maire indique que le débat sur les poules en milieu urbain en est un métropolitain qui devrait faire l'objet d'une consultation publique mais que la ville centre a décidé que les discussions devraient avoir lieu arrondissement par arrondissement. Il indique que des analyses de la question sont en cours notamment à Rosemont et qu'on en attend les résultats..

Of course, this was "Répondu sur place." I am happy to have the opportunity to go further into details in a larger forum. I will deal with each point in detail, and finish this submission with an idea of an urban farm that touches on each topic in a responsive manner, and which this city desperately needs. The points are:

- Keeping chickens in community gardens
- Angrignon farm
- Horses and stables at Griffintown and Basin
- Berger Blanc.

In addition, I will add initial comments on bees and apiaries, and an agronomy service.

Bees.

I would like to be able to consult with a “animateur” or someone at the local Eco-Quartier on how and where to install a hive on my property, including a wall-mounted or sloped-rooftop model. And I would like to be able to buy one at the Eco-Quartier with ease. I would like to reiterated the importance on acting on the beehive issue as quickly as possible, because Colony Collapse Disorder can best (if only) be combated by having a large increase in the number and diversity of bees in apiaries, so that they have opportunities to create other hives and intermingle with wild populations. Boosting the number of bees in our city, region, and country can best support natural resistance and its propagation amongst populations. All the better that we are planting clover and have a bylaw restricting and forbidding the use of pesticides.

Agronomy service.

I believe it would be in the Ville’s best interest regarding urban agriculture to accept soil samples from citizens and submit them to the laboratory for testing. The Ville will then have a copy of the soil’s profile, and the Ville’s agronomists can make recommendations to gardeners on what not to plant, or what to do with the soil in order to plant a certain crop. Most contamination of metals in the soil are non-problematic in normal pH ranges, and are not problematic at all for most if not all fruit crops. The Ville would not have razed one of its community gardens in the past if it had proper intervention by agronomists. I would also like to point out that the Ville’s or the boroughs’ rules on “cleaning” a garden plot by October 1 of every year is hostile to urban wildlife, which we negatively impact by our obsession with “cleanliness,” as they need the seeds, flowers, and vegetative cover over the winter. In addition, the detritus of the previous year’s crop is essential for good soil nutrition.

Chickens.

I grew up on a farm north of Toronto, where as a teenager I looked after a flock of about 50 hens and several geese. I wanted to raise three hens in my backyard, where I have probably 100 square meters total, half of which would be amenable to housing and feeding chickens, with the front yard of approximately 30 square meters amenable with a suitable fence, to give them space to eat and run. I also created a Facebook group to this effect, some time before other Facebook groups on urban chickens became active in other Canadian cities. I tried to apply to my borough to get a permit. They refused.

People pay about \$3 per dozen eggs. This makes it one of the cheapest sources of protein around. Nonetheless, it is so cheaply produced that a hen must cost a farmer less than that per month in order to be profitable. We can afford to cut out the middlemen and have the Ville participate in the quota system by submitting its permit records to the egg marketing boards. We also disrespect the animals quite horribly here in Quebec (notably in the Lanaudière), cramming them into battery cages with short, miserable lives. Free-run or organic eggs get shunted off to the “specialty” section of the grocery store as if this is a non-issue, yet they only cost a dollar to two dollars more per dozen – still well within the consideration of being cheap for quality, but out of the habit of too many people who can well afford them. We also slaughter an astounding number of young chickens for consumption – over 80,000 birds per day, per abattoir - because people, not knowing what a real, live chicken is, thoughtlessly consume them as if they were vegetable matter. There is at least one specialty farm in British Columbia that grows chickens for several months longer than we do for our mass market, because its Asian customers, who know what a chicken is and what a chicken tastes like, want the kind that has reached the size and maturity to provide a real meal.

