



# SSMU BOARD OF DIRECTORS PUBLIC MINUTES

April 1, 2021

The Board of Directors meeting of the Students' Society of McGill University (SSMU) will be held by teleconference on Thursday, April 1, 2021 at 18:00.

Present: Lauren Hill (Chair, non-voting), Jemark Earle (Officer), Gifford Marpole (Officer), Chip Smith (Legislative Councillor), Paige Collins (Legislative Councillor), Alex Karasick (Legislative Councillor), Benson Wan (Legislative Councillor), Rohan Bhutkar (Member-at-Large), Beatrice Mackie (Member-at-Large), Adin Chan (Member-at-Large), Daniel Dufour (General Manager, non-voting), Addy Parsons (International Student Representative, non-voting), Sam Haward (Recording Secretary, non-voting), Maheen Akter (Officer, arrived at 18:06)

Absent: Brooklyn Frizzle (Officer), Ayo Ogunremi (Officer, non-voting), Ana Paula Sanchez (Member-at-Large)

## 1. Call to Order: **18:03**

The Chair calls the meeting to order at 18:03.

## 2. Land Acknowledgement

*The SSMU acknowledges that McGill University is situated on the traditional and unceded territory of the Anishinaabeg and Haudenosaunee nations. The SSMU recognizes and respects these nations as the true and constant custodians of the lands and waters on which we meet today. Further, the SSMU commits to and respects the traditional laws and customs of these territories.*

## 3. Attendance

The Chair takes attendance.

Director Frizzle, Officer Ogunremi and Director Sanchez are absent.

## 4. Adoption of the Agenda — **ADOPTED UNANIMOUSLY**

The Chair recommends moving the presentation from Alexis Zhou as item 5. The presenter indicates that this is acceptable.



The Agenda is adopted unanimously.

5. Presentation from Alexis Zhou

Alexis Zhou presents to the board. Zhou is proposing a project to redesign the alleyway between McTavish Street and Peel Street. Zhou states that this issue arose from the lack of a bike lane to give access to the proposed bike facility in the basement of the SSMU building. They envision an area that is pedestrian and bike friendly.

They anticipate that this project will cost between \$500,000 and \$2 million, and would like to ask the Board to provide some funding for a feasibility study.

Question Period:

**Question:**

Director Bhutkar asks what consultation has been done with groups that can provide funding.

**Answer:**

Zhou replies that extensive consultation has already taken place, including Drivesafe, Walksafe, The Flat Bike Collective, the McGill Undergraduate Geography Society and McGill's Sustainability Projects Fund.

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**Question:**

International Student Representative Parsons asks how the \$500,000-\$2 million range was derived.

**Answer:**

Zhou responds that this figure is preliminary and that they cannot provide a set amount until a feasibility study is conducted. They state that it will only cost \$5,000 as the individuals conducting this study will be students and can be paid at 1% of the cost of a professional.

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**Question:**

International Student Representative Parsons asks how the \$5,000 figure was reached, and if the presenter can explain why this project makes it acceptable to pay students less.

**Answer:**

Zhou responds that this is to keep this project feasible and affordable. They envision hiring 5 students from the McGill Undergraduate Geography Society (MUGS) at \$1,000 per person. This will include research and conducting outreach with relevant stakeholders. They would like to provide more funding, but that it is imperative to keep the price tag as low as possible.



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**Question:**

Director Wan asks how long it would take for a feasibility study to reach completion.

**Answer:**

Alexis Zhou responds that they would like to see a study completed by the end of 2021, with the project completed by 2023.

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**Question:**

Director Smith asks if MUGS is the most appropriate body to conduct a large study. They also ask about how this space could be utilized by the SSMU.

**Answer:**

Alexis Zhou responds that the alley has no practical purpose at the moment and that it should be a boulevard with space dedicated to pedestrians, cyclists and events. They state that they would prefer for professionals to conduct this study, but do not believe that it is affordable.

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**Question:**

Director Marpole asks how students will be chosen, and what kind of information they are expected to provide in this study.

**Answer:**

Alexis Zhou responds that hiring will be conducted by MUGS. They would like to see the students survey the zoning, ownership, utilities and areas appropriate for digging in the alleyway. In addition they would like to produce options for this project. These students would also conduct outreach, and run town halls for stakeholders.

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**Question:**

Director Karasick asks if there has been any consultation done with McGill itself, and who owns this land.

**Answer:**

Alexis Zhou states that the alley could belong to the City, not SSMU or McGill. This gives the opportunity for government funding. If McGill owns any of this alley, they would need to contact the planning office at the university.

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**Question:**

International Student Representative Parsons asks if it would be possible to provide the Board with a budget for the feasibility study. In addition they ask about if use of the study is to convince the owners of the land to allow it to be used.

**Answer:**

Alexis Zhou responds in the affirmative for both questions.

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International Student Representative Parsons states that she has concerns regarding the hiring of students for this project, namely that it is unclear who their supervisors would be. In addition, they are concerned that the pay is not commensurate with the value of the work, and that it sounds as if the students are being 'paid with experience'. She continues that in her experience, she has seen this happen with students of the Faculty of Music not being paid the value of the work they are asked to take on.

