



MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR – FEBRUARY 2006

It is great to be back in Baie d'Urfé despite the chaos of the agglomeration! The agglomeration structure is turning out to be as difficult and one-sided as we had feared. One thing the last few months has highlighted is how lucky we are in Baie d'Urfé to be a Town again! We have control over our territory and zoning by-laws, we have 24 people dedicated to listen to us and deal with our specific needs, and we, as a community, can decide what services we need and want to pay for!

December 2005 and January 2006 were quite eventful ... lots of changes and activity – a lot of it having to do with agglomeration issues.

The release of the agglomeration budget on December 8, 2005, which was then revoked four days later by Mr. Tremblay, because of the criticism he received for breaking his election promise to the citizens of Montreal for no tax increases in 2006, put all the demerging cities in a quandary. Should we adopt our budgets in December as we had been working for a few months to do or should we wait for the agglomeration budget to finalize our budgets?

Once it was apparent that the agglomeration budget would only come down sometime in January and not knowing when it would be adopted, we decided to adopt our local budget on December 21 making some fundamental assumptions on what we could expect a revised agglomeration budget would look like. We took into account the extra costs that were downloaded to the demerging cities as per the Quebec government decree that was issued on December 9th and also included all additional expense and revenue data that became known after the first agglomeration budget was tabled. Changing data was coming in daily, up to December 20, which made it quite the exercise to produce a final local budget for Baie d'Urfé. The administration, particularly our Treasurer Ghislaine Turcot, and Councillor Janet Ryan have to be commended for their tremendous effort during a very stressful time period.

Ghislaine and Janet were called upon to work overtime once more when the revised agglomeration budget was tabled on January 20th.

Version 2 was significantly different both in philosophy and in the bottom line impact to our citizens, both residential and corporate and we had barely a few days to react to ensure that the tax burden on all our sectors was fair and reasonable.

You will be pleased to read Councillor Ryan's report. The end result from this mammoth exercise is that both the residential and non-residential sectors will see an average increase of 4.35% over 2005. This increase includes the 8.48% and the 3.77% property evaluation increase for the residential and non-residential sectors respectively.

4.35% for the residential sector ... not 14.8% as predicted by the Quebec Government - sponsored Secor group ... not 10.9% as predicted by the Transition Committee ... not even the 5.5 % had we stayed merged ... 4.35% is the final number!

You will find more Town news in the following pages. Please note the change in Town Hall hours and council meeting dates.

It is great to be back home! I hope you can say the same each and every day from now on!

Maria Tutino, Mayor