

M. JIMMY CHAN :

You're very welcome, sir. Thank you very much. Thank you. Merci. Merci beaucoup.

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LE PRÉSIDENT :

Xiè xiè. Merci. Merci à vous.

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M. SANDY YEP, citoyen

LE PRÉSIDENT :

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Alors, prochain intervenant ou intervenante : Sandy Yep.

(Coupure sonore) ... vous informer qu'il y a présence d'une personne qui fait une captation vidéo pour un documentaire sur le Quartier chinois, c'est bien ça?

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INTERVENANTE NON IDENTIFIÉE :

Oui.

LE PRÉSIDENT:

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Oui, alors voilà. Alors, ce n'est pas pour la commission, c'est pour des fins d'un documentaire. Avec l'autorisation des personnes. D'accord. Alors, Monsieur Yep, vous avez dix minutes pour votre présentation.

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M. SANDY YEP :

Excellent.

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LE PRÉSIDENT :

Par la suite, il y aura un autre dix minutes pour des échanges et des questions des commissaires. Quand vous êtes prêt, on vous écoute.

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M. SANDY YEP :

Oui. Madame Sauvage, Monsieur Cardinal, Monsieur Boucher. Permettez-moi de m'exprimer dans ma langue première, en anglais. Si je prononce en chinois, il n'y a personne qui va me comprendre aussi. And so, thank you. I'm really happy and proud to be here tonight. I would like to... my theme of the presentation is I'd love for you to have been here in the 1960's, when I grew up.

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My name is Sandy Yep. Yep Geen Lup. My Chinese name means "strong foundation". I'm fifth generations Quebecois-Chinois, descendant of Charlie Duk Yee Yep, from Sun Wui village. And in 1892, Charlie, my great-grandfather came over and settled here, in Montreal's Chinatown. He's probably around the... amongst the first 500 or so pioneers living here.

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And in the Gazette, where I learned just recently: in 1902, on May 26, he wedded Liw She of Vancouver B.C., one of seven Chinese females in Montreal. And my great-grandmother was apparently the first Chinese woman in Montreal to marry. And it was in 1942 that the Yep family purchased the 116-118, rue De La Gauchetière, which is just around the corner, where my grandfather Willie, uncles, aunts, my father lived, and where I was raised, on the third floor of that house. And it's where I will sleep tonight, invited from my good friend, Jean-Philippe Riopel.

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So, I acknowledge all my ancestors, all of yours who have brought us here today, to speak to the present and future of Chinatown. I recognize the Indigenous lands on which we gather, and the many peoples, les Québécois, the Scottish, the Irish, the Jewish, the Portuguese, the settlers of Près de Ville, and the Chinese and Asians that followed. I am very proud to be a descendant of one these pioneer families.

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And it's interesting. I never even connected myself to my roots, and the fact of my history. And it's only in the last five years that I learn this fact.

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So, in 1987, there's a picture of me going back to China, in Sun Wui. I went to visit my ancestral home. Returning to those roots was unbelievably ground-breaking, cathartic for me. Unfortunately, the space and place, and building, is no more. The buildings and surrounding heritage have been torn down, destroyed by modernization, destroyed by gentrification, developers and unprotected by government.

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Montreal's Chinatown and that building that I speak to is now my ancestral home, and that of my son, Alec. C'est carrément mon village à cœur. On est des Québécois-Chinois de Sun Wui. Moi, je suis maintenant un Québécois-Chinois errant à Toronto. But I come here de toute façon.

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So, I really wish you could have been with me in Chinatown when I grew up, in the 1960's. Cause growing up here, I was surrounded by my park, my church, houses, businesses, people, lots of friends, families. Grocery stores were full. We ran in the street, we parked in the... my parents parked in the streets, generations of families gathered, gossiped, laughed. And Loh Yeh Gung and I used to buy groceries. And he would hold my hand as we walked from Ho Ho Snack bar to Dufferin Park, ending up under a beautiful tree. I remember this tree to this day, and we would sit and I'd be so happy, just to eat my butter roll with Loh Yeh Gung.

So, to me, that Chinatown is no more. Every time I return, I see my Chinatown of the 60's engulfed by offices, towers, hotels, concrete, and I would say, in my own view, some pretty

1130 disgusting development. I say it's disgusting because it doesn't reflect any of the heritage, height, density, economic and social life of my past.

