

December 2, 2003

**To : The Commissioners
Public Consultation Concerning the Benny Farm Project
Ville de Montréal**

**From: Jeff Itcush
President – Montreal Island Citizens' Union Borough Association
(CDN-NDG)**

Commissioners:

This letter acts to express our support for the expeditious development of the Benny Farm residential project.

In our association's 2002 –2003 term our Executive moved to support and promote the development of access to public and affordable housing through the Benny Farm project. Part of our resolution called for inclusive public consultation. We are glad to see that this process is in motion.

Our motivations for supporting the development of public and affordable housing at Benny Farm are manifold. A key premise for the expeditious and maximum use of the land for housing is the fact that Montreal has been undergoing severe housing shortages, especially in the rental and low-income sectors. In addition, prior to the 2001 municipal election the MICU expressed support for public housing initiatives. This commitment was outlined in the *Political Program* of the party adopted at its Congress on August 26, 2001. At the most basic level there currently are over 300 housing units at Benny Farm that have been boarded-up for years. This fact alone has the appearance of an anachronism in the midst of such a housing shortage. Our Executive also spoke of the relationship between poverty, especially that affecting children and shortages in public and affordable housing.

With regard to zoning issues associated with the proposed construction of a recreational complex, our association wishes to stress that as much of the available space possible be used for housing. Given our party's and association's commitment to social housing, such a recreation complex becomes an issue of secondary or tertiary importance. As such, it would be difficult to justify sacrificing much needed housing space for a recreational facility.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeff Itcush