

## **Glenmount Revives Community Association**

*Anna Bratulic*

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Faced with the prospect of being volleyed back into Côte-des-Neiges once the fate of Mount Royal within the megacity is decided on June 20, Glenmounters Francine Brodeur and Patrick Hamel are hoping to give a voice to residents in their part of town by reviving the Glenmount Community Association.

"With all that is going on, I think we have to protect ourselves... for the problems that are coming our way," said Hamel. The association dates back 60 years, but has been largely inactive since the mergers as it was felt that Glenmounters' wish to join T.M.R. had at last been granted.

Having once in the distant past been part of the Town of Mount Royal, Glenmount was joined to Montreal sometime between 1912 and 1938 for reasons that are unclear, possibly to resolve a land dispute (the sector used to be part of the Goyer farm which straddled the two cities).

### **If at first you don't succeed...**

Despite failed efforts in the 1940s, 1956 and then again between 1983-85 to annex the 75-acre sector to T.M.R., a geographically logical move, it was finally annexed to the Borough of Mount Royal from Côte-des-Neiges following the forced mergers in 2002.

But if Mount Royal demerges in 2006, the hapless sector will be stitched back to Côte-des-Neiges because the rules in Bill 9 state that a reconstituted city reverts back to its old borders.

However, the 1300 or so residents never did quite fit in. They continued to pay high Montreal taxes (although the tax rate was lowering every year while that of Mount Royal steadily rose, a trend that is supposed to continue until a uniform rate is reached all over the island); many of their basic services are still carried out by Côte-des-Neiges until the blue collar labour agreement is signed -whenever that will be- and since 2002 Mount Royal has been unable to invest any of its \$3.36 million allotted capital budget in the area, again due to the blue collar impasse.

"It's been three years and nothing has been done here," said Brodeur, who attends monthly Mount Royal, Côte-des-Neiges, and Montreal council meetings with clockwork regularity to repeat in essence the same question, What about Glenmount?

Brodeur believes that extensive repairs to local streets, sidewalks and Dunkerque Park have to be done, as well as improving the safety of the dodgy Canora/Jean-Talon intersection.

### **Reimbursed taxes?**

"They've paid their taxes and they have not received full value for what they've paid,"

said councillor Nick Stephens. But when our hands are tied and we can't hire contractors or use blue collar workers... all we're able to do is ask Côte-des-Neiges to patch this and patch that."

Even if the blue collar situation does eventually get resolved by the end of the year, Mount Royal may be a municipality-in-waiting as of June 20 and will still be managing budgets in 2005 (a transition year) that are supposed to include Glenmount.

Borough Mayor Suzanne Caron has said that demergers would not affect capital investments in Glenmount, but Hamel has his doubts.

"There wouldn't be a lot of motivation to spend money on a area that you will separate from," admits councillor Stephens. "The three of us (councillors) will have to decide what to do."

So will Glenmount residents demand that either Montreal or Mount Royal reimburse some of their taxes for unrendered services since 2002?

"Our aim is not to sue anyone... we don't want to make any enemies," said Hamel. "We just want to have what Glenmount has always wanted, an association with T.M.R."

Agreements were hammered out between the two cities a few years before the mergers in which Montreal paid T.M.R. to allow Glenmounters use of closer town facilities. The closest public pool, for example, after the one in T.M.R., was way over in Jarry Park. One has since been installed in Côte-des-Neiges, but even that one is located several streets away on Van Horne. "The kids didn't understand why they couldn't go here," said Brodeur, who suspects that all those agreements will have to be re-negotiated following a demerger.

### **Montreal clinging to every inch of itself**

The last serious attempt at negotiating a possible transfer of Glenmount to T.M.R. occurred in 1983-85 when mayors Reginald Dawson and Jean Drapeau were at the helm.

"He doesn't want to give up an inch of Montreal," Mayor Dawson is quoted as saying of Drapeau in a Globe and Mail article at the time. "Besides, Montreal wouldn't hand over Glenmount for nothing. We would probably have to pay \$30 million to Montreal and I don't think my people are prepared to pay that price."

In fact, Drapeau allegedly would have gladly parted with Glenmount -in exchange for T.M.R.'s industrial sector, a "preposterous" notion, according to Dawson.

The article goes on to note that Glenmount was worth \$40 million in taxable properties as of 1983. At last count, there were 350 single family homes, 34 duplexes, and 4 apartments in the area, not including the new homes built in what is known as Mount Royal Square, a stretch of new residences around the Brookfield/Canora neighbourhood.

With scant attention from both Mount Royal and Côte-des-Neiges, perhaps

Glenmount would be better off as its very own borough. "The thought has crossed my mind," laughed Hamel.

The association's Web site is at [www.glenmount.info](http://www.glenmount.info).