

625 **LA PRÉSIDENTE :**

Écoutez, je pense que ça fait le... compte tenu du fait qu'il y a des recommandations que vous nous avez proposées de mettre de côté, je pense que ça fait le tour des questions qu'on avait. Alors, on vous remercie beaucoup.

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M. ÉRIC MICHAUD :

Ça me fait plaisir.

635 **LA PRÉSIDENTE :**

Merci, monsieur Michaud.

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M. ROBERT HAJALY

LA PRÉSIDENTE :

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J'inviterais maintenant monsieur Hajaly. Monsieur Hajaly, vous aurez compris qu'on est un peu en avance sur notre horaire, alors monsieur Michaud d'Habiter Ville-Marie est venu nous présenter son mémoire, et vous voilà, tout de suite. Alors, on vous écoute.

650 **M. ROBERT HAJALY :**

Okay. You got my brief, did you?

655 **LA PRÉSIDENTE :**

Fine, we read it.

660 **M. ROBERT HAJALY :**

Okay. It's just a small brief, and I think I'll just read it so people here can hear it, at least.

665 **LA PRÉSIDENTE :**

Yes.

M. ROBERT HAJALY :

670 And maybe you have a few questions afterwards.

Okay. So, I start by saying I'm a resident of the Peter-McGill city electoral district in the western downtown of Montreal. My chief priority regarding the rezoning of the Tower 6 site is the great necessity for building more social housing in Peter-McGill district.

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According to a professional study done for the Peter-McGill community council, based on the 2016 census, 41.3% of Peter-McGill residents, that is to say, 14,781 persons, are below the federally defined low-income line – we would say, colloquially, they're poor – while rents of 1,171 dollars monthly, on average, are among the highest in the city. So, as a result, 61.9% – 62%, let's say – of renters spend more than 30% of their income on rent, which is usually thought to be a bit excessive.

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And finally, there is very little social housing in this district, and virtually none for families.

685 Hence the great need for much more social housing in Peter-McGill district.

690 Given these facts, I am against the proposed rezoning of the Tower 6 from 20 to 4 stories. First, because it is presented by the city – it was presented here, by the city – not as a means to pressure the developer to build a 20-story tower – in return – of social housing on this site, but rather for environmental reasons that clearly presuppose there will not be any 20-story tower of social housing on this site.

695 My second reason for opposing this rezoning is that it amounts to expropriating most of the real estate value of the Tower 6 site without giving the developer, who owns this site, any compensation for this loss of value. As a result, the developer is suing the city for 20 million dollars – this is according to an article in Le Devoir, April 13th, 2022, by Jeanne Corriveau – a suit he has a good basis for winning, which loss of money the city could otherwise use to build or support social housing.

700 A CBC news report dated May 6th, 2021, by Kate McKenna, indicates that the chief reason that the developer, High Rise Montreal, could not agree with the city on the terms of building the 20-story tower of social housing, is that the developer believed that such a tower satisfying the standards of social housing would cost at least 40 million dollars to build, whereas the city was able to offer the developer only 34.5 million.

705 Therefore, one way of resolving this difference, assuming the developer still wants to build social housing on this site – which he claims to in this news report – is for the city and the developer to request the appointment of an impartial and expert arbitrator to determine a fair price for building this social housing, which price, both the city and developer undertake to accept.

710 For the city, this is better than having to pay the developer 20 million dollars, assuming he wins his suit, and having no social housing on this site. And for the developer, it's better than being left with a site on which he can build only a 4-story building.

715 So, what I'm asking the OCPM commissioners, is to recommend such a means of creating a solution for this problem.

720 Finally, one lesson I would draw from the Tower 6 story is the necessity in the future for the city to make only definite and legally binding agreements for developers to build social housing. And by that, I mean, definite as to the terms of the building, including its price, and legally binding on the developer to build this housing on these agreed terms. This wasn't true of this case, here, and that's why it fell through.

725 So, in closing, I wish to thank the OCPM and the commissioners for this chance to present my views on this issue, and to express the hope that the commissioners will seriously consider what I have to say about it.

That's it, thank you very much.

730 **LA PRÉSIDENTE :**

That's it? Thank you very much.

735 Your brief and your recommendation are quite clear. I would just like to ask you: what you're recommending is that the city and the developer appoint an arbitrator or a sort of mediator to determine a price for building the social housing. My colleague and I, when we read your brief, thought it was an interesting suggestion. Do you have examples of such appointments in recent years?

740 **M. ROBERT HAJALY :**

No, I don't.

745 **LA PRÉSIDENTE :**

No?

750 **M. ROBERT HAJALY :**

Quite honestly, I'm not an expert in this area.

755 **LA PRÉSIDENTE :**

No, but if you... Maybe, we thought that you had an example in mind of such a...

760 **M. ROBERT HAJALY :**

No, I'm sorry, I don't. I mean, the idea came to my mind. There is, actually, as far as I know, there is a service of the Government of Québec for such disputes. I don't know too much about it, but I know it exists, and it could be called upon to settle this issue.

765 But the reason why it came into my mind is the nature of this difference. If this CBC News article is correct, it really seems to be a difference of money. I mean, the developer recognizes that social housing has certain standards that have to be met, it's just that he thinks it costs a certain amount. He's not a philanthropist, you know, he's a commercial developer, and the city just wasn't willing to give him that difference of 5 and a half million. Well, perhaps this is the best way to settle it. He says, in the CBC article, he's still interested in building social housing, in fact, he goes so far as to say – I don't really believe it – “I'd build it for free if Mayor Plante wasn't in office.” Well, she is in office.

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LA PRÉSIDENTE :

It would be unusual.

775 **M. ROBERT HAJALY :**

He's probably exaggerating. It seems that he could be interested, still, in building it. He said he recognizes a need for it, socially. So, if that's true, then, this is perhaps one way of approaching the problem.

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LA PRÉSIDENTE :

That's an opening.

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As-tu une question à poser?

Je pense que, comme je vous disais, votre présentation puis votre mémoire étaient aussi très clairs. Il me reste à vous remercier et puis de...

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M. ROBERT HAJALY :

That's it? No more questions?

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LA PRÉSIDENTE :

Oui, that's it. No.

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M. ROBERT HAJALY :

Thank you very much for this change to present my views.

LA PRÉSIDENTE :

Monsieur MacDonald, pas de nouvelles?