

70 pour la première partie de la consultation, tout ce qui est dit au cours de l'audience est enregistré. La transcription des notes sténographiques sera accessible sur le site Internet de l'Office dans une semaine.

75 Je veux aussi mentionner que la commission est soutenue dans son travail par monsieur Gilles Vézina qui est attaché de recherche et de documentation à l'Office, par monsieur Laurent-Maurice Lafontant qui est préposé à l'accueil et que vous avez rencontré tout à l'heure, et par madame Brunelle-Amélie Bourque qui est chargée de la logistique.

80 La séance de ce soir devrait se terminer vers 9 h 45 si tout se déroule comme prévu. Nous prendrons une pause d'une quinzaine de minutes à mi-parcours.

85 Comme vous le savez, la commission tient à ce que le climat de la rencontre demeure serein. Je vous rappelle donc que les propos malveillants ou les interventions qui portent atteinte aux droits fondamentaux ou à la réputation d'autrui ne seront pas reçus.

90 Comme il est de coutume en matière de consultation publique, si pour une raison ou une autre des inexactitudes se glissaient dans les propos qui seront tenus ce soir, les représentants de la Ville pourront utiliser de leur droit de rectification. C'est la présidente, c'est-à-dire moi-même qui leur accorderai la possibilité d'exercer ce droit à la fin de la séance seulement. Il s'agira bien entendu de rectifier un fait ou des données et non pas d'émettre un commentaire ou un avis de la part de la Ville.

95 Alors, j'invite tout de suite madame Maura McKeon. Did I pronounced your name right?

Mme MAURA MCKEON :

That's fine. Would you wish me to stand?

LA PRÉSIDENTE :

100 No, please sit down, you'll be more comfortable.

Mme MAURA MCKEON :

105 My name is Maura McKeon. I live at 383, Clark Avenue in Westmount. I wish to present the Office de consultation publique de Montréal a short brief concerning the closure of chemin Camillien-Houde and Remembrance road.

The purpose of this presentation is to make the following points:

110 One; this pilot project was done without proper prior consultation.
Two; the closure of the roadway in affect was the appropriation of access to a public park for the benefit of a small minority of the local population, i.e. speed cyclists.
Three; the closure entailed serious inconvenience to a vast number of people.
115 Four; environmental protection is a smokescreen cloaking the City's real intention of removing vehicles from the mountain permanently.

Now, I will elaborate on each of these. Number one. The pilot project and the lack of proper consultation. The pilot project was foisted on the population by the present City administration without any advance consultation. In democratic municipalities, no such major initiative should be permitted without giving the people most directly concerned a full and fair opportunity to express their views. The way the pilot project was implemented suggests that the decision to implement the closure was already made before this consultation began.

125 Why was this project even considered when there was a petition of some 25,000 signatures opposing it, and the petition supporting the closure had only about 10,000 signatures? Will this consultation make any difference, or is permanent closure already a done deal ?

130 Number two. The closure will appropriate the roads concerned for the use of a minority. The closure of chemin Camillien Houde -- Remembrance Road in effect constitutes the appropriation of this public thoroughfare for the benefit of a very limited number of individuals, notably competitive cyclists training for speed cycling competitions. Other residents of, and visitors to, the Island of Montreal will thus be deprived of the use of this roadway. Even purely recreational cyclists, in many cases, have avoided using the road concerned during the pilot project, since they find the terrain too difficult for them to navigate easily.

140 Three. Serious inconvenience to many. The closure of this roadways during the pilot project has engendered various and serious difficulties for large numbers of Montreal Island residents and visitors.

145 Great numbers of Montrealers traditionally used chemin Camillien-Houde - Remembrance Road for travelling from east to west or west to east in a convenient and direct manner, many of them on a daily basis, for accessing their homes or places of work. The closure required them to face the increased traffic on other arteries around the mountain, resulting in further congestion and loss of time in moving from their points of origin to their destinations.

