



The citizen's summit – June, 1st and 2 – City of Deux-Montagnes

Library, Arts and Culture

For many, arts and culture are the primary ingredients which define a good quality of life and the backbone of the city. This is one of the reasons why our City has invested a lot of energy and resources to see them flourish.

However, the costs incurred to maintain cultural infrastructures (library, Petite École Jaune Art Centre, Legion building), and recurring activities, (shows at the Olympia, the Painting Symposium, Canada Day celebrations, the Fête de la Saint-Jean, etc.) keep going up and are passed on through municipal taxes while citizens keep wondering why their municipal tax bill is increasing.

Presently, the arts and culture budget for the City amounts to \$599,200 and encompasses one-third of the payroll for recreation and community services as well as the cost of operating the library and the buildings which house cultural activities.

1- Library

In 1978, the City took control of the library which had, until then, been under the responsibility of not-for-profit organizations. The City then invested financial, material and human resources in the library in order to afford citizens access to this infrastructure which is the pride of Deux-Montagnes for showcasing culture.

Should the city continue to be involved in the library?

Reduce opening hours?

Charge a service fee?

Do away with some services?

In your opinion, what direction should the library take in the coming years?



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2- La Petite école jaune Art Centre

The City acquired the Petite école jaune in 1985. More than 5,000 people visit the centre every year. The City's financial responsibility is limited to building maintenance and the heating expenses connected with the building (\$6,800 / per year) and a contribution (\$10,000 / year) for the association in charge of managing the premises. However, preserving this building will require substantial work amounting to approximately \$200,000.

Should the City continue to be involved?

Would it be better to sell the building to a private enterprise or to the Association culturelle of Deux-Montagnes?

- What would the consequences be of such a gesture?

3- Legion

The City purchased the Legion in 2003. In 2007, \$200,000 were invested to renovate the building. Operation and maintenance programs cost the citizens approximately \$33,800 per year.

As well as being available for our legion members, the building is used as a reception center for various recreational, community, social and cultural activities. It is used 200 days a year. Special rates are set for private use of the building and bring in some \$7,500 to the City.

What should we do?

- Increase rental fees?
- Aim for profitability?
- Privatize the building?
- Continue to favour our local organizations?



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4- Subsidized activities

Here is a list of arts and culture activities which are subsidized in part or in whole by the City:

The Nuit de la peinture (Painting night)

The Jeudi show

The Symposium de la peinture (Painting symposium)

The Route des artistes (Artists' open houses)

The Deux-Montagnes Lions Club Winter Carnival

Fête de la Saint-Jean-Baptiste (June 24th) (Saint-Jean-Baptiste Day celebrations)

Canada Day celebrations (July 1st)

The Santa Claus parade

Family Day

Etc.

These activities cost the city approximately \$80,250.

Should we decrease our contributions? Should we increase our contributions?

5- Arts and culture, an economic stimulus

For many municipalities, arts and culture is an economic stimulus which provides tourist and recreational attractions and brings in income for restaurants and other business while providing more tax revenues for the City.

In Deux-Montagnes, we have the Olympia which is only used six (6) to eight (8) weeks of the year as a theatre. Because of its size (1,400 seats), the City has to spend large sums of money for the Olympia's operation (ground level stands, curtains, chairs, stage, rental of lighting, etc.). These expenditures amount to approximately \$5,500 per show.

There are not many artists who can draw more than 1,000 spectators, the number required to generate enough revenue for making this venue a profitable one. Approximately four shows per year reach this threshold, therefore creating



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continuous losses for the city. A more stringent management of the site since 2005 has reduced the yearly deficit from \$80,000 to \$30,000 today.

What should we do?

Should self-financing be a requisite for continuing our involvement in these presentations?

Should we invest in this niche to help create more wealth for our City?

Should net revenues be dedicated to arts and culture needs or to the City's general funds?

What are the benefits of such infrastructures in Deux-Montagnes?

What are the drawbacks of such infrastructures in Deux-Montagnes?

Lastly:

Should we reduce the arts and culture budget?

Should we reduce personnel?

Should we sell some of the buildings?

Should we do more to use this niche to create more wealth for the City and its citizens?

Other comments and suggestions.