

M. ADRIAN SHEPPARD :

C'est moi qui vous remercie.

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LA PRÉSIDENTE :

Nous avons pris un peu de retard, alors j'appelle tout de suite monsieur Joel Ospovat à se joindre à nous.

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M. JOEL OSPOVAT :

Ladies and gentlemen of the Commission, please excuse me I'm going to speak in English if I may. Two minutes on who I am. My French is not good enough and some of this is very personal and emotional for me because I've been a resident on the island and I'm a property owner on the island and happy since 2003. I've owned three different homes on the island at one stage or the other. And, I'm the owner of Sandalwood Management. We are currently the owners or are under a sub-lease for 1, 2, 3 and 4 Place du Commerce, and for the Gravel site which is all in the City's new proposition. In addition to that, we own another site on Nuns' Island and in Québec we own about 5 millions square feet of retail and about a million square feet of office. So we came and are based on Nuns' Island; I came from United States and started investing here in early 2000 and feel quite passionate about some of this.

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I think it's important for the City and the Commission to understand that what we're dealing with in reality on Nuns' Island is a suburban market. It is a suburban market both in office and in retail. One of the few competitive advantages we have, especially on Nuns' Island, because ingress and egress from and to the island is so particularly difficult because it's an island. One of the few competitive advantages we have, both from a regional perspective and from an office perspective, is parking. And any attempt to change that parking infrastructure will materially damage all of the office leasing on the Island and it will materially damage all the retail on the Island.

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725 Speaking to retail for just a minute, if I may, I was with urban planners this morning in
another site on Anjou. And everybody has these great ideas of mixed use projects: we should
have retail, we should have office, we should have hotel, but, at the end of the day, there is reality
730 about what those sites can support. The retail environment at the moment, especially here on
Nuns' Island, is very, very difficult. We are competing against Amazon, we're competing against
all internet deliveries, and all of the retailers are having to pay real property taxes, in huge
amounts, to the cities and the boroughs, and the more expensive development gets to become,
the higher that tax rate is going to be.

735 But what we will never get rid of, no matter what we do, is what's called the last mile. And
the last mile is how does your vegetable, or your egg, or your piece of clothing, get to your front
door. And if we don't have cars, for sure, we're going to have UPS and Fedex delivery people. So
the concept of reduced parking, the vulnerable for a green planet is unrealistic for real life.

740 And I feel that what as been missed in the plan is put forward by the City is that they have
taken this whole piece of land as a block and have ignored the bifurcation of ownership between
different people within that block. So, for example, they would penalize Mr. Gewurz on some of
his parking and give us density on some office sites as a swap for doing one for the other, but it
ignores reality. Because reality is, we have a lease with Mr. Gewurz until 2064. So, if you're
giving... if you're taking away density to give somewhere else, you can't get a full 2064 because
we can't forward develop those sites because of this existing land leases. And those exist for 1,
2, 3 and 4 Place du Commerce, but more importantly for the Gravel site.

745 If there is one site on this island where you could genuinely do a meaningful mixed use
development other than what Mr. Gewurz has so beautifully done on Pointe-Nord, it's that one
site. And so, to develop... and while it's admirable to have a beautiful peak place to go, for the
citizens of Nuns' Island – who total only 20,000 – to have a site where you could do a much more
750 detailed mix of residential, and living, and retail, on the waterfront, seems to me, which is so close
to in proximities to the REM, seems to be a much wiser use of the land and much less punitive to
the people who own it.

755 It's worth noting that on that track in particular, we could really have a world class development that would match what's going to happen along Bonaventure in a distant future. But for us that have been very limited in services on the Island, it seems a huge price to pay for the citizens of the Island to be able to afford such an expensive piece of land where at times, the businesses on the Island aren't able to get basic services.

760 The cities that have provided our roads, and our maintenance on our roads, and our infrastructure for our roads, have been at times appalling, at best: we have pot holes, we've had all sorts of problems getting people in and out of our office buildings, and it seems that there's an allocation of funds to this extent that the ongoing maintenance of existing tenants should be important as well.

765 We have had a tremendously difficult time getting our occupancy levels in our Nuns' Island buildings to where they are now. We have office product in both Old Montreal and on Nuns' Island. And in Montreal, we have very, very positive leasing at this present time. In Nuns' Island, we do not. And I believe if you take away our parking and our ability to compete with the downtown and Vieux-Montréal markets, I think you'll do a huge disservice to the people who own land on the Island. I think that's all I have to say.

