

Meadowbrook friends propose heritage park

BY ISAAC OLSON

Dida Berku has long worked on protecting Meadowbrook Golf Course as a Côte St. Luc councillor and as a member of Les Amis de Meadowbrook. Now she is throwing her support behind a plan put forth late last month by Les Amis de Meadowbrook, the Conseil régional de l'environnement de Montréal and the landscape architecture firm, Catalyse Urbaine, that would see the golf course as an urban nature heritage park.

The Côte St. Luc side of the course is protected by zoning. The Lachine side, however, is a different story. While Montreal officials have said the city will not support the infrastructure needed to develop the land, it appears the developer, Groupe Pacific Inc., is pushing ahead.

Groupe Pacific has recently filed a court order against the borough of Lachine, according to the mayor's political attaché, Denis Gaumond. Beyond that, he said he had no comment about the property or the court order.

This isn't the first time Groupe Pacific has filed cases against a city as, Berku noted, it targeted Côte St. Luc's zoning in 2002. The case, she said, never went anywhere.

Berku said Lachine's zoning allows for development, but she and Les Amis de Meadowbrook want to see that change, not just to protect the environment and preserve the city's sparse green space, but also, plans to expand nearby train yards would conflict with any residential buildings in the area.

"We should be introducing safe setbacks along the railway yard in Lachine so that no more residents are affected by the noise, pollution and vibrations and that we're not building for complaints, which



A new plan proposed for the Meadowbrook Golf Course.
Photo: Isaac Olson

is what any development in Meadowbrook would basically do," said Berku, noting Côte St. Luc has made the mistake of allowing developments too close to the train tracks. "Why should we repeat the mistakes of the past? Lachine has to take positive steps in order to rezone this territory. Lachine must take positive steps like Côte St. Luc on this."

A statement released by Les Amis de Meadowbrook outlines a plan that "will provide a solid basis for transforming this green space into a public park and hope that city officials will study the report in this light. New pedestrian entrances and cycle paths could easily open up access to Meadowbrook and integrate it with existing green corridors. The new park could be connected through a greenway to a network of parks, including the Falaise St. Jacques, and a pedestrian infrastructure could make it accessible to all Montrealers."

Berku said the population needs assurance that this green space will stay green for the long term.

Jane's Walk explores the nature around golf course



Green Coalition's David Fletcher identifies some of the flora near Meadowbrook on May 4.

Photo: Michael Moore

BY MICHAEL MOORE

About 35 locals stretched their legs on May 4 and 5 for the annual Jane's Walk that took place around Meadowbrook golf course to illustrate the environmental importance of the sprawling green space.

"As humans, we tend to see life in macro. We see big and obvious things, but we often miss a lot of details that are the engine of the environment," said the Green Coalition's David Fletcher.

With a trio of canine companions in tow, the two-hour tours, led by Fletcher and Côte St. Luc councillors Dida Berku and Steven Erdelyi, explored the environmental make-up surrounding the private golf course.

The trio frequently alternated as lead guide, with Fletcher highlighting the floral and environmental issues facing the area and the councillors explaining the political challenges surrounding the future of the golf course, the Côte St. Luc side of which was re-zoned exclusively for golf in 2001.

Named in honour of writer and activist Jane Jacobs, Jane's Walks are a series of free volunteer-led neighbourhood tours held on the first weekend of May designed to encourage people to explore the areas in which they live and interact.

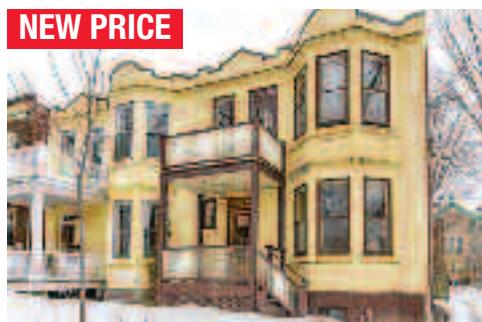
Since its inception in Toronto in 2007, the walks have spread to over 100 cities around the globe, predominantly in North America.



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