

## Airport protesters snubbed

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MONTREAL - Carrying placards saying "stop the massacre of Lachine," a group of citizens concerned about night flights from Trudeau airport were snubbed by both federal Transport Minister Lawrence Cannon and airport CEO James Cherry Thursday night.

"They chose not to come to the meeting even though they were invited," Luc Marion, president of Citizens for Quality of Life said to boos from the crowd.

Marion's group organized the meeting because the airport authority said it plans to test a new route next month that would see planes leave Trudeau airport in Dorval and fly over the Lachine train yards then turn south toward the Mercier Bridge.

Despite the snubs from Cannon and Cherry, about 120 people attended the meeting held at Lachine's borough hall.

Those in attendance heard from Lachine city and borough councillors, as well local MP Marlene Jennings about what they were doing to stop the airport's proposed plan.

Marion said the message Cherry and Cannon sent by their absence was they don't care about citizens' complaints.

"They didn't want to respond to citizens," he said. "In a democratic society, that shouldn't be acceptable."

The group is asking that the Aéroports de Montréal, the private, non-profit corporation that manages both Montreal-area airports, to transfer all night flights back to the Mirabel airport.

They received support last night from Jennings, who told residents the government should suspend all night flights until their impact is known.

Jennings introduced a motion in the House of Commons last month to suspend flights between 11 p.m. and 7 a.m., except under extreme circumstances.

"I think the minister of transport has the duty and the authority to regulate night flights, not just here, but across Canada," said Jennings, who represents the riding of Notre Dame de Grâce-Lachine.

Marion said the airport's decision to spread out night flights has led to a huge influx of complaints.

"Saraguay, Ahuntsic and Laval were all hit in one stroke, (in 2006) when the airport introduced a new corridor, which was supposed to fly over Highway 13," Marion said. "But they're two kilometres off that path."

Jennings said the Lachine path, as well as the path added two years ago over the northern section of the island will probably be phased out because pilots seem to have trouble following the strict rules set by the airport.

"However, that only displaces the problem," Jennings said. "Those night flights will still continue, but they will continue over Dorval and Pointe Claire."

[jmagder@thegazette.canwest.com](mailto:jmagder@thegazette.canwest.com)