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LA PRÉSIDENTE :

775 Thank you. For information, can you explain to us the difference... you have the reality for your property outside of Nun's Island and the new proposal for the parking...

M. JOEL OSPOVAT :

780 Right.

LA PRÉSIDENTE :

785 ...what is your reality outside of Nuns' Island and how you deal with the parking and space?

M. JOEL OSPOVAT :

790 Outside of Nuns' Island, in Vieux-Montréal, we have a fantastic infrastructure of a public transportation. The transportation within the island itself is not great. Right. So if I have to get from the south, which is where my old condo used to be, to go and do shopping at the Provigo, it's almost impossible... well, it's totally impossible right now to do it by public transport. And I think that when you analyze the REM, I think its influence is overstated. Because if I have office space and I have people, and I have many of them who come from *Rive-Sud*, if those people live
795 in Longueuil and need to come to Nuns' Island, it's a devil's own time to get here. They would either have to go to Longueuil, to the subway into the city, and then from the city back on the REM; or they would have to go and try and fight with the whole rest of the south shore that is going to go to the new bus terminal on the REM terminal – in Panama – to get to Nuns' Island.

800 And so I think that the effect of the REM is overstated. I tried to come to work today – I've sadly moved off the island and I'm living in Vieux-Montréal now – and when I came this morning, because there's only one way in and one way out of this Island, it makes it tremendously difficult. And even if it's going to be improved by the existing bridge, the feeling that the general public in Montreal has is: don't go and get an office in Nuns' Island, you can never get on, you can never
805 get off. And though these new roadways have made mass of improvements, it's still not great.

And today, if you have one blockage on Bonaventure coming in this direction towards the bridge and they reroute all the traffic, it makes getting here really difficult and is punitive on all the landlords here. So, let's worry a little bit more about getting people on and off the Island and let's
810 stop being so dictatorial about what happens to land that exists on the Island already.

LA PRÉSIDENTE :

815 And just another question. Let's say the parking situation is o.k., what is your stand on the
general concept of getting more density into Place du Commerce? Transforming Place du
Commerce in the long term... if parking is o.k.?

M. JOEL OSPOVAT :

820 Again, you've got the problem of the land lease. Right? That... Place du Commerce on
the Island, I used to own that shopping center. And one of the reasons we sold it is we were
uncomfortable going forward with retail generally. We have a very strong retail leasing team and
for years, we tried to bring some really special retail to that shopping centre. And it was really...
825 it's so easy to say let's go get a great restaurant, let's go get a great *patisserie*, a *boucherie*, this,
that – I own les Halles d'Anjou where we have plenty of them and we could never get those
people to come here because retail on the Island isn't great.

830 I think generally on the Island, if we accept density as a norm, and we provide for it, and
we don't try and kill the developers like Sam by making it punitive for them to sell their condos, if
you change the parking ratios to what you guys are gonna do, you make them compete with a
downtown building without downtown infrastructure. You'll kill them. You'll kill your tax base, you'll
kill the prices of the existing homes on the Island, you'll really do untold harm going forward.

LA PRÉSIDENTE :

835 Thank you.

M. JOEL OSPOVAT:

840 Thank you.

LA PRÉSIDENTE :

845 Est-ce que vous avez des questions? Toi, est-ce que... non? So thank you very much.
It was really clear and we have your paper.

M. JOEL OSPOVAT :

850 Thank you.

LA PRÉSIDENTE :

And again, to state that we are not the promoter of the PPU. We're just here to hear you.

855 **M. JOEL OSPOVAT:**

Thank you very much. Sorry for being so passionate.

LA PRÉSIDENTE :

860 No, that is fine, thanks. Alors, maintenant, nous allons entendre madame Andrée Marsot.
Bonjour!

Mme ANDRÉE MARSOT :

865 Bonjour! Je vous remercie, je remercie les membres de l'Office de consultation publique
de me donner la chance de m'exprimer sur ce projet, ce gros projet. J'ai envoyé, moi, ma
demande le 23 octobre, qui était la date limite. Je ne sais pas si vous avez eu une copie papier?

870 **LA PRÉSIDENTE :**

Oui.