1135 Even in the rapport de Luce Lafontaine, je ne suis pas... she speaks of "Éléments significatifs disparus". Mais moi, j'ai vu la disparition de tous ces bâtiments-là en face de mon maison de mon grand-père. And there's a picture of Dufferin Park, the tree, my grandfather's house at the bottom, and there was a school. Imagine the living community that was here, and Dufferin Park.

1140 So, I lost my church, I lost the park where my grandfather and I sat. A year ago, I literally contemplated bringing my son to Montreal to possibly witness the tearing down of his ancestral home.

1145 The neighborhood of Loh Yeh Gung's houses fronted by Guy-Favreau, to me, and I respect the people who live there, a cold mirrored building that tried to be community-oriented, but is not. The park that replaces Dufferin is gated for condo dwellers. Elderly find refuge in a concrete government building. The church where I grew up has moved twice, slated to move again, and at same time, losing more of its heritage each time.

1150 And throughout the 70's and 80's, I witnessed the systemic erasure and eradication of our built Asian heritage. Chinese community and families were pushed out with more than 200 buildings lost and 90 % of the population gone.

1155 So now, I'm proud to say it's nice to hear that this part of Chinatown is designated as an Institutional hub, un site patrimonial du Noyau-Institutionnel-du-Quartier-Chinois, by the provincial government. It covers Wing's Noodle, which you see, and my grandfather's house is always right beside it, so I'm really fortunate, whenever I Google "Chinatown", you see Wing's, people see Wing's, I see my grandfather's house, and protected is S. Davis and Sons' factory, where the Chinese Family Services of Greater Montreal was located, where I got my first job.

1160 So, I support the proposed changes to the Plan d'urbanisme by the City of Montreal. I recommend that to be part of the steps taken, to facilitate what CWG calls "a human-scale urban development centred around its living communities with urban cultural landscapes".

1165 I support the heritage designation of City of Montreal and expansion of the boundaries, the identification of Chinatown as a "secteur de valeur exceptionnelle", and as well, I support the reduced allowable height and density as an important part to protecting heritage, to deter further land speculation, and start a basic framework to guide our development of Chinese... the Chinatown's tangible and intangible heritage.

1170 So, the Chinatown of the past, present and future needs that protection from real estate pressure, to highlight this distinctive architectural character. I think if we really need it, we explore what that really means, I'd love to be involved in that conversation. And so, while I appreciate the downzoning of the proposed modifications, I don't think they go quite far enough, from my own experience.

1175 I think those living, working, and visiting Chinatown should be able to see Old Montreal, and the City Hall from the South, if possible. And, my Goodness, could it be amazing if we could see Mont-Royal to the North of Chinatown?

1180 Everyone who's here is entitled to the sun without casted shadows from high-rises, poorly circulated air from buildings that can suffocate the surrounding Chinatown core. The Chinatown Arches, which Jimmy would probably have talked about, protects our village, should always remain prominent, and not encroached, as they are by some of the buildings.

1185 These arches and the Dr. Sun Yet Sun Park could be used as reference points to how we can look at future development. I feel, and the S. Davis & Sons' factory building is right behind in our backyard: it should be the highest building in the Chinatown core, as was the case at the turn of the century.

1190 So, while I agree with lowering the height and density proposed, I still think it is too high. I
feel that the buildings along the Chinatown core of De La Gauchetière should not be higher than
20 meters, and buildings along Viger limited to 25 meters, so we can see Old Montreal. The
northern limitation should be restricted to 35 meters. Of course, there's a little pocket there,
1195 between René-Lévesque... between Clark and Saint-Laurent, should remain 25, and all buildings
25 meters or higher should have top floors set-back from the street, to provide more light.

You know, Chinatown can no longer be an island in a sea of high-rises. The sun must be
able to shine. I think somebody talked about Feng Shui. This is good Feng Shui. It's important to
have light. We should have this human-scale urban development centred around living
1200 communities with parks, places of leisure, community gardens. And I would love to invite you, if
you haven't been already invited to Loh Yeh Gung's ancestral home.

Behind the home is our family garden, and it's my understanding, it is now deemed a
"zone d'intérêt archéologique", as a result of J.-P.'s work to enforce the Borden code, and in this
1205 place that is untouched I believe from Près de Ville, we found amongst a number of things, this
one is really unique, I think it's a Mahjong tile from the Qigong Tang building that predated my
family's house.

And J.P. just shared with me yesterday, no, this morning, or yesterday morning, he was
1210 gardening his plants, and he found, I believed, it's a dime from 1874. Just at the surface of this
garden. So, imagine the richness of which we are trying to protect, and the significance of it for all
of Quebeckers and Montrealers.

