

Question 10 - David Jeanes

Good evening. Bonsoir Mr. Mills, Mr. Kristmanson, board members, les membres du conseil. Heritage Ottawa is concerned with the entire Central Experimental Farm as a national historic landscape and, for over 125 years, as a research institution of global importance. Our questions are: Will the NCC ensure that the Central Experimental Farm lands being transferred to the NCC remain available undamaged and in their entirety until the question of the Civic Hospital Campus is resolved?

Second question: Will the terms of this land transfer be for a hospital only? Third, will the NCC work with the Ottawa Hospital to investigate other suitable sites? And fourth, if no hospital is built, will the NCC ensure that the lands are returned, undamaged and in their entirety, to Agriculture Canada for their original purpose? One of the reasons we say this is that we understand that, so far, the Ontario government as yet has no plan to construct a new hospital. So those are my questions. Thank you.

Time code 01:08:58

Réponse 10 - Dr. Kristmanson

Thank you, David. First of all, on your first question, yes, there is no other use that could be contemplated other than the hospital. I would like to talk a little bit, maybe fill in a little bit more on your question, though. The NCC was asked essentially by the government to act as the middle man or the broker for this process between Agriculture Canada and the Government of Ontario. I was quick to accept the offer to do this, because what I wanted, and what has happened, is that the lands will remain federal lands. They will be leased on a long-term lease to the Province of Ontario for the use of a hospital. And that means that the federal land use and design approval process will remain in effect, which allows us to — and I don't know if Fred Gaspar is here tonight. He's not here, but Steve is here, and Steve's group is working closely with the hospital on matters such as how the design guidelines for the new hospital must respect the heritage character of the farm: that the buildings, for example, cannot cast shadows on the greenhouses, that the public realm that is designed into the campus is integrated into the public realm of the Central Experimental Farm, that design excellence is built, is assured, in the architectural design and plan of the new hospital. I've talked to Dr. Kitts a number of times. I'm meeting him again next week to talk about how we can make — I don't like the word *world-class* — but the best of its kind in these kinds of hospitals, from an architectural and design perspective. Also, how the hospital will sit in the site to preserve forest margins to respect our heritage parkway that runs through. So, all of these questions we can deal with because of the nature of the agreement.

(suite - Time code 01:11:15)

Now, the Government of Ontario will have a window of 30 years to complete, to initiate, this project. If they do not do so by that time, the offer essentially goes off the table. That's the way the agreement is written. The other principle of the agreement is that, so long as this project is in gestation and discussion and design, Agriculture Canada should be free to continue its use of those lands throughout that period, and would only release them as they are needed. That's the principle. Now, I think of Agriculture Canada trying to understand how to take advantage of that, frankly, because the type of crop experiments they're doing don't necessarily lend themselves to that amount of indecision. So these are some discussions we still have to have. But the broad principle, I think, is a good one, which is a minimalist one in terms of letting everything stay as it is for as long as possible, giving the Government of Ontario a reasonable time to act on this, but not forever — and giving the Ottawa Hospital ample space and time to build the case to build this very important facility. From a planning perspective, I think all of us at the NCC have to go about parting with the 60 acres on the Experimental Farm. But the alternatives are not fantastic. And, when you think of the densification coming in this city, when you think of the growing health care needs of this city, and you think of the actual condition of the Civic Hospital and the fact that is strained in its life cycle, it's hard to imagine that it would be preferable to locate this hospital much further out, which is what the alternative, effectively, would be, based on the studies that the Ottawa Hospital has done. So, from a long-term planning perspective, as much as we are seized with the loss of a portion of this very important heritage cultural landscape and heritage site, the social benefit, broadly speaking, is hard to argue against. But, I think what the role of the Commission can be is to — and we're still in the process of understanding and working out the modalities of how this transaction can work. Eventually, what we need to do is get to consultation and hear what people want us as the NCC to do vis-à-vis the hospital and Infrastructure Ontario to make sure that, as a community and as a capital, we're working with the hospital for the right outcomes. Some of the recent hospitals that have been done, I've actually gone to look at them, and I can see how we could do better. And I think Dr. Kitts agrees with that. So, I think I've answered your question as best I can, and the last part of your question will be, yes, the site will be returned to Agriculture Canada if it's not used.