

March 11, 2006

Mrs. Margareth and Leo Mol  
Winnipeg, Manitoba

Dear Margareth and Leo,

I am writing first of all to thank you very kindly for supporting our initiative to establish a Taras Shevchenko Monument in Ottawa and for providing us with a model of the proposed statue. I would also like to give you a status report on this project, since it is now reaching a very positive outcome.

As you know, we have spent more than a year examining the various sites around the city, and have now finally determined that the best location for the statue is next to the St. John the Baptist Ukrainian Catholic Shrine in Ottawa. The site has excellent visibility from a major roadway (Baseline Road), sits next to a major park (Vincent Massey Park) and overlooks the beautiful Rideau Canal in the distance. This last view in particular is one that will symbolically remind everyone visiting the site, of Taras Shevchenko's national memorial on the Dnipro River in Kaniv, Ukraine.

At a recent meeting finally announcing this exciting project to the Ukrainian Community in Ottawa on March 5, 2006, a broad-based formal Organizing Committee was created, with representation from key organizations and both Ukrainian religious communities (Catholic and Orthodox). The meeting approved membership to this Committee for our founding team, which has been working closely together on this project, and named me as its Chair.

The Organizing Committee includes Mykhaylo Tytarenko, who came to Ottawa to participate at this meeting, and was named as your representative and our sole direct contact with you. I would like you to know that Mr. Tytarenko clearly explained your vision and requirements for establishing this monument in Ottawa.

The meeting also discussed and approved the Ukrainian Catholic Shrine site as the best and only option available.

We have now had a number of meetings with Reverend Father Cyril Mykytiuk, Pastor of the Ukrainian Catholic Shrine, and have just received a positive response to our proposal. At our request, Father Mykytiuk obtained legal advice from the Basilian Fathers Corporation, in whose name the church land is registered. Their legal proposal is for the parish to acquire the ownership of the statue (in view of the fact that it is located on parish property), and to sign a tri-partite Memorandum of Understanding with you and our Organizing Committee (or with the non-profit Ukrainian Canadian Shevchenko Foundation, based in Winnipeg, if we so designate) stipulating that the statue shall not be removed, moved or altered without our expressed permission.

Father Mykytiuk will now seek approval from the Parish Council and then prepare an official letter to us, proposing the legal framework, including terms of ownership and ongoing maintenance and insurance requirements. We will review all of these with you to ensure they meet your approval.

Note that the process for approving and erecting the monument is now moving swiftly to its conclusion. We will begin to use the full resources and support of the Ukrainian Community in Ottawa and promote it nationally and internationally through the Ukrainian Canadian Congress and the Shevchenko Foundation.

What is essential to us to proceed at this time is to receive formal written authorization from you, communicated through Mykhaylo Tytarenko, regarding your requirements, terms of sale ownership and transfer of this statue. Upon receipt of this authorization -- given that this statue is currently in Germany -- we will work with you to make all the necessary arrangements to have the statue crated and shipped to Ottawa. We can get a secure location for temporary storage while the design is being finalized and site landscaped.

Let me end my letter by emphasizing to you that this initiative to establish a monument for Taras Shevchenko in Ottawa is one that will make all Canadians proud of our multicultural heritage. It comes at a time when we are celebrating the centennial of settlement of Ukrainian Canadians in Ottawa and in the euphoria of the new democratic Orange Revolution in Ukraine. The statue itself will be set in a beautiful location, slightly elevated, with a proper pedestal and bas-relief plaques, and professional landscaping. There is room to handle a large assembly of people for ceremonies, and adequate parking for the public and tour buses for visitors. Indeed, we can anticipate many senior political leaders and dignitaries from Canada, Ukraine and guests from around the world coming for the unveiling ceremony and various official visits!

On a personal note, both of us will be proud to have a second statue by our pre-eminent Order of Canada sculptor Leo Mol in Ottawa, complementing the statue of Prime Minister John Diefenbaker. Indeed another special honour.

Thank you once again for your confidence in us and for working with us to make this vision a reality.

Yours sincerely,

Orest Dubas, Chair  
Organizing Committee for the Taras Shevchenko Monument in Ottawa

