

MAYOR'S MESSAGE – APRIL 2006

What a mess of things the Quebec Liberal Party has made. It will not come as a surprise to those of you who have been following the news stories on the agglomeration to learn that the agglomeration structures and processes put in place by the Quebec Liberal Party are just not working. I say structures because the 3 largest megacities (Longueuil, Montreal and Quebec City) that were affected by the merger/demerger exercise had differing demerger buyouts and therefore were given differing agglomeration solutions. Given that the solutions were neither well-thought out, nor well-defined and that their delivery were delayed until the very final days of 2005, it took less than four months into the new year to realize that all three agglomerations were in a complete state of paralysis.

Nothing is working at the agglomeration level. Even the Liberals have begun to acknowledge that new solutions may be necessary. After the 15 municipalities on the island of Montreal contested the agglomeration budget with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs on February 20th, the government appointed an intermediary to investigate our objections. Appointee Roger Noël met with all the demerging municipalities and the City of Montreal and was to report his recommendations to the ministry by April 30.

This deadline has now been postponed as the Minister recognized that the problem is bigger than just the agglomeration budget and that she will be continuously bombarded by appeals after every agglomeration meeting. The Minister has yet to respond to any of the appeals.

Mr. Noel has now been mandated to meet with the demerging cities and Montreal to arrive at a solution that could be acceptable to both the City of Montreal and the demerging cities. Meetings have been scheduled for May. Let's hope that common sense and democratic principles will prevail and that the solution will be a democratic structure that is fair, equitable and just for all the citizens on the island of Montreal, a structure that would allow for real dialogue and decision-making, a structure that would allow all 16 cities to work in harmony.

The Liberals will get another crack at a solution. They need to listen to both sides and not deliberately ignore the demerging cities' concerns and needs as they did last time. The suburban mayors have made it very clear that we will not tolerate any further discrimination and abuse of our citizens and that we will consider every option to ensure that our citizens are fairly treated and not taken advantage of nor disenfranchised.

On the local front, I would like to announce that Councilor Janet Ryan, currently responsible for the Finance Portfolio, will as of April 24 add the Environment to her portfolio. I am confident that she will handle her new responsibility in the same efficient and competent manner that she brought to the Finance area.

Also, please read Councilor Kim Watson Millette's article this month for news on our summer youth program. Councilor Millette has worked very hard to produce this exciting, new program which I'm sure will be much enjoyed by our children aged 6 to 12.

Keep in touch with Town affairs ... join us at our regular Council meetings. The next one is May 30th.M

Maria Tutino

Mayor