

LA PRÉSIDENTE :

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Alors, on vous remercie, monsieur King, et vous communiquez avec madame Naud pour scanner des documents et on sera prêt, comme demandé par monsieur Hanna, avoir la première page du class action dont vous avez parlé tout à l'heure.

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M. DONOVAN KING :

O.K.

LA PRÉSIDENTE :

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Alors, merci beaucoup de votre témoignage et de votre présentation.

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PAUSE

M. SAMUEL HELGUERO ET ALEX HANYOK
Our Royal Vic Consultation Committee

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LA PRÉSIDENTE :

Alors, bonjour, good afternoon. La commission reprend ses travaux qui ont été suspendus notamment parce qu'une participante s'est déclarée incapable de venir présenter son mémoire.

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Alors, on passerait maintenant à Samuel Helguero et à Alex Hanyok. Bonjour.

ALEX HANYOK :

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Bonjour.

LA PRÉSIDENTE :

420 Bonjour, madame. Monsieur Helguero. Bonjour, ça va?

SAMUEL HELGUERO :

425 Oui, ça va bien, merci.

LA PRÉSIDENTE :

Alors, nous vous écoutons tous les deux.

430 **SAMUEL HELGUERO :**

O.K., parfait. C'est d'accord si je continue en anglais, hein?

LA PRÉSIDENTE :

435 Yes, there's no problem.

SAMUEL HELGUERO :

440 Perfect, thanks so much. So, first of all, we would like to thank the commission for giving us the task to present and discuss our community consultation report.

445 My name is Samuel, I use « he/him » pronouns, I am a volunteer community organizer with the Milton Park Citizen's Committee and the co-author of the « *Our Royal Vic* » report.

ALEX HANYOK :

450 Hi, my name is Al Hanyok, I use « they/them » pronouns ou « elle » en français. I'm a community member and co-author of « *Our Royal Vic* » report.

SAMUEL HELGUERO :

455 So, before discussing our report and moving into questions, we want to recognize that the authors of this report and the Royal Vic site are located on the unceded indigenous lands of Tiohtià:ke.

460 After this report and its translation were finalized for publication, a statement was released by the kanien'kehá:ka kahnistensera, the Mohawk mothers, on October 18th.

465 The kahnistensera insisted that an indigenous-led investigation should be done according to the Great Law of Peace as soon as possible and before any construction begins, so as to investigate the potential of unmarked graves near the Allan.

Secondly, they insisted that the site's redevelopment only be carried out with the permission of the site's traditional caretakers.

470 This last declaration has been systematically ignored. The thought that traditional caretakers should make decisions over this land has been treated as (inaudible) as to not deserve comment from McGill or the SQI.

475 McGill has instead released an insulting letter to OCPM, dated November 9th to suggest that they have properly consulted indigenous groups over this land grant.

Of the meetings with people who are broadly defined as indigenous in this letter, all except two were carried out in 2021. 2021, well into the development of the major aspects of McGill's plans.

480 The two other meetings with indigenous groups were in 2019. Even by this earlier time, McGill had the outlines of its plans completed as evidenced by McGill's 2017 (inaudible) report.

485 Not only have serious consultations for which a formal analysis stands to be provided not been performed, but there's no recognition by either McGill or the SQI of the need to move beyond consultations and give traditional indigenous caretakers decision-making authority over this land.

This is what they are asking for and this is what they have the right to.

490 Returning real decision-making authority would be a true gesture of reconciliation and a recognition of the wisdom of the Great Law of Peace, of the rights of the kanien'kehá:ka nation, of the land theft that has been committed on this territory, the deaths from historic and present day colonial violence, and the pressing needs of indigenous communities.

ALEX HANYOK :

495 « *Our Royal Vic* » project came out of the efforts of the Royal Vic for the Public Coalition to ensure a democratic and ecological repurposing of the former Royal Victoria Hospital site.