We also need commercial life, social investments, in order that we have economic vitality.
1215 We need legacy businesses protected, investment in arts and cultural groups. Equally dedicated
government monies to directly support an economically viable community, alongside resources to
support safe and inclusive spaces for everyone who sets foot in Chinatown.

1220 Affordable housing, investing infrastructure to bring arts people back, socially minded
1225 developers to work with the community to develop these spaces. City social services needed to be
invested into Chinatown. Investment in social and security services to improve a commercial and
economic viability.

1225 We don't need a Swatow hotel, when we are surrounded by 50+ hotels. We need tourism
support. Nowhere in the world I think you can walk from the Old Port down the central artery of rue
Saint-Laurent through Old Montreal, and then Quartier chinois, and then the Quartier des
spectacles. This is the intimacy that people come to, when they visit Montreal.

1230 Quickly, I just pulled up a picture of the development in Singapore Chinatown, if you take a
look closely at it, you can see how much green space and how much livable space there is.
Basically, I feel we need to bring back the glory of Chinatown. The picture to me saddens, it's not
me, even though je suis toujours a fan of Montreal Canadians, of a young Chinese boy. I miss the
interaction in front of my grandfather's house.

1235 We need that protection and investment into built heritage, government dollars for living
heritage, the revitalization of a strong circular economy, a historic landscape approach supported
by the government, investments in community and people.

1240 And I just ask you, folks, Monsieur, Madame of the commission: how best will your report
respect the spirit and heritage of our Chinatown, the Chinatown of Montreal, le dernier Quartier
chinois du Québec? Can you make it a grand as Old Montreal? Can you respect the roots
granded in Près de Ville, in Chinatown? Will your report's recommendations bring people back to
live in Chinatown?

1245 I no longer have to bring my son to see his ancestral home disappear. I look forward to the
day when I can bring my grandson sit under a tree, share a butter roll, and talk about how we
saved Chinatown for him. And I wish you could have been with me in the 60's, where you could
feel what I feel is missing today.

LE PRÉSIDENT :

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Merci beaucoup. Alors, on a quelques questions pour vous, pour le temps qu'il nous reste.

M. SANDY YEP :

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Oui.

LE PRÉSIDENT :

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D'abord, vous nous avez présenté des belles pièces archéologiques ou du patrimoine qui ont été donc retrouvées sur le site. Et dans le projet, il y a l'idée que sur l'ensemble du Quartier chinois, que ce soit reconnu comme un site d'intérêt archéologique, pour obliger, pour tout nouveau projet, d'avoir des travaux archéologiques. Est-ce que vous pensez qu'on retrouverait des éléments de patrimoine chinois sur l'ensemble du Quartier chinois?

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M. SANDY YEP :

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Ça, je ne sais pas, j'espère que oui, mais c'est sûr qu'il y a tellement de développement depuis des années, la destruction des édifices, le déménagement des personnes, tout le terrain qui est notre noyau institutionnel reste seulement les cinq ou six bâtiments qui sont là, en espérant que ça va être sauvegardé dans d'autres milieux.

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Moi, je suis confiant, et je suis content, que ce noyau est protégé. Je pense que c'est à nous à découvrir où on peut trouver les mêmes genres de mémoire, de souvenirs, à travers le Quartier chinois, et j'espère qu'avec la protection et puis l'élargissement des *boundaries* qu'on peut trouver de même. Parce que je pense que c'est... ils sont là. Mais aussi, on a tous des trésors aussi, alors j'espère bien qu'on peut tous venir ici comme d'autres pour y vivre.

LE PRÉSIDENT :

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D'accord. Merci. Bruno-Serge.

LE COMMISSAIRE :

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Merci. Bonsoir.

M. SANDY YEP :

Bonsoir.

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LE COMMISSAIRE :

D'abord, bravo de tenir le flambeau des Canadiens à Toronto.

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M. SANDY YEP :

Yeah, I know.

LE COMMISSAIRE :

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Vous nous avez parlé, comme beaucoup de gens, du manque d'espaces verts dans le Quartier chinois.

M. SANDY YEP :

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Oui.

LE COMMISSAIRE :

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Malheureusement, il n'y en a juste pas, d'espaces. Le quartier est construit à peu près partout, il y a très très peu de terrains vagues. Si on vous donnait une baguette magique et on vous disait « à quel endroit voulez-vous mettre et installer ces espaces verts », où est-ce que vous pointeriez votre baguette?

