

**Toronto
Port
Authority**



**Administration
Portuaire
de Toronto**

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April 22, 2013

Councillor Glenn De Baeremaeker
City of Toronto
Toronto City Hall
100 Queen Street West, 2nd Floor
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

Dear Councillor Baeremaeker:

Re: Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport

I wanted to write to you today regarding statements that you are reported to have made to *The Toronto Sun*¹ regarding the Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport ("BBTCA").

As you know, the TPA is aware of the recent announcement made by Porter Airlines. As an independent operation, it is up to Porter to pursue its own business plan for the benefit of its customers, shareholders and employees. The TPA takes no position on Porter's business aspirations. The TPA will not consider any change of use to the airport until a determination is first made by the elected representatives on Toronto City Council regarding Porter's proposed changes to the 1983 Tripartite Agreement.

We are, however, concerned when our public officials are provided inaccurate information about the airport and its operating agency, which they in turn repeat to their constituents as fact. We know that you will want to share only correct information with the residents of Toronto, and appreciate this opportunity to bring these facts to your attention. We understand that you stated the following:

"In terms of the airport itself I think it should be ripped up and put back into parkland, it is supposed to be parkland."

"We created a temporary airport that looks like it may last forever and my response is no."

"I think (closing the airport) would be net benefit to the City of Toronto."

If I may, I'd like to take this opportunity to clear up this misinformation for you and will address each comment in order.

¹ <http://blogs.canoe.ca/goodgravy/tag/toronto-port-authority/>

“In terms of the airport itself I think it should be ripped up and put back into parkland, it is supposed to be parkland.”

The premise of your statement is not true.

As you will see from the attached photos, the area that is now the BBTCA was a combination of harbour water, sand and marsh prior to the airport's construction in the 1930s. The enclosed photos cover three periods, to give you the best possible appreciation of the history of the site:

Photo #1: January 11, 1921. View to the West of York, Maple Leaf, Spadina and Bathurst Quays being reclaimed from the water. (Photo may have been taken either by William Bishop V.C. or William Barker V.C., as the rear is stamped "Bishop-Barker Air Service".)

Photo #2: Taken circa 1935. Aerial view of the west end of Toronto Island, with the famous Hanlan's Point Stadium (where Babe Ruth hit his first professional home run) in the mid-upper left of the image.

Photo #3: Aerial photo of Airport, taken April 23, 1939.

“We created a temporary airport that looks like it may last forever and my response is no.”

Unlike the origin of income taxes perhaps, this statement isn't true.

In fact, according to the archives, Toronto City Council resolved in July 1937 that the BBTCA would be the “main” airport in Toronto while Malton (which is now Pearson International Airport) would serve as the “auxiliary” airport to be used during foul weather. According to archival records, Malton was “too far from downtown” at the time to serve as the main Toronto airport. As well, the Province of Ontario promised to construct a new road to Malton Airport once the airport was built, given the distance from Toronto (what is now Brown's Line). There was nothing “temporary” about the City Council's resolution to build what is now the BBTCA.

Following World War I, the City of Toronto and Federal Government began to receive advice from a variety of experts that would see the construction of what is now Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport. This group included none other than Victoria Cross holders Billy Bishop and Billy Barker, both of whom came to reside in Toronto following the Great War.

The TPA archives include a letter from William (Billy) George Barker, VC, dated November 1, 1919 to the then Mayor of Toronto on behalf of the Aero Club of Canada (he was President at the time) asking if he was prepared to consider establishing a municipal aerodrome in the city.

There are also several letters to and from Col. William A. (Billy) Bishop (May 20 and July 13, 1937) and Toronto Harbour Commissioners general manager E.L. Cousins concerning the airport. The latter one informs Col. Bishop that Toronto City Council adopted the report of the city's Board of Control to build two airports, with the main one in the harbour (what is now the BBTCA) and an auxiliary one out in Malton. The City requested that the Toronto Harbour Commissioners (predecessor to the TPA) build both facilities.

The THC began clearing and grading the land for development of the BBTCA in August of 1937. The THC used some 1.8 million cubic yards of landfill to create the additional land for the airport (a byproduct of that dredging was the Long Pond regatta course). The first airplane to land at Toronto Island was February 2, 1939. Interestingly, the failed 1935 airport tunnel project was initiated by the federal government as an unemployment relief effort, as a means of accessing the airport.

There are no records that suggest or imply that the BBTCA was going to be used for a “temporary” period.

“I think (closing the airport) would be net benefit to the City of Toronto.”

Despite the best attempts of Porter Airlines and Air Canada (via Sky Regional), the BBTCA is less active today than it was in 2001 or 1961, for example. I also note that the Buttonville Municipal Airport, just north-northwest of Ward 38, had 17% more aircraft movements in 2012 than the BBTCA.

That said, the BBTCA is still contributing to Toronto’s economy.

The TPA recently had the pleasure of announcing, in partnership with the Toronto Board of Trade, the release of an economic impact study for the BBTCA. The study was conducted by InterVISTAS Consulting Group, a leading management consulting company with extensive expertise in economic and transportation research. According to the study, the BBTCA is a major economic engine for the Greater Toronto Area, generating \$1.9 billion in annual economic output and 5,700 jobs, which includes 1,700 employed directly at the airport; it plays a “significant role in providing critical regional and continental transportation linkages to support and grow Toronto's economy.”

Not to mention the environmental stewardship, as the BBTCA was the first airport in Canada to be one hundred per cent powered by green electricity provided by BullFrog Power.

The BBTCA is the fastest-growing airport in Canada and has become its 9th busiest. 75% of our passengers are repeat business travellers. And 83% of Porter passengers are “very” or “extremely” satisfied, according to an Ipsos Business Travel Study. 89% of Torontonians call the BBTCA “an asset” to Toronto, according to a separate 2012 Ipsos Reid poll.

We reiterate the invitation for you to visit the airport to get a firsthand sense of the jobs that depend on the operation and the annual economic impact that flows from the airport. You might, as well, find it useful to visit the Bombardier plant in Downsview; this plant is Toronto's largest manufacturing employer. This is noteworthy as its 4,500 CAW jobs were maintained during the recent global financial recession due to the popularity of the BBTCA with airline passengers and the Q400s that were ordered during that period to support the airport's growth.

We hope to receive you soon, and to address any other questions or concerns that you may have. In the interim, we trust you will have found this information helpful.

Respectfully,



Mark McQueen
Chairman

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