150 In addition, the closure also impeded access to the mountain for handicapped people, who would otherwise have been able to drive or be driven from Côte-des-Neiges Road to the Lookout on the mountain's eastern slope. The same difficulty has faced visitors willing to access the Lookout from the west during the pilot project.

155 Other citizens gravely inconvenienced by the closure were those wishing to visit graves in Mount Royal Cemetery from chemin Camillien-Houde. They were forced to access the Cemetery through the main gates in Outremont, to which access by car is more complicated.

160 The pilot project also detracted from the enjoyment of residents and visitors alike, who were formerly able to drive across the mountain, admiring the beautiful views that such transits afforded of the surrounding landscape, extending far into the distance.

165 Four. The City of Montreal's real intention behind the closure. It has been argued that the closure will enhance the enjoyment of the mountain as a public park and protect it as a green environment. One wonders whether the pilot project is only the first step towards the complete elimination of vehicular access to Mount Royal.

170 One is tempted to think that the environmental argument is being used as an excuse that will be invoked, sooner or later, for banning all cars and other vehicles from the mountain, perhaps once more without proper prior consultation with the population affected.

175 My opinion regarding this pilot project was well expressed by Arlene Lutter, in a letter to the editor of the Westmount Independent, published November 20, 2018, under the title "Opposing Plante, Taking Back Our Mountain". The letter reads in part as follows:

180 *Based on utilitarian principles of democracy – the greatest good for the greatest number --- Montreal Mayor Valérie Plante should reverse what has been her blatant disregard of these principles by returning the mountain to the many: thousands of families, elderly, handicapped, cemetery visitors, motorists who treasure the 10-minute drive over the mountain for a bit of country in our urban world, and tourists, all of whom, in Josh Freed's words, were the "losers" during her five-month pilot project.*

185 *They did not go to the mountain this summer because she made access so obstructive and unwelcoming. Rather, she gave the mountain to the very few, i.e. the super-fit, 18-to-30 aged cyclists and denied it to the rest of us.*

190 *Moreover, the City of Montreal's self-serving, deeply flawed report and Luc Ferrandez's egregious claim that the pilot project was a success defy the facts on the ground. Mayor Plante's approval rating, being already low, and, should she not return our mountain to us, most assuredly she will be a one-term mayor.*

195 Chemin Camilien Houde – Remembrance Road must be kept open permanently. Speed limits can be reduced and enforced and concrete barriers can be erected to prevent the U-turning that killed the young cyclist. Those solutions are workable and affordable. They would solve the real problem, without depriving the majority of us of a personal, practical, convenient and beautiful route for our use and enjoyment. Thank you for hearing me this evening.

LA PRÉSIDENTE :

200 Thank you for coming to present a memoire. A first question would be: what is your personal experience of the mountain? Do you go to walk on the mountain or...

Mme MAURA MCKEON :

205 I have on occasion, two or three times in the summer, gone from East to West in a vehicle and gone to the look out. Once in awhile when we have visitors, we will bring them to the mountain as a, to see the panoramic view. I don't go there regularly.

LA PRÉSIDENTE :

210 Regularly, on a regular basis. Fine.

LA COMMISSAIRE :

215 Just in terms of one of the solutions that you're proposing is concrete barriers. Would you have the concrete barriers going from East to West, right across the road? Right across the mountain, all the way along to prevent U-Turns, is that what you...

Mme MAURA MCKEON :

220 Where the traffic congestion appears to be a problem, I am not absolutely certain about the width of the road... I mean I'm sure if the width of the road is the same from East to West. I guess an engineer would have to answer that problem. But where there seems to... when I saw on television where the cyclist was killed, it appeared to be in a narrowing of yet that area. I believe, if I recollect correctly, it's going... when you're going down more
225 towards these that the road appears to be a little more narrow. I don't know, I don't think the road is the same width throughout. So...

LA COMMISSAIRE :

230 So, it's only where it's narrow that you would put...

Mme MAURA MCKEON :

235 Well, I would say where it would appear to be a problem, whether it would be an interference between a car and a cyclist and so on.

