



Association du patrimoine de Potton

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Potton Heritage Association

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Our beautiful countryside is threatened ...

Potton Heritage Association invites its members to react to the threat to our valuable landscapes posed by the intended construction of two telecommunication towers in Potton, one of 107 meters and one of 90 meters.

You are invited to make known your personal opinion by writing, before March 8, 2013, to the following :

- **Bell Mobilité**
200, Boul. Bouchard, suite 5CS, Dorval (Québec) H9S 5X5
- **Industrie Canada**
C.D. Howe Building
235 Queen Street, Ottawa (Ontario) K1A 0H5

**Here is the copy of the letter sent in the name of Potton Heritage.
Be sure to quote the following reference.**

Sandra Jewett
President

Att : Consultation publique -Tours de Communication
– Dossiers F1112 – Dunkin – F1127 – Mansonville
Bell Mobilité 200, Boul. Bouchard, suite 5CS Dorval, QC, H9S 5X5

Potton Heritage Association is a non-profit organization devoted to the protection of Potton heritage, including our rich natural and cultural landscapes, our physical, biological and geological formations, etc. Potton Heritage Association was founded 23 years ago, and counts a membership of over two hundred individuals.

Our observations and remarks are based on the *Charte des paysages estriens* which was adopted by the municipal Council of Potton. Some of the dispositions contained therein include :

- citizens have the right of access to information held by public authorities in relation to sites of heritage value; and to participate in the decision making process pertaining to the landscapes which they, by their activities, have helped to shape.
- The engagement by the signatory to reconcile economic development with the protection of our environment, which includes our natural landscapes, while ensuring coherence of decision, action

and intervention; to be particularly prudent in interventions which may negatively impact these landscapes; to promote a concerted planning process that, from the outset, includes citizen participation in the decision making and implementation phases of projects involving landscapes.

« Le manuel des bonnes pratiques pour les paysages », a practical user guide to complement the Charter, acknowledges the great challenge which the construction and positioning of antennas presents. It favours using sites of minor visual interest and suggests using strategies that will allow the harmonious integration of these structures into the natural landscape. The manual suggests that by integrating these antennas into existing structures, where architectural criteria permits, visual impact is minimized. In addition, the Guide notes Industry Canada requires that promoters follow a process obliging them to study the sharing of existing towers or existing infrastructure before proposing new tower construction.

Context :

Le Schéma d'Aménagement et de Développement (SAD) de la MRC Memphrémagog identifies in its objectives « the structuring role played by quality landscapes ». As such, the protection of same is essential.

Insofar as concerns the Township of Potton, its landscapes are a collective asset and an important resource in the development of tourism. This very message has long been trumpeted by the Heritage Association.

The Townships Trail (Le chemin des Cantons), created five years ago by Tourisme Estrie, crosses our Township and attracts thousands of tourists each year. The Trail offers the tourist an opportunity to discover our magnificent natural landscapes, including those to be found on Route 243 as well as the chemin de la Vallée Missisquoi.

Comments:

Without question the installation of communication towers in the areas now proposed by Bell Mobility will be of negative impact generally, and will compromise the panoramic views promoted by the Chemin des Cantons, in particular. As a consequence, Bell should modify its plans, with a view to eliminating or minimizing as much as possible the negative impact on our landscapes.

Argument

— Industry Canada prescribes that : « *...the promoters are responsible for ensuring that the network of antennas are installed and operated in such a manner as to respect the local environment.* »

- In Potton, a signatory to the Charte and its accompanying manual, the dispositions are clear : « The question of the visual impact which this equipment has on our landscapes is foremost, particularly since the multiplication of such antennas is only beginning, especially in rural areas. » « The challenge : to install antennas on sites of least impact on the landscapes and to use strategies for these structures, *if they are necessary*, to integrate these harmoniously into their surroundings. » In this sense, harmonious means structures where the parts are well proportioned and visually pleasing.
- **Did Bell Mobility evaluate sites permitting such a harmonious integration? Did the company evaluate the possibility of placing antennas on several smaller structures, more easily camouflaged and dispersed, instead of opting for these very visible, imposing structures?**

