



Greenspace Alliance of Canada's Capital

Alliance pour les espaces verts de la capitale du Canada

Greenspace Alliance of Canada's Capital
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February 23, 2021

The Honourable Marc Garneau, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Global Affairs
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

Dear Minister,

First, I would like to thank you for dedicating many years of your life to the Canadian space program. I believe we need to look up often while keeping our feet on the ground. The best in the space program helps us do that.

I am writing to you, on a matter much closer to home. Recently, the National Capital Commission (NCC) filed an application for a City of Ottawa Official Plan amendment to allow for the creation of a diplomatic enclave on federal land currently zoned as greenspace (O1- Parks and Open Space). I am leading a campaign on behalf of the Greenspace Alliance of Canada's Capital to have the NCC withdraw this application.

The subject lands are located at the Sir John A. McDonald Parkway and Slidell Street, a stone's throw from the Ottawa River and next to the Mechanicsville residential neighbourhood in Kitchissippi Ward. The loss of this greenspace will be felt acutely by residents of Ottawa, and in particular by a neighbourhood that currently has very little greenspace and almost no tree canopy.

We are writing to you as the Minister responsible for managing Canada's international relations, including steps taken by the Canadian government to host foreign embassies on Canadian soil. Our question is, why is this proposed use of federal lands in the public interest, and who specifically will benefit from this use? The NCC has not developed a business case to demonstrate a demand for diplomatic lands beyond what is currently available to foreign nations through the general land market or federal lands that do not currently serve as public greenspace. More generally, the situation raises questions regarding plans Global Affairs may have to gift, lease or sell surplus federal lands for the benefit of foreign embassies, at a direct cost to greenspace in Canada's capital. Is this the case?

For your information, the Councillor for Kitchissippi Ward, Jeff Leiper, has joined us and other organizations in our campaign to have the NCC withdraw its application for an Official Plan amendment in favor of the current use of the land as public greenspace.

Yours sincerely,

Daniel Buckles
Director,
Greenspace Alliance of Canada's Capital

cc:

The Honourable Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Canadian Heritage)

Tobi Nussbaum (CEO, NCC)

The Honourable Catherine McKenna (Ottawa Centre)

The Honourable Micheal Chong

The Honourable Jack Harris

Mayor Jim Watson

Councillor Jeff Leiper

Allison Hamlin (City of Ottawa Planner)

Lorrie Marlow, President, Mechanicsville Community Association