

On Aug 13, 2015, at 12:12 PM, Luc-Anne Salm <luc.anne.salm@gmail.com> wrote:

Dear Jeff Westeinde,

Happy Summer of 2015, I'm speaking directly to you, although I'm sharing this letter with a wide audience. I'm doing this as part of the "constructive discussion" you invited me personally to engage in with you...and I understand that although the discussion is about a local Ottawa location-that this issue has national/global implications. I'm opening this up as I feel that you're ignoring the conversation; putting cart before horse and not honouring the fact that your ZIBI project is under increasing appeal with citizens of this country. You are acting as though the chance for public objection- to whatever the city, in our view, is recklessly planning to proceed with- can be aborted when it has hardly just begun.- all for the sake of haste and colonial bottom lines and false fronts for a sesquicentennial celebration that in truth is just empty parading without the acts of reconciliation with our First Peoples that are essential in the nation building process. The need for reconciliation is magnified in the very heart of this country- the sacred Chaudière Falls and its islands; dammed and desecrated as industrial wasteland. I'm sure that you would at least agree that emerging from this dilemma with grace and dignity should precede any collective feasting .

Why are you using buildings on the Chaudière site for corporate advertisement? Why are you selling condos while your project is being contested as being further misuse of a sacred site? Why are you establishing a residential/retail/business community directly on a geological fault line? You are celebrating there (Gala fest/arboretum fest), partying on sites that have been shut off from the First Nations community as gathering places for over a hundred years. They are still shut off from them with security guards and metal barricades. You are spending a fortune on glitzy advertising, selling condos while the period for public objection to this project is still officially pending. You are using Dream Corporation's deep pockets to silence the press and other normal channels for objection on this issue- by buying valuable ad space in the Ottawa Citizen, donating big money to Ecology Ottawa, donating moneys to the river keeper so that it is more difficult for citizen groups like the "freethefalls and its islands " group, which I belong to, to communicate their viewpoint through avenues that won't go against funding sources. No matter; our voices are heard in the summer breeze!

With disdain, on June 4th this summer, you claimed that our effort is causing positive action on that site to regress by 100 years-that our group of appellants are mere annoyances- status quo mosquitos objecting to progress.

In an earlier public letter addressed to Claudette Commanda, I had stated that you had said that if we don't grab this development opportunity, that the land will lie derelict for another 100 years; that was actually from an earlier discussion with your brother Jonathan in your office a number of months back, but same deal...

Seven years ago, I would have applauded the Zibi project as a progressive, fun, green, sustainable community project for that site; perhaps I would even have cheered if you had finally built your father's "Friendship Windmill" in that location (Centretown Ottawa/close to water were always the criteria for that seven story working grain/saw windmill proposal)....and that I would have considered you a brilliant, progressive strategist and community builder. However,now, with the experience of the intervening seven years, I keep returning to the strong feeling I've had all my life in this country- that we are living on native land and that we are denying its authentic voice with our imported visual agenda.

I'm happy, as well as you must be, becoming familiar with the First Nation community firsthand and seeing what beautiful people they are. However, by offering lucrative construction contracts to previously financially strapped members-offers difficult to refuse- you essentially buy them out and deprive certain members of the Algonquin community of their honorary roles in traditional society, as well as the freedom to speak their truth, weakening the indigenous social fabric and that is a shame.

In early 2009, I met the last hereditary chief of the Anicnabe people, the late Grandfather William Commanda, when elders at the Odawa centre felt that the ultimate authority for the authentic Algonquin voice was 90 something year old William Commanda....and I called him up as I needed to hear the authentic Algonquin voice in my quest for a First Nation's perspective on our collective history. This led to a number of discussions at his home where he spoke passionately about his dream for Asinabka- he spoke of the Chaudière Falls and Chaudière islands as being a sacred place in need of restoration for his people; he was full of hope.

The land had been rezoned as public open space which would accommodate that dream from his ancestors which he proudly carried. He radiated with happiness...

When on October, 2014, the city was set to change the zoning from public open space to mixed use/downtown with height schedule, it felt like a slap in the face to the work of William-our "Nelson Mandela"-a man who tirelessly fought for justice for his people and our collective social fabric. In life, he was warm and generous with everyone but his heart cried for his people and he knew that reconciliation would need to come first before we could actually call this country Canada.