- Industry Canada obliges the promoter to work with the authorities responsible for territorial land use. In the present context, this means the Municipality of the Township of Pottton and the MRC de Memphrémagog.
- Has Bell Mobility taken into account the land use plan of the MRC? If not, why not? If yes, then how did the Company demonstrate conformity to the current Land Use Plan for the MRC, particularly as regards the integration of these structures within sensitive landscapes. « Encourage the harmonization of architecture with the environment while respecting the natural and rural framework. »

Dunkin project, File F1112 :

Bell Mobility documents submitted to the Municipality indicate that in the summer of 2012, two sites were retained by the Company for the installation of towers, the first of these south of the Missisquoi River, near a private road (Site 1) and a second close to Chemin des Pruniers north-west of Dunkin. (site 2) Bell's visual simulations, shown from chemin de la Vallée Missisquoi, clearly indicate that a tower on Site 1 would be of far less visual impact than Site 2. Why was Site 1 rejected by Bell Mobility? We strongly recommend a renewed consideration of this site.

The proposed tower would be 107 meters high. The placement of the proposed tower is within the perimeter of a zone designated as « natural landscape of superior interest ». This designation is reserved for landscapes of exceptional panoramic beauty. Why does Bell Mobility insist upon visually scarring this vista?

Mansonville project, chemin White, File F1127 :

The documents in File F1127 furnished by Bell Mobility note that a 90 meter tower is proposed for this site, thus compromising the panoramic views to the west of Mansonville. An extract of the topographical map furnished by Bell Mobility, requested by the Association, indicates an extremely confined site. Are there alternatives?

Planning the construction of communication towers within available options :

Bell Mobility chose to present its projects in a piecemeal fashion as opposed to revealing the total project. They chose not to address themselves to the parties concerned, of which, the MRC de Memphrémagog, in order to plan a harmonious integration of these structures within the territory. We cite as proof, the example of a tower within the Municipality of East Bolton, at its border with Pottton. This tower is sited in close proximity to an designated ecological reserve, *La mine-aux-Pipistrelles, devoted to bats designated threatened or vulnerable*. *Did Bell Mobility obtain the permission of federal and Quebec authorities, both of which are preoccupied with the preservation of threatened species? As the mine itself is located in Pottton, was the Municipality of Pottton consulted?*

Bell Mobility should adequately inform not only the population of Pottton but also the MRC concerned about its overall planning and insertion of communication towers in the territories concerned. What are the population numbers to be served by these 27 to 35 storey communication towers? Just how many towers are necessary to serve Pottton? Was the alternative of satellite transmission investigated? Other companies offer satellite coverage. Why does Bell Mobility not make share-agreements with other carriers or use their own existing Bell satellite network?

We understand that such planning requires co-ordination between many parties, including competing wireless carriers, governmental authorities responsible for the territorial management, as well as local civic and regional

authorities implicated in the conservation of natural heritage and the health of its citizens. The guide to good practices, mentioned above, suggests « that it is much to the advantage of communities to develop plans and implementation strategies for telecommunications networks » This is a wise recommendation which Bell Mobilité should also integrate into its consultation process and apply in Potton.

Can we avoid the proliferation of these imposing structures? We submit that the network projected by Bell Mobility will impact our society and particularly our landscapes such that the insertion of a network must be made with respect to the best interest of all Pottonites and not exclusively in the interest of Bell Mobility, its clients and shareholders.

Considering what is known of the files submitted, we will advise our members and fellow citizen in Potton to oppose zoning changes desired by Bell Mobilité and to request a referendum on the question.

Respectfully submitted

Hans Walser,

Member of the Board of Directors, Potton Heritage Association and spokesperson for the Association on the subject of Telecommunication towers.

c. c. Jacques Marcoux, maire de la municipalité du Canton de Potton; Jacques Demers, préfet, MRC Memphrémagog; Industrie-Canada; Conseil d'administration de l'APP et Membres de l'APP, Conseil d'administration du Groupe bénévole municipal de Potton (GBMP).