

Presentation  
To the  
Commission  
of the

BUREAU D'AUDIENCES  
PUBLIQUE SUR L'ENVIRONNEMENT

concerning

THE PROPOSED MEGADUMP AT DANFORD LAKE

by

Shannon H. Martin, President

on behalf of the

DANFORD LAKE AND DISTRICT PROPERTY OWNERS  
ASSOCIATION

June, 2007

## **Introduction**

I am Shannon Martin, President of the Danford Lake and District Property Association. This association is composed of a cluster of 8 lakes:

- Danford Lake
- Little Danford lake
- McConnell Lake
- Shea lake
- Egg Lake
- Farm lake
- McAuley lake
- Lyon Lake
- 2 smaller lakes (Freddie and Andy Lakes)

While we have about 150 registered members in our association, there are more than 250 cottages on these lakes, representing over 1000 owners and users. Many of these cottages have been used by succeeding generations of the same family for many, many years.

## **Interest in the project**

The Coalition against the Megadump was formed when a committee of our Lake Association joined with local residents of Danford Villlage to look into the proposed landfill in Danford Village. At last year's Annual General Meeting (2006) of the Association, the report of the Coaltition on opposition to the megadump received unanimous support . Almost all of the cottage owners and users believe that a large megadump within 10 Km (by road and much less as "the crow flies") of their lakes will have a huge effect on their enjoyment of their cottages. Also, many owners have converted their cottages to year round use with ideas of retiring to them and living here permanently or at least spending the greater part of their time here. These decisions have been made because of the beauty and peace of the area, important factors for retiring city dwellers. They are concerned about their health and future quality of life.

## **Concerns about the Project**

The cottage owners and users are deeply concerned about the following issues:

1. Our members feel that we are in the post landfill era and we should no longer be burying our garbage for future generations to deal with.
2. Garbage can and must be dealt with by other more efficient methods and technologies which produce less environmental damage.
3. Large landfills damage the environment. They pollute the air and water. They attract rats and gulls which spread pollution and disease.
4. Large landfills increase the road traffic by adding very large trucks to our highways and especially the local roads which are narrow, dangerous and badly in need of repair! This extra truck traffic will increase the number of road accidents and result in disturbing noise which will affect our members' health and quality of life.
5. The proposed megadump is located in an area that is more suited to recreation and tourism. It would affect the livelihood of many people working in recreation and tourism or working in jobs which depend on aspects of recreation and tourism such as construction, upkeep of property, the local nursery, the local store, food providers and garage.
6. It will reduce the property values in our area.

## **Position of the Association**

We strongly oppose this project and implore the Government of Quebec to turn it down!

We believe that the project is placed in the worst location, is based on out-of-date technology and that no changes or improvements would make the project acceptable from any point of view.

We believe that our association is only one of many groups or organizations which hold similar views.

That briefly is the position of our Association. However I do want to convey to you the strong emotional opposition that our members wish to express, which we believe is also shared by many others. I will not go into the details of the issues as these have or will be explored thoroughly by various members of the concerned communities.

I call this part of my presentation:

## **Mendacity, Frustration and Outrage**

### **Mendacity** (untruthfulness)

Our members ask:

if this project is so good, why so much mendacity?

1. Why did the Municipality and the Promoters have to lie in their first letter to the community about the scope of the project?
2. Why did the people running for Mayor and Council of Alleyn and Cawood not inform the public that they were going ahead with a project of this size? Without this information, they were subsequently elected by acclamation!
3. Why did the Mayor of Alleyn and Cawood say in a radio broadcast on CBC that the project would not go ahead without community support and is now doing exactly the opposite?
4. Why did the Municipality and Minister of Municipal Affairs tell a huge crowd that if the voters of Alleyn and Cawood objected to the zoning changes, there would be a Referendum and the people would have a chance to vote but upon receiving many, many letters of objection, the Mayor and Municipality dropped the zoning changes? In this way, they managed to prevent the Referendum taking place.
5. Why did the Warden of the Pontiac MRC tell a public meeting that the project would not go ahead without community support and that the community would have a Referendum on the zoning but then proceed to adopt the project and arranged with the Minister of Municipal Affairs that no Referendum would be held?