This is why I want chickens reinstated as an animal not forbidden by the City’s (anti) animal policy – so that people have opportunities to encounter and begin to respect the birds again; to enjoy their company as companion animals; to have increased access to eggs that were not extracted, so to speak, from birds that are treated as badly as we have them. The law needs to be rewritten, without the pathetic excuse that they don’t have enough inspectors. When I hear “stricte ment contrôlé” used in reference to Rosemont-Petite-Patrie’s new chicken law, I think it is a reactionary attitude in favour of the detractors of animals. As a farm kid, it strikes me as the worst kind of ignorance for towns and cities to seek to problematize animals. The problems are people and their unruly attitudes about the lifestyles they’re “entitled” to, where animals supposedly only exist in theory. Incidentally, unsanitary is the last word I would use to describe a farm, where human children on the whole grow up to be healthier and more resilient than their peers in the city.

At the same time, I understand well that the SPCA and animal advocates, such as I am, do not want disrespect of neighbours and animals to be taking place right under our noses with impunity. The SPCA already receives a deluge of animals every year, in part thanks to the Ville and the Régie du Logement and their regressive animal policies that provide no support to pet owners. These policies are only a reflection of a fading culture that was ignorant of the reality of animals – which ethology can correct - and arrogant towards their place in urban life, disrespecting the real importance they hold for most people, even those who don’t have pets. To

allow chickens to anyone requesting a permit, or allowing them freely, without inspection, is problematic. I proposed to my borough that a partnership be created with an animal welfare organization that ensures that the conditions surrounding the application are all fulfilled and that the chickens would be well cared for and surrendered appropriately when they were no longer needed. The borough was disinterested.

I also proposed, and with this application continue to propose, that community gardens where several gardeners are responsible obtain the Ville's support to have chickens. There will be ample space, ample distance from neighbours, a place to secure the hens every night, and several people in charge of looking after the chickens to make sure they are given a range, have ample garden waste, insects, and food to eat, and add their manure to the local compost. According to anyone knowledgeable of the subject, it does not make sense to insist on gardens without hens and rabbits (though the rabbits, as in my present case, and in support of the SPCA's constant need of finding homes, should be kept as pets). A garden needs the soil aeration and insect control that hens provide, and a garden or compost heap uses chicken and rabbit manure most efficiently – they are both an excellent source of nitrates and nitrites that are plant-available and that can be converted to plant-available ammonia by soil microbes.

Angrignon Farm

It mystifies me why the city would close this exhibit down, rather than build it into a real farm. It is a farm house with a garden that is still actively used, and a few corrals. I dropped by there this spring for the BioBlitz and there were plenty of people gardening there. There simply must be a way to convert Angrignon Farm into a real demonstration farm, modelled after the Downsview Farm in Toronto, or after the Canada Agriculture Museum in Ottawa. You need to reinvoke its funding and reimplicate its animateurs into the new reality of urban farming. Find a way to make the farm a break-even or profitable venture. You are not lacking for human resources, only political will!

Horses.

Eight years ago, in 2004, I wrote the following letter to the OCPM regarding an inquiry on how to encourage BlueBonnetts to set up shop off-island – which, of course, they did.

<p>Jane Sorensen Pour : plandurbanisme.ocpm@ville.montreal.qc.ca 2004-05-13 10:26 cc : Objet : Blue Bonnetts</p>

Today in the news:

Marvin Rotrand said he's been calling for the racetrack to be redeveloped for years. "It's an aberration to have a piece of choice land like this in the centre of the city, really valuable land, frozen from development because there's a racetrack there," he said.

Greed, greed, greed! Always looking to expand the tax base without regard to the underutilized developments that already exist! Public covetousness of private land is bad enough, but public covetousness of public land that has a historical value is even worse. The racetrack should stay exactly where it is. Moreover, just like every other city in the rest of North America, the race track, stables and land should be used for an annual agricultural fair and midway, so that urban people, most of whom here have never experienced a fair, can learn a bit about how the other half - the rural population they ignore, deride, or in any case, outvote - lives, shares values, and has fun. Toronto has the CNE. Vancouver has the PNE. Montreal? Has prime real estate going to waste over horses, according to a politician. My god, the arrogance!