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M. SANDY YEP :

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Moi, je pense qu'on peut... si avec une créativité et le désir, on peut bâtir des genres de *garden*, a *green space Chinatown*. On peut mettre des genres de *surface gardens*, *community gardens* qui sont possibles. S'il y a d'autres développements, si on intègre cette idée... c'est le problème qu'on n'intègre pas cette espèce de communauté dans notre développement. Moi, je pense... j'ai confiance en ce genre de développement où on peut avoir une consultation avec des experts et la communauté, pour vraiment bâtir a *jewel of Chinatown*.

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I really feel that we can do this, and it can be the most beautiful Chinatown in Canada, if not the world. However, we have to work together creatively with developers, with community, with land owners, to really think about the vision of what we want. And I think now is a time to be able to actually create those green spaces.

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There's a little spot, right by Guy-Favreau, there's a big tree there. Well, why don't you just open that up? Why don't we make more of the community gardens out here? Cause I think people would be happy to get fresh vegetables. I think a lot of the seniors would love a community garden, do something they can work in. I think we can do it. There are spaces that can. I'll open up my grandfather's house if we would buy the house back, and we can all have some tea there.

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LE PRÉSIDENT :

Merci. Danielle?

LA COMMISSAIRE :

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Je pense que vous habitez Toronto, maintenant?

M. SANDY YEP :

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Oui. Oui.

LA COMMISSAIRE :

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Oui; et comment comparez-vous le Quartier chinois à Toronto à celui de Montréal? Est-ce qu'il y a le même amour de leur Quartier chinois? Est-ce qu'il y a la même vitalité?

M. SANDY YEP :

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Oui. Mais quand vous êtes né dans un certain espace, vous êtes biaisé, surtout. Moi, je vois beaucoup plus de développements à Toronto qui l'entourent, et *it makes me scared*. Actuellement, l'image que j'ai de ce Quartier chinois, c'est à cause de ce qui se passe avec le développement à Toronto, où on ne trouve guère, pour moi, le patrimoine qui est là. Et ils ont la même lutte, à Toronto. À Calgary. À Edmonton. Il y en a des quartiers chinois qui sont disparus dans les... *in the last year, in Chinatown*.

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So, I think the forces that we have are big, and the same forces exist in Toronto, and the push-back from the community is taking a lot of effort, without government support, it's a difficult challenge.

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LA COMMISSAIRE :

Are there alliances between chinatowns in different provinces?

M. SANDY YEP :

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Oui, on se parle pas mal. On essaie de monter un genre de mouvement national, sauf que chaque quartier chinois est menacé avec leurs propres difficultés, so in order To create a combined front means that we have To be able to work consistently together, and it is difficult. Cause, the moment you start to work together there's an issue that comes back in the community, and that small group of folks is trying to mobilize to stop one building or try to understand how another building was sold. So, it becomes a little fragmented. Yeah.

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LA COMMISSAIRE :

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Will you do the same network job in Toronto that you do in Montreal? Do you have the same fight?

M. SANDY YEP :

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You know, I haven't joined the fight there, I'm kind of involved in the community in different way, I'm with the Kung Fu club, we're doing art installation, I'm more relaxed there. I can't hold on to too many fights. I do support their work, I do exchange information when I can, but I'm happy, as my friend would say, to drive my car, take a train back to Montreal, and then just sit here. The moment I step here in Montreal, it's like, you know, your pores open up, something about the cells in your body just kind of go like ah, man, I'm home. And so, I have more passion, I guess because of my heritage, to come and drive as a... for now, yeah.

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LA COMMISSAIRE :

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Thank you.

M. SANDY YEP :

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Merci.

LE PRÉSIDENT :

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Merci beaucoup, xiè xiè. Alors, nous allons maintenant prendre une pause, et on va reprendre à 20 h 45, oui. Donc, 20 h 45, avec Steve Shanahan et Bill Wong.

PAUSE

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M. STEVE SHANAHAN ET M. BILL WONG
Conseil de développement du Quartier chinois

LE PRÉSIDENT :

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On va reprendre après cette pause avec Steve Shanahan et monsieur Bill Wong. Alors, bonsoir, donc je vous rappelle que vous avez dix minutes pour votre intervention, et ensuite un autre dix minutes pour les échanges et les questions. On vous écoute.

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M. BILL WONG :

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Hi. My name is Bill Wong, I'd like to do a little introduction of myself. I've been (inaudible)... all my family has been here in Montreal, Chinatown for over 100 years. I live in Chinatown right now, and all my life, have been working and living in Chinatown. For today's presentation, I would like to ask Steven to present the files for the Counsel Development of Chinatown.