500 The project aim is to have community needs and demands shape the entirety of the site's future.

This operates on the basic premise of a democratic society: that citizens should determine public affairs, particularly the management of land, through their demands and needs.

505 These major decisions are not the prerogative of institutional actors, whether they're university task forces or unelected government officials.

The report was completed without any major funding and is largely the result of grassroots volunteer work.

510 The report presents an analysis of a community questionnaire which first began collecting responses in March 2021 and closed September 10th of the same year.

515 The questionnaire lasted 10 to 15 minutes. The contents were inspired by a previous questionnaire filled out by over 30 signatories of the Coalition's 2020 open letter.

This new questionnaire was posted on the Royal Vic site for the Public Coalition's website. It was advertised through over 200 posters, over 200 flyers, and through newsletters and community organizations.

520 In the end, the questionnaire elicited over 350 responses. We found we had a good demographic spread of people in Montréal in different areas.

525 There was a healthy reporting of students and people across a variety of professions. Strongly opposed to the private governance and/or government use, the public's vision of the site is instead focused on community building, ecology, health and affordable housing.

530 Questionnaire responses highlighted both a strong desire and need for social cooperative and transitional housing, shelter services, affordable student housing, worker co-ops, green spaces, student or community-run gardens, health and social services including food security resources and community gathering spaces.

A portion of the respondents asked that McGill not be entrusted with the site or have reduced occupancy from the current plan.

535 We'll now open up for questions.

LA PRÉSIDENTE :

540 Alors, je vous remercie beaucoup tous les deux de votre présentation.

I'll ask my colleague, David Hanna, for a first question.

LE COMMISSAIRE HANNA :

545 Yes, hello. We certainly read with great attention your community questionnaire. I think the pie graphs and bars and... paragraphs, histograms and the percentages that you attributed to the various questions are very clear, so I just wanted to congratulate you about clarity.

550 There was just one spot, however, where I had difficulty following what you were saying, or your conclusion. I just wanted to ask you about this.

555 It comes under « *Major takeaways* », first of all, where you say on page 7. So if you want to refer to your report, page 7, where you talk about now the purposes for which the repurposing did not gather any support and, in fact, would not make for something meeting popular needs and demands, and you list privately-run enterprises, University-run student housing, government offices and McGill's occupancy.

560 So, it was just this last one I wanted to bring to your attention and ask you about, as the other three seem to garner a fair amount a support – or negative support, I guess – but McGill's occupancy, it says that : « *When asked to select their "desired limitation on [McGill's] occupancy", 28 % [...] selected that "McGill should not be given" the "[...] apportioned site."* »

565 I then moved over to page 17 to look at your graphs, and sorry for being lengthy here, but on page 17, where I look at the graph that corresponds with your statement and you'll have to elucidate me as to how to read it exactly, but I looked at then « *Uses deserving, at least, a portion of the site* », referring to McGill's presumed occupancy of its project, and « *How should the parts of the site being considered [by] McGill be used?* », and there's a long list of what seems to be, from my reading, favourable opinions – green spaces, student-run gardens, library, event space, lecture halls, research laboratories, student housing, socially run cafés, 570 classrooms, and so on – which seemed to garner very high-level support.

575 So, could you help us on the commission to understand the statement that McGill's occupancy does not garner support versus the bar graph that seems to indicate that it does garner support? I just can't reconcile the two. Could you help us clear that up, please?

SAMUEL HELGUERO :

Yes, sure. So, if you go to the questionnaire itself...

580 **LE COMMISSAIRE HANNA :**

Yes.

585 **SAMUEL HELGUERO :**

There's a question regarding possible limitations of the respondent legacy on McGill's allocation of a portion of the site.

590 That is not included in this graph. Those responses to that question are not included in this graph.

595 The reason that you might see a disparity between favourable uses of McGill's portions and the desire to limit McGill's portions, and this is why we created this question, was because some people might still wanted input on what McGill does with the site if it does get the site, even if they do not believe McGill should get the entirety of the site or a portion of the site at all.

I hope that clarifies it.

