



MEDIA RELEASE

Agreement with NCC offers more parkland at Embassy Precinct

Saving greenspace has galvanized community since 2019

OTTAWA March 22, 2023 — Mechanicsville Community Association (MCA) has signed an out-of-court agreement on principles for a settlement that will cement the community's connection to Lazy Bay Commons – a 3.7-hectare piece of land where the National Capital Commission (NCC) is seeking to build an embassy precinct.



"We are pleased to see that the NCC is respecting our community's desire to keep the greenspace north of LaRoche Park as parkland," said Lorrie Marlow, president of MCA.

"The principles of settlement are in line with the parkland vision set out in 2014 when we developed and endorsed the Scott Street Community Design Plan," she added.

During the fight to prevent six embassies from being built across the site, people living in Mechanicsville named the area Lazy Bay Commons – a reference to what is now a small bay on the shores of the Ottawa River. Before building of the NCC parkway, the bay was much larger and extended to Burnside Avenue in the heart of Mechanicsville.

The Commons has provided Kitchissippi Ward's most densely populated neighbourhood with health, recreational and environmental benefits for decades. "It's an oasis, a really important part of living here," she said.

According to Marlow, more than a month of intense negotiations with the NCC proved worthwhile because now the NCC's appeal to the Ontario Land Tribunal will be settled without a formal hearing. "This is a relief for us" she said. "Communities like ours are cash-strapped and having to raise \$40,000 or more to pay lawyers and experts is a big burden on our working-class residents."

Glad "a significant park" remains, sidewalks will be built and access provided

Roy Atkinson is an MCA Board member and chair of an MCA working group that has opposed the NCC's embassy plans for 3 years.

"I am relieved that our determined efforts in recent weeks convinced the NCC to retain a significant park at the east end of Lazy Bay Commons, to build sidewalks around the site, and to provide a west-end pedestrian corridor" he said.

With 24% of the site now slated to remain as greenspace, Atkinson said he hopes the NCC and the City of Ottawa will join in partnership with the Mechanicsville Community Association to address outstanding health, safety and environmental issues and to create the "convivial park" the NCC promised at the outset—one that will meld the sports-oriented focus of Laroche Park with the more relaxed and natural experience offered at Lazy Bay Commons.

The MCA working group developed a "Trees Not Embassies" logo, created an online petition, erected signs on fences around Lazy Bay Commons, spoke out about security issues posed by embassies and the need for more trees, raised money during information sessions on Wellington Street and online, staged street protests along the parkway, and lobbied federal, provincial and city politicians—all during a pandemic.

"It's no exaggeration to say that the fight over Lazy Bay Commons galvanized this community," said Atkinson. "We fought together for a place we love."

-30-

For media inquiries:

Mechanicsville Community Association, Roy Atkinson

Chair of MCA's Lazy Bay Commons Working Group

Phone: 819 923 6733

Email: roycatkinson@gmail.com

Website: <http://www.mechanicsville.ca/>