I am no less passionate now on the subject than I was then. For a long time, I have wanted to raise a successful fuss about the stables on Basin street, simply because they have this big playground for horses that they prefer to use for storing trucks and wagons and whatever else. That land would be a good acre or two of pasture that the horses, after their day of work or on their days off, could enjoy. Instead, I have met only one of the caleche drivers who takes his horse for a walk and a graze along the Lachine Canal after a day of work. The others bring them back to the stable and put them in a box stall. Some horses get impatient for air and exercise, as I have (thankfully, as the stables are not paranoid) witnessed in visiting them. It is sad that they have been underserved by legislation mandating appropriate sizes of box stalls, upgrading their living quarters, and giving them routine access to pasture. This would never happen in the country.

Over a year ago, Juliette Paterson, the architect with a primary stake in the preservation of the Griffintown Horse Palace - a project that the Ville has let down - told me that the site was sold for development. Are people insane? This piece of land is undeveloped! It is agricultural! And do you lack the political will to preserve and upgrade it? Where are the caleches going to go? Do you think Montreal is just too modern for them, now? Or will they need to keep on marching all the way to Ferme Angrignon to get rest for the night? The Ville should straight up find a site in its books of derelict, unoccupied properties - there are plenty of them! - and offer a land swap to the purchaser, in order to preserve the stables in perpetuity.

Berger Blanc.

This section is intended to underline that my complaint to the Sud Ouest borough for handing the new contract to Berger Blanc without thought to the residents and their pets **predated** the transmission Enquête on Radio-Canada, that

showed the mistreatment of animals. This subsequently became a difficult situation for the Ville to extricate itself from, and its new laws and responses are still missing components to satisfy animal welfare and civic demands that respect the citizens who keep animals. It seems that for every consideration that the Ville offers dog owners (especially), it wants to extract further demonstrations of control, quite over-the-top and not commensurate with cities in Europe nor the vast majority of North American cities. It makes owning a dog in the Ville a very unpleasant and unjust experience. This may not seem related to urban agriculture, but animals are a part of urban agriculture, and animals are an important part of biodiversity. Our political fear of them lags behind others and begs for some real capacity building of our politicians and citizenry. Cultural fear of animals, such as those from our immigrants, is something they should get over in adapting to Canadian society, and status-based denigration of animals, such as Canadians may have for those who live in closer association with animals, is equally foolish.

Conclusion.

This memoir comes from an informed person and is written in a hurry from disparate notes on several topics, with a background of peer-reviewed papers to consult and plenty of personal experience. It was a surprise to me that the deadline, or the notice of the requirement to submit these memoirs, would pass so quickly upon the consultations, and was so little publicized on the website, and was certainly not apparent in English. It is hard enough to be aware of the differences in democratic participation in a francophone society, but the lack of effort to say “Submit your comments over here by this date!” in an obvious way has made my attendance at last night’s consultation at CEDA of paramount importance to me, and to you, too.

Those who take a similar position to mine on the topics of animals in urban agriculture and the re-ruralization and rewilding of urban landscapes for biodiversity are welcome to contact me.

Outline: Farm replacing industry when Hwy 20 Turcot moves

Rationale for the idea

The Turcot exchange is moving Hwy 20 closer to the escarpment, which will free up land on the industrial side. This land is flat and borders the Lachine Canal. There is a farming initiative at Polyvalente St. Henri, and there may be other agricultural training programs outside of MacDonald Campus on the island of Montreal, for which this farm would be a welcome resource or annex.

Urban agriculture is needed for food security, and the city's lock-down on livestock means that private and community gardens only address fresh produce, not milk nor eggs, their products, or meat. In addition, high-tech solutions are a fetish for cosmopolitan urbanization, but do not address the real needs of low-tech solutions for resilient communities

Given that Ferme Angrignon was never a full-scale farm, and all traces of agricultural heritage have been erased from the island of Montreal, it would be most appropriate if some of the industrial land was reclaimed in an area that is highly visible to people entering the city from the West Island, reverting many acres of it back to agricultural purposes.

The Ecozone in which most of Eastern Canada is urbanized - from Windsor to Quebec City - is the smallest Ecozone of Mixed wood plains. This forest type and agricultural lands that displaced it are both under threat from urban encroachment and intensification, despite the implausibility of the need to increase the size of our urban areas.