LA COMMISSAIRE :

240 Okay, thank you.

LA PRÉSIDENTE :

245 Any ideas about the parkings, their dimensions, their appearance?

Mme MAURA MCKEON :

250 The parking?

LA PRÉSIDENTE :

255 The parkings. Yeah, the Lac-des-Castors and the Smith's House parking? The two parkings?

Mme MAURA MCKEON :

260 The parking, when I have been there on occasion, the parking seemed reasonable, I thought. If somebody wants to enjoy Lac-des-Castors et the Chalet and the skating, it seems, I wouldn't necessarily increase the parking area, but I think the main issue, you know, if somebody wants to go to the other side, to the look out and so on, they would have to park and walk. You know. And it's difficult, even with people with young children, you know, and so on. And the Smith House too. Very often at Smith House, there are on occasion have been exhibits at Smith House. And so if someone want, I'm a member of the woman's art society, and on occasion, they have exhibits and a lot of the people in that society are seniors. So it's just a question of access I think, for a lot of people.

LA PRÉSIDENTE :

270 Were you able to visit the Belvédère Soleil on the northern side of the Camillien-Houde road, you know what I mean?

Mme MAURA MCKEON :

275 Yes, the belvédère. Saint-Patrick's ball was there. At the chalet you're talking?

LA PRÉSIDENTE :

280 No, no, no. These are the, there's a belvédère on Camillien-Houde, the old one, and there was a restaurant who was there...

Mme MAURA MCKEON :

285 Oh, the restaurant.

LA PRÉSIDENTE :

290 The restaurant and a little in direction of Remembrance Road, there was also a belvédère called the belvédère Soleil on the side of the road. Maybe you didn't see that?

Mme MAURA MCKEON :

295 I'm not familiar with that. I'm familiar with the restaurant.

LA PRÉSIDENTE :

Yes, and what did you think of it?

300 **Mme MAURA MCKEON :**

Well, years ago, a relative of ours had his 60th birthday party at the restaurant, which was very nice...

305 **LA PRÉSIDENTE :**

Okay, at the Lac-des-Castors.

Mme MAURA MCKEON :

310 But you're talking about another restaurant?

LA PRÉSIDENTE :

315 Yes.

Mme MAURA MCKEON :

320 This is something quite new, I guess.

LA PRÉSIDENTE :

It was a small restaurant on the belvédère Camillien-Houde with a sort of parking lot.

325 **Mme MAURA MCKEON :**

Yeah, I didn't, I'm not familiar with that.

LA PRÉSIDENTE :

330 So, no more questions. Thank you very much for taking your time.

Mme MAURA MCKEON :

335 Thank you for receiving me. A appreciate it very much.

LA PRÉSIDENTE :

340 Would you be kind enough to leave your brief to madame Élise Nault and we'll have it on the Internet at the Office.

Mme MAURA MCKEON :

345 Yes, I have it on the Internet, I have a copy for... is that alright?

LA PRÉSIDENTE :

350 Fine. Fine.

Mme MAURA MCKEON :

355 Thank you very much.

LA PRÉSIDENTE :

360 J'inviterais madame Cheryl Berger, please s'il vous plaît, si elle est ici. Ah bon, vous êtes arrivée juste à temps. Prenez le temps de vous... On va attendre deux secondes que notre collègue revienne, alors reprenez votre souffle. Allez-y.

Mme CHERYL BERGER :

365 Juste parler comme ça librement?

LA PRÉSIDENTE :

Vous pouvez le faire en anglais si vous le souhaitez.

370 **Mme CHERYL BERGER :**

375 O.K. Ça risque d'aller les deux côtés, parce qu'en français c'est les meilleures paroles qui sortent en premier, si ça ne vous dérange pas trop. Mais peut-être je vais commencer. Je viens juste de quitter le travail, c'est une longue journée. I'll switch over in English if that's okay.

LA PRÉSIDENTE :

380 That's fine.