600 **LE COMMISSAIRE HANNA :**

Well, to a point, but then if I go back to the original question on page 7, where 28 % of people selected that McGill should not be given the entire portion site, what about the remaining huge percent that is on the other side of the question, a very clear majority? What does that represent? Could you clarify that? I'm puzzled, that's all.

605 **SAMUEL HELGUERO :**

610 Yes, sure. So, this was inserted here because there are many uses for the site, which are quite popular and receive quite wide accommodation. It's not the fact that McGill's occupation would not meet popular needs and demands is not meaning to say that the majority of people are against McGill taking a portion of the site.

615 It is just not when we consider all of the possible uses for the site; that this is not a particularly purpose that would meet in any particular way the popular needs and demands of its citizens. So...

ALEX HANYOK :

620 If you were to take both those numbers, you have 43 % of people who are saying that they want McGill to have less of the site and they've been allocated, which is fairly significant.

SAMUEL HELGUERO :

625 And an important thing to note, too, and this has been, I guess, a statement by the (inaudible) public coalition that the allocation of a portion of the site to McGill was made without debate in the National Assembly of Québec and it was made without any serious public of consultations.

LE COMMISSAIRE HANNA :

630 Okay, then. If this last, this latter item here about the entire site is put aside and we go back then to that bar graph that I was referring to on page 17, where there seems to be a lot of favourable opinion about the McGill site, this refers only to the portion for the New Vic, is that correct?

635 And this is what your questionnaire addresses and where there were a number of proposals made for that site that emerged out of this graph. Does that represent a consensus or not? Or what does that graph mean? It's not referred to in « *Takeaways* ».

ALEX HANYOK :

640 Yes, this graph specifically refers to if the site were to be used by McGill, what do people want that used to be. It doesn't refer to should McGill get the site or not. That was a separate question.

LE COMMISSAIRE HANNA :

645 Alright. Refers only to the portion that is being envisaged for the New Vic, correct?

ALEX HANYOK :

650 Correct. Correct.

LE COMMISSAIRE HANNA :

655 And if that site were to be granted, this is what your questionnaire reveals as being wished for? Wanted?

ALEX HANYOK :

660 Yes. For this question, yes.

LE COMMISSAIRE HANNA :

Alright. Fine. Thank you.

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LA PRÉSIDENTE :

A question by my colleague, Radouan Torkmani.

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LE COMMISSAIRE TORKMANI :

Bonjour à vous deux, merci pour votre travail et votre présentation. J'avais pour vous une question plutôt de clarification ou de compréhension un peu plus détaillée.

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Une grande partie des répondants ont exprimé une opposition formelle à l'implantation de bâtiments gouvernementaux. Pour d'autres types de services, ils sont très favorables, des services d'appui, notamment, aux personnes qui recherchent des besoins plutôt plus *socials*, mais ils ont exprimé une opposition formelle à des bâtiments gouvernementaux, et je voulais essayer de comprendre avec vous quelle est, selon vous, la raison de cette opposition formelle.

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SAMUEL HELGUERO :

I can give that a go. So, you're asking what we might speculate to be the reasons why there would be opposition to a government office on the site?

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LE COMMISSAIRE TORKMANI :

Yes. Exactly.

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SAMUEL HELGUERO :

And yet favouring community social usage?

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LE COMMISSAIRE TORKMANI :

Hum, hum.

SAMUEL HELGUERO :

700 So there's two things that sort of come out of the survey: one thing is if you put to page 16, there's a question... it is an analysis of who should govern the site and just give like a graph there.

You will see that the community sector was favoured quite a bit more than the public or government sectors managing the site.

705 I think this sort of reveals trust more of the local and community structures, of actual governance at the local level rather than... and a sort of skepticism of provincial governance of the site. So, that's one thing.

710 I would also say, on other hand, I think this identification of much more pressing needs for the site, much more associated with maybe its original purpose as a kind of healing purpose.