Description of the Idea

A historical barn from elsewhere on the Island, or in the Province given that this threatened specie of structure needs protection on the Island, shall be procured and the structure relocated to the urban farm site, and reconstructed using the best LEED retrofits. This barn shall be used to accommodate most of the livestock on the farm, including all of the livestock in winter unless a smaller barn can be co-located and heated adequately. It should also accommodate the horses used in the tourist caleche trade, especially availing the horses of pasture that they presently do not enjoy, and giving them a green route along the Lachine Canal between their work and their stables.

There shall also be a house collocated from one of the existing adjacent properties, so that the primary caretaker of the animals, and the student interns working on the farm, have a place to stay that allows proper supervision of the animals during off-hours. The land will not be monoculture farmed, but light industry equipment (ATVs) and modified traditional ox-drawn equipment can be

used to plant sufficient forage to lay away for winter, while all animals are on pasture rotations from April to October.

An small apple-hazelnut orchard shall also be part of the farm, providing shade, habitat, and food for poultry and pigs. An urban wildlife rehabilitation centre (private corner The neighbouring paper recycling plant can have a demonstration forest planted between their location and that of the farm.

If the farm is of sufficient acreage, the property, staff, and/or administration can be shared with -- otherwise, closely associated with — a customized light commerce/industrial building serving as an animal shelter for companion animals, at which the veterinary office is able to service the animals of the farm as needed.

Zoning and Ville de Montreal

The property belongs to the Ministère Transports Quebec, and there are a lot of condo developers already working on the docket

Loi C 6.2 Commerces Lourdes - this is the zoning good for animal shelters - other commerces may as well Agricultural zonage controlled at Qc level Zoning change process:

Avis preliminaire \$250 Projet particulier - plan or letter to explain why to change the zoning

Urban Council Committee: Zoning change process:

Projet particulier - plan or letter to explain why to change the zoning

Letters from owners authorizing the request on their property - properties prior to acquisition or in accord with goals of project Square metrage determines cost of zone change. 4 months to do so by public consultation. Unused properties are in a binder at Planning. The book is also for sale annually. Examples I saw:

- Greene & Workman
- *Zhi Qiang Chen, 3670 Lisbonne, Brossard*
- 157 St-Philippe & Ste-Emilie
- *Christom Inc. 4409 Blvd Pierre-le-Gardien, Terrebonne*
- 586-592 Thérien & Notre-Dame
- *Nazem Ibrahim, 3265 Pie IX, Laval H7C 2S6*
- 5073 Turcot & Bourassa
- *Mohamed Reza Kasrie, Saint-Boniface, MB R2H 3B4*
- 5069 Vaillant, b/w St. Remi and Bourassa

Land swaps - urban planning In Sud Ouest, contact M. Hirishi, the Borough Administrator, at 872-3673

Subsidies from the Ville - Competition for Quartier 21 (3 years = \$130 000)

Wade Eide (architect) referred me to Danielle Lussier from Developpment Durable - VdM - who then referred me to at Quartier 21 fmiller@ville.montreal.qc.ca

- submit projects linked with sustainable plan, which must be approved by CSSS and borough council, to address sustainability and health and welfare of people

- proposal 4 pages long max
- winners get \$30K first year, then \$50 for remaining two years. The project must be durable and
- presumably able to stand on its own two feet if ongoing...

Operations funding for farm:

The land must be put under a conservation/agricultural easement (funding) or have a governmental land grant to keep it affordable compared to the bids that developers are prepared to pay. Easement necessary anyway to keep the wolves at bay MAPAQ for obtaining quotas and inspection licenses for eggs, milk, and milk products to sell at farm gate - and value-added, e.g. sheep --> wool --> artisanal textiles in Montreal

Interview école métier on farming school recruitment and collaborative programs Workshop courses offered as well as volunteer work opportunities

Administration of farm must be v. small, as farms are. No administrative "collective!" bloat; accountable to the Board, the clients and customers, and not politicians

Other resources or people who have experience or interest in this domaine

this part kept private