## **Frustration**

The frustration level of the residents of the concerned communities began to rise as the Mayor and Council continuously ignored our concerns and input. Once the public became aware of what the Mayor and Council were actually intending to “dump” on us, many of us, along with the ratepayers of Alleyn and Cawood, attended the Alleyn and Cawood Council meetings every month to ask questions and voice opposition to this megadump. Our questions were never answered during the question periods which became shorter and shorter at each meeting with the Mayor actually walking out at one of the last meetings. He frequently replied to our questions with, “Question received and noted.” They may have been received and noted but were certainly never answered!

We felt that a major project was being pushed through by a Private Corporation without actually consulting the people who are most affected by it. Calls for a Referendum on the Megadump were refused by the Mayor and Council although at one point, a Council resolution approving a Referendum was passed. However this was then vetoed by the Mayor! You can imagine how the frustration level of the residents was increasing tremendously over this period.

We, who do not actually live in Pontiac (although in proximity and geography, we are virtually more a part of that community than the rest of Pontiac is), were told that as we were not ratepayers, we had no right to question or object! The Promoter even told the part time residents of the community that they did not count as proper residents and therefore their opinions did not really count! This, even though they are ratepayers and pay well over 50% of the municipal taxes! However, even of the “full time residents” there was a strong majority who objected strenuously to the project.

On many occasions Mayor Squitti referred to the BAPE, saying that all our questions would be answered there – that we would be

able to ask our questions and express our views at that time. Anyone who attended the BAPE Question Hearings was only more frustrated by Mayor Squitti's avoidance of the issues during his telephone interview.

## **Outrage**

You, Madam Commissioner and Mr. Commissioner are our last resort. We ask you to include in your report the strong feelings the people who oppose this project.

1. It is outrageous that a 30 story high mountain of garbage be built on sand in an area surrounded by lakes and rivers and whose future depends on recreation and tourism.
2. It is outrageous that the Mayor and Council of Alayn and Cawood claimed community support based on 14 people at that first meeting (before which, the public had not been fully informed about what they were proposing and after which support was reduced to a poor minority). Once the public became aware of what was happening, there were so many people at the meetings that many people had to stand or stay outside.
3. It is outrageous that the Mayor and majority of the Municipal Council could promise a referendum on zoning and then withdraw the Zoning Bylaws to avoid a Referendum.
4. It is outrageous that the MRC of Pontiac could be rewarded with large "tipping fees" for being one of the worst MRC's in Quebec in managing their garbage problems by doing little or nothing in this area for the past 7 or 8 years and are now panicking.
5. It is outrageous that the MRC of Pontiac, should support this project on the most easterly border of the MRC where those most affected would be residents of another MRC altogether who do not even have a vote in that area. Most of the traffic

to the dump would come along Highway 105 from Gatineau and then 301 to Danford village.

There have been **two previous attempts** to establish megadumps in Pontiac. They were roundly opposed by those communities and the Promoter was forced to withdraw them. Does the MRC of Pontiac think that by selecting land “over the hills and far away”, reached by a little used Pontiac highway and far from most of their own communities, they are justified in their endeavors without considering the views of the communities on this side of the project?

6. It is outrageous that a small rural municipality is asked to deal with the garbage of one half million urban dwellers.
7. It is outrageous that, having invested in this area because of its peace and tranquility, part time and full time residents should suddenly have that peace and tranquility snatched away from their lives by means of something so totally out of date, unexpected and uncalled for as a mammoth garbage dump. These country cottages are often our true homes where we come to regain our peace of mind.
8. It is outrageous that the Ministry of the Environment is not obliged to encourage modern alternate methods and technologies which are technically less dangerous to the environment and socially less dangerous to the involved communities.
9. It is outrageous that in closing all the small municipal garbage dumps in the name of the environment, the province is thinking of creating a gargantuan environmental problem for a few small communities incapable of dealing with the phenomenon.

## **Conclusion**

**Please, as our last resort, include in your report to the Minister, the strong emotional reaction and opposition of the many people who are affected by this project. It has**



**already created havoc within the community and if allowed to proceed will create so much more that it seems on the point of destroying the community and any chance it has of moving forward and making the most of its potential.**