Also, with the specific needs in the Montréal population. For instance, one need that wasn't highlighted at all very strong was the need for more government offices within the City of Montréal.

715 However, it needs - such as like the need for the construction of more social housing, needs for better food security, ending, like, social isolation, et cetera.

720 Like, those are very high priorities, and so then that transfers over to an analysis of what actually would be a social repurposing of the site; those things tend to be highlighted much more strongly, and consequently, things like government offices, while maybe not being bad in and of themselves, are given a lot less favourable responses.

LE COMMISSAIRE TORKMANI :

725 D'accord. Je vous remercie. Thank you.

LA PRÉSIDENTE :

730 J'aurais une troisième question qui porte entre autres... j'aimerais avoir votre point de vue, ça déborde un peu de l'enquête, mais c'est relié à l'enquête, où on souhaite entre autres répondre par ce site-là aux besoins de logements sociaux ou de logements communautaires :

735 comment on concilie les besoins de familles qui vivraient sur ce site ou, en tout cas, une partie
de ce site-là, et la demande de conserver avec trois contraintes, un, la demande qui est la
nécessité de conserver ce site en permanence accessible pour la population parce qu'il fait partie
du parc du Mont-Royal, deuxièmement, au fait qu'il soit isolé et qu'il n'y ait pas de commerces
de proximité, et troisièmement, qu'il soit situé sur une pente très, très abrupte et difficile d'accès,
si je peux dire?

740 **ALEX HANYOK :**

So, what I gathered from this report is that people want it to be available for the whole
community.

745 **LA PRÉSIDENTE :**

Yes.

ALEX HANYOK :

750 Not just the wealthy, not just condos, not just private businesses, but everybody, and that
includes transitional housing, social housing, that includes coop housing and co-op restaurants.
Those are, like... there's a difference between private enterprises and co-op enterprises in our report
and how favourable they were. And people wanted co-ops where didn't want private housing.

755 So, that could be a solution to making it accessible for everybody.

LA PRÉSIDENTE :

760 But the issue... Oh! Please, Mr. Helguero.

SAMUEL HELGUERO :

765 Another two things, I guess : first of all, like what we can speak on best is sort of community
consultations and we wouldn't be able to too much speak on the technicalities of working these
things out.

770 A second thing is the survey hit over 350 people, a lot of them university educated or getting a university education, a lot of them residents... well, all of them, pretty much all of them residents of Montréal, in professions, a lot them like high income earners, medium income earners.

775 I think like it's... and from the responses to the common section you see people who are familiar with the site, people who are working through difficulties. With the site, so we did have a free-form written comment section where people could provide more intensive feedback, and it was clear from this that people were working through difficulties like yes, the steepness, yes, preservation, heritage buildings, et cetera.

780 And so, I say all of this because it's important to keep in mind that these 350 people have extremely rich intellectual lives and are likely considering these difficulties, which are like not super... they're not super hidden. I mean, it's quite obvious, yes, heritage would be an issue, yes, it's quite on a steep hill.

785 So, when the community comes out with these demands, I think it's fair to suppose that these things have been considered by the population.

LA PRÉSIDENTE :

Thank you. So, do we have more questions? Yes, David?

LE COMMISSAIRE HANNA :

790 Yes, sorry to come back, but I had forgotten there was a technical aspect to that histogram that we need to understand in addition to what we just said or exchanged.

795 So, getting back to page 17 again, the histogram about the McGill portion, in other words, the... understanding correctly, the portion of land that would be, could be appropriated for a new Vic project, that there are only two colours, purple and blue, and that all those functions that are listed here are green spaces, student-run gardens, library, event spaces, lecture halls, research laboratories, student housing, cafés, classrooms, student housing and co-op restaurants: all those functions, which are all on the purple side, are up to 0.8 on the graph in 1. Does that mean 80 % of your respondents responded highly favourably or... to those types of occupations on that site were it to go to McGill? Is that how I should read that...
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ALEX HANYOK :

Yes.