Alexis Zhou states that this point is well taken. They understand that students' labour is often exploited. They state that the \$1,000 figure is comparable to the average amount paid to SSMU student employees and should be correct when adjusted for the number of hours worked. They plan to provide further information detailing this and the cost of a professional firm to conduct this study.

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**Question:**

Director Collins asks what the next steps for the Board would be were they to take on this project.

**Answer:**

Alexis Zhou states that this presentation was purely informational, and they would make a formal request for funding in the future.

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Director Bhutkar states that they would appreciate the scope of this project being more clearly defined before it is brought back to the Board of Directors.

**Question:**

Director Smith asks if it has been confirmed that this land is owned by the City of Montreal.

**Answer:**

Zhou responds that they are certain that it is, and suggests that this makes the project easier as it avoids needing to communicate with various McGill bodies.



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**Question:**

Director Wan asks if there has been any research into the attitude of the wider student body.

**Answer:**

Zhou responds that this is the reason the project is being pushed through a coalition, and evaluating the needs of students is the goal of the feasibility study.

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**Question:**

Director Wan asks if it is possible for a preliminary study into the needs of students before committing to the feasibility study regarding the project.

**Answer:**

Zhou responds that this will be presented to the Board when they formally ask for funding, providing assurance that the project is desired by students.

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**Question:**

The Chair asks about the use of the funding for the feasibility study.

**Answer:**

Zhou clarifies that this covers research into the land, as well as consultation with affected populations. They are combined so that these comments can be integrated into a final report and proposal. This is common practice in urban planning.

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**Question:**

International Student Representative Parsons asks about the structure of this organization.

**Answer:**

Zhou responds that *The McGill Urban Development District* is a coalition of student organizations at McGill. Most of its work is conducted by MUGS.

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Director Wan suggests informally polling the student body before proceeding with the feasibility study.

There is no further discussion on this item.

6. Executive Committee Report



Director Earle presents the report of the Executive Committee. There are no questions on the report.

7. Motions for Approval

- a. Motion to ratify the [Reference](#) re Applicability to the Society's Services of the 2016 Reference re Legality of the BDS Motion and Similar Motions 2021-03-08 —  
**POSTPONED UNTIL THE NEXT REGULAR MEETING**

Director Smith states that they have concerns with contradictions within this ruling, and ask other Directors if they share the same concerns. Director Earle responds in the affirmative. Director Earle notes that they are listed as the petitioner in this case, even though another SSMU Executive was responsible.

The Chief Justice Choi states that Director Earle's name is on these documents as it had been delegated to them by other Executives, and that the Judicial Board cannot hear an issue unless it is raised by the SSMU President or the Board of Directors. He continues that they would be happy to go over perceived contradictions, but the summary of the ruling is that Services can take positions as long as they are in line with the governing documents of the Society. He states that the challenge of this ruling was to create a boundary where Services can operate, and there is no regulation that affects the political mandates of Services. As such, the Judicial Board deferred to the Constitution and Policy Book of the Society.

Director Karasick states that he would be willing to note the Board as the petitioner. Director Earle states that he has no issues with their name being on the document, but would like the other Executives listed as well. Director Earle proposes striking the sentence regarding the President lobbying the McGill Board of Governors. The Chief Justice clarifies that this sentence refers to the 2016 Judicial Board ruling, not the reference.

Director Smith states that he is concerned that members of the Society may not understand this ruling. He continues that it could cause issues on campus if members do not understand the scope of the ruling. Director Karasick agrees and states that the scope of the reference is still unclear. The Chief Justice Choi states that there needs to be a bridge to members of the Society, and would be open to working on this with Directors to understand what is confusing and help explain it to members. The Chief Justice Choi clarifies that SSMU Services are bound by all SSMU governing documents and must remain within the confines of these documents.

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**Question:**

Director Smith asks how the Board could go about clarifying this ruling and removing clauses that may confuse members of the Society as a whole.

**Answer:**



The Chief Justice states that it is possible to revisit the wording, as long as it does not alter the substance of the decision.

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Director Smith notes the executive summary of the reference. They state that it seems to say that the SSMU's Services can take stances on political issues including the BDS movement, which seems to be contradictory to the rest of the reference. The Governance Manager states that this motion could be returned to the Judicial Board with an appeal, or overturned if applicable.

The Chief Justice Choi states that the executive summary is not binding, and should be read as just a summary. He continues discussing the paragraph that Director Smith mentioned, clarifying that the Judicial Board has ruled that clubs can take a political position opposing specific countries. He proposes a separate meeting with Directors and the Governance Manager to adjust any wording that is at issue. The Chief Justice Choi states that the Judicial Board cannot change its decision at this point.

Director Smith moves to postpone this item until the next meeting of the Board of Directors, pending a meeting of the Judicial Board.

The motion is approved unanimously.

8. For Discussion

There are no items for discussion.

9. Confidential Session: **19:13**

The Board enters a confidential session at 19:13.

10. Adjournment: **19:32**

The meeting is adjourned at 19:32.

*Darshan Daryanani*

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Darshan Daryanani, President