



MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR – DECEMBER 2006

We are less than one month away from the first anniversary of the reconstituted Baie d'Urfe. Mark January 1st 2007 on your calendars and join members of your Council and staff at our New Year's Levee at the Fritz Farm to celebrate our first year anniversary as Baie d'Urfe again. The celebration will begin at about 2pm and continue until about 4pm.

As we approach our first year's anniversary, we are heartened by all the great things that have been accomplished this first year of demerger and by all the wonderful comments received by you, our citizens, on how pleased you are to have Baie d'Urfe back.

The comments we hear most often are how wonderful it is to get personal service and how appreciative you have been to see your Council and Administration working diligently to make sure Baie d'Urfe citizens' interests are served at all levels.

The one thorn in the flesh this year has been dealing with the agglomeration and dealing with a provincial government that has shown neither desire nor political courage to address the problems that all the demerged cities, whether they be in the Montreal area, Longueuil or Quebec City, have had to live with.

After almost one full year of living within this undemocratic, autocratic, unjust and unworkable structure which was imposed upon us by the provincial government, it is very clear that things must change, and the sooner, the better.

A couple of mayors, including myself, have already started boycotting the agglomeration council and numerous appeals have been sent by all the demerged cities to the Minister of Municipal Affairs (MAMR) over expenses that we feel have been unjustly charged to the agglomeration. All but one appeal still remain to be addressed by the Minister. That one showed that the demerged cities were correct in claiming that a significant amount of local Montreal expenses was unjustly allocated to the agglomeration body. While we had claimed that that amount was about \$105 million, the MAMR's arbitrator put the number at \$41.3 million. That means that the citizens of Baie d'Urfe were overtaxed last year by the agglomeration by an amount approximating \$230,000 (more than 7 years worth of your combined Council's salaries). Our success in this matter will translate in tax credits for the citizens of demerged cities in the 2007 agglomeration tax bill.

The current structure puts the City of Montreal in a conflict of interest situation in that it is responsible both for its local budget and the agglomeration budget. Given their absolute power on the agglomeration that allows Montreal carte blanche to create the agglomeration budget without either consultation or approval by the demerged municipalities, Montreal can continue to manipulate both budgets to transfer some of their local tax load onto the agglomeration ... this is taxation without representation for the citizens of the demerged cities and allows Montreal politicians to appease and please their electorate on the backs of the citizens of 15 other municipalities as there are no political consequences for them.



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This situation is intolerable and unacceptable. The provincial government has been made aware of the problems with the agglomeration structure many times. And while everyone agrees that it is not working and needs to be fixed, they have been slow to take action.

As we approach the year-end, we are actively looking for solutions to the problem. We have advised the Quebec Liberals that we are looking at all our options to force changes to this situation.

The options could be in the form of legal or political action or both. The ball is in their court.

We have a small window to effect change (the upcoming provincial election) and would appreciate your views on this matter. Please send them to mtutino@baie-durfe.qc.ca or call me at 514-457-6291.

Wishing you all a festive, healthy, happy holiday season with your families and loved ones and don't forget to come to the Fritz on January 1st to celebrate with us the first anniversary of the rebirth of our precious Town!

Maria Tutino