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LE COMMISSAIRE HANNA :

... or am I misinterpreting? Okay.

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SAMUEL HELGUERO :

Somewhat, somewhat. So it is... it's not sort of highly favourable, it's just some portions. So, they might have said... just, like, a room...

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LE COMMISSAIRE HANNA :

Combining somewhat and highly, right?

SAMUEL HELGUERO :

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Yes.

LE COMMISSAIRE HANNA :

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Like the others?

SAMUEL HELGUERO :

Yes.

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LE COMMISSAIRE HANNA :

Okay.

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ALEX HANYOK :

Note quite.

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LE COMMISSAIRE HANNA :

No?

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ALEX HANYOK :

So, we do provide the appendix that you can go and look at the data itself. The question how it was phrased was « Should the site have multiple buildings, multiple rooms, the whole site? », and/or none of some sort.

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So, the question did favour a positive answer, and so we simplified it quite a bit here to be able to present it in the report.

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It takes any place where they have said McGill should get part of the site, that's in purple, and at any time they have said it should not get any space, it was in blue.

LE COMMISSAIRE HANNA :

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Okay, so the purple, you're saying, is « should McGill get that portion of the site? », those are the favoured occupations of the site? Is that what it means?

ALEX HANYOK :

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Should they use that usage, should they have a library, how much space should a library get. If someone said the library should get the whole site, that would be in purple; if they said the library should get a couple of rooms, that would also be in purple.

If they said there should not be a library, then it's in blue.

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LE COMMISSAIRE HANNA :

So, how to read then the 0-1 bar at the bottom? They're not percentage.

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ALEX HANYOK :

They are percentages.

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LE COMMISSAIRE HANNA :

They are or they aren't?

ALEX HANYOK :

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They are.

LE COMMISSAIRE HANNA :

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They are.

ALEX HANYOK :

They're percent of people that said that some portion...

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LE COMMISSAIRE HANNA :

Ah! Of the site should...

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ALEX HANYOK :

... of the site should go to the library.

LE COMMISSAIRE HANNA :

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Got it. Thank you. Ha! Ha!

ALEX HANYOK :

Yes, it's a confusing one.

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LE COMMISSAIRE HANNA :

Yes. Yes, I have to admit. So thanks...

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ALEX HANYOK :

And the actual data is much more... it would be much more telling to look at the data and specifically for this question.

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LE COMMISSAIRE HANNA :

Yes. So, if there are any data you wish to transfer to us by, feel free to do so, but thanks for spending the time with us to clarify those readings.

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LA PRÉSIDENTE :

Autre question, Radouan? Non?

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LE COMMISSAIRE TORKMANI :

Pas d'autre question, merci.

LA PRÉSIDENTE :

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Alors, il me reste à vous remercier tous les deux de l'initiative...

SAMUEL HELGUERO :

Can I just add something?

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LA PRÉSIDENTE :

Yes, do you want to add something?

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SAMUEL HELGUERO :

Yes, please, thank you. Just two things. First of all, there's an appendix that is linked at the bottom. If you click on the appendix, the link, it'll bring you to view a sort of... a very similar report that just includes some of the raw data that I was referring to, and it also has every single one of the individual responses that people had worked on in the comment section to the questionnaire.

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So, like individuated desires for what the site should be used for, I believe there was more than 200, and those are all listed in the appendix.

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The second thing, this is not referred to the opening statements, I just wanted to add this again. One of the unfortunate things about the consultation we did is we didn't have the resources to fairly consult members of the indigenous community, so we just want to make that very clear that we do believe that the site's decision-making... authority over the site should be held by traditional indigenous authorities and caretakers, and that actual thorough consultations with such a serious report that... like we tried to deal with our limited means like this one should be released on those types of consultations, so that actual decision-making can be given to indigenous caretakers.

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LA PRÉSIDENTE :

Alors, merci de cette précision. Merci, alors, de votre présentation et de vos réponses à nos questions. Alors, je vous souhaite une bonne fin d'après-midi.

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