I was so surprised to learn from him that he did not vote in elections here because he could not recognize Canada as a valid entity yet. He also could not recognize the 49th parallel as a border and he considered himself a free being in his ancestral territories.

Radical? Not really, when you think about the fact that First Nation representatives had not been part of the constitutional talks that supposedly legislated the existence of this country; that voice had been missing from the negotiating table. There had been no First Nation's Fathers of Confederation.-they were all european colonialists who imagined that first peoples had been conquered or that they were a dispensable reality.

Windmill Development Group is enthusiastically participating in the big government/corporate machine that wants to spiffy up this city for Canada's sesquicentennial...trying to make the heart of Ottawa, Canada *appear* to look good.

This is manufacturing false fronts just as early settlers did in their towns to protect Canadians from the TRUTH.

This plan for the islands, you inherited from the NCC who had long "coveted this site"-a phrase borrowed from an article by Elizabeth Payne of the Ottawa Citizen.(August 1, 2013) Some 30 years ago, the NCC had hired Mark Brandt (MTBA) to come up with a residential/retail/business plan for this site, while being fully aware that under the Trudeau government, all levels of government had approved a First Nations vision for this site. Douglas Cardinal, architect,invited by Trudeau personally, to help design Confederation Boulevard, had sourced William Commanda, authentic Algonquin voice, and learned from him this vision for the Chaudière and its islands , based on at least 6000 years of traditional sacred use

and they incorporated this vision, documented in the 3 figure wampum belt that William carried, into the plan for the National Capital.

William's wife Mary had made the late Primeminister Pierre Elliot Trudeau that beautiful buckskin suit that he had been fond of wearing.

Successive changes of government had no meaning for Grandfather. As far as he was concerned, the country was waking up to the indigenous voice and welcoming it and he was so immensely happy that the century plus of desecration was ending and that restorative justice was activated. He also carried the sacred Seven Fires Prophecy wampum belt and he could feel that the time of the 7th fire was upon this country.

That sacred Fire -impossible to snuff out- when Liberals lost and Conservatives won (and the desire to work with First Nations on this national project diminished)- bypasses irrelevant political details in its light which has been animating this country.

From Grandfather's paradigm-that sacred fire continued burning and so the vision he carried held full authority still-it's just according to a different paradigm-one that we need to all be more in tune with. Successive governments tried to turn back the clock on the reconciliation process in the heart of this country out of a fear for loss of Colonial dominance. Planning a continuation of downtown Ottawa on those islands, however greenwashed and built with First Nation labour contracts, does not honour the reconciliation process in my eyes. Lucrative contracts for a community that essentially reflects colonial interests, will not bless First Nations seven generations into the future or even the current one. As Grandfather said- "...When all is lost, you will find that money cannot be eaten."

This generation might feel largely assimilated, but this generation is also crying out -hungering and thirsting for their indigenous roots-their culture, languages, their ceremonies and their sacred spaces. "Build it up before they wake up and realize what they've lost", I hear your actions say-laughing up their corporate sleeves. Rather disgraceful image, that, don't you think?

I'm surprised that you don't grasp the ugliness of what you're colluding with; The city of Ottawa/NCC/private developer/OMB colluding together and denying the democratic rights of citizens to make a formal appeal against a zoning change that would *disable* a grand indigenous vision designed to bless us all seven generations down the road- a zoning change that would *enable* irrevocable changes to the islands making them more of the same euro-centric rectangular, rock blasting/sky scraping exclusive condo landscape, however green-washed, that we see in the rest of this city. It absolutely does NOT make sense to me that you can't understand that the colonial agenda is not really on the national menu any more because it is *tainted* and we need NOT be in such a rush to slash and burn the indigenous cultural landscape for the sake of empty parading an outmoded sense of this place. We can't be Canada until we ALL revise the foundation stones and we can't celebrate, until we do.

Hopefully you can come to your senses before it's too late.

Respectfully,

Luc-Anne Salm
(fellow Dutch Canadian)