

# CITIZEN'S SUMMIT



## Presentation of the Final Report

The Citizens' Summit of Deux Montagnes

June 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2010



***Julie Boivin, M. Sc.***

***Geographer***

## Table of Contents

Table of Contents .....	p. II
Table of Figures .....	p.III
Foreword .....	p. IV
Introduction .....	p.1
Section 1: Organization of the Citizens' Summit .....	p.3
- Methodology .....	p.4
Section 2: Yesterday's Choices, Today's Reality .....	p.8
Section 3: Report of the Citizens' Summit in Deux-Montagnes .....	p.16
- <b>1st General Objective:</b> Prioritize Investments with Respect to the City of Deux-	
Montagnes Infrastructures and Facilities .....	p.18
- <b>2nd General Objective:</b> Optimize the City of Deux-Montagnes' Revenues and	
Revision of Management Methods.....	p.24
- <b>3rd General Objective:</b> Create New Wealth in Deux-Montagnes by Optimizing its	
Economic Development .....	p.30
- <b>4th General Objective:</b> Ensure the Continuity of Deux-Montagnes' Quality of Life .....	p.35
Conclusion .....	p.42
Annexes	
- Annex 1: Workshop coordinators .....	p.45
- Annex 2: Secretaries' notes, June 1 meeting (French) .....	p.48
- Annex 3: Secretaries' notes, June 2 meeting (English) .....	p.69

## List of Figures/Tables

Figure 1: Deux-Montagnes Population Increase between 1980 and 2010.....	p.10
Table 1: Income Distribution According to the Tax Rate, 2009 .....	p.10
Figure 2: Total Investable Assets.....	p.11
Figure 3: % Increase in Payments and Tax Revenues in the Past 10 Years.....	p.12

## Foreword

Report to

*Mr. Marc Lauzon, Mayor of Deux-Montagnes*

Distinguished town council members

*Mr. Nicolas Bouchard, General Manager of the City of Deux-Montagnes*

In February 2010, Mr. Marc Lauzon, Mayor of the City of Deux-Montagnes, asked me to help organize the town's Citizens' Summit. Elected officials, aware of the city's difficult financial situation, wanted to meet with residents. The event had two objectives. On one hand, elected officials wanted to give people a status update. On the other hand, they wanted citizens to take part in the decision-making process so that the results would reflect their needs and expectations.

As a result of the extensive teamwork with elected officials, managers, employees and professionals of the City of Deux-Montagnes, citizens and numerous volunteers achieved highly satisfactory results last June 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>, turning out in large numbers at the Deux-Montagnes Citizens' Summit.

All of this now leads me to present the final report of the event, consisting of a qualitative analysis that summarizes the highlights of the event and the conclusions that emerged from the various workshops.

The fruit of a community's labour is matched only by the will to follow through.

Julie Boivin, M. Sc.

Geographer

## Introduction

The city of Deux-Montagnes, with a population of 17,703<sup>1</sup> people is located on Montreal's North Shore. With an area of more than 5.82 square kilometres,<sup>2</sup> the municipality belongs to the administrative division of the Laurentians and is part of the Regional County Municipality (MRC) of Deux-Montagnes. The municipality is surrounded, among other things, by the Lac des Deux-Montagnes and the Mille-Îles River, Autoroute 640 and by the cities of Saint-Eustache and Sainte-Marthe-sur-le-Lac.

At the outset of 2010, the municipality of Deux-Montagnes was at a cross road and major decisions were necessary. It was imperative for our elected officials not only to inform the population about the situation but as well, to involve the population in the about-turn the city was to undertake.

The Citizens' Summit initiative was developed and proved to be an efficient way of bringing citizens together to present to them an overview of the situation, based on the past three decades and then to sit down with the citizens and examine the various themes connected to the present problem issues facing the city in order for the population to find solutions to the city's present woes.

Two days were set aside for the citizens of Deux-Montagnes, June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2010 for a French session and June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2010 for one in English. The event was held at the Olympia, located at 611, 20<sup>th</sup> Avenue in Deux-Montagnes. A historical meeting took place between our elected officials and citizens where, together, they put shoulders to the wheel and elected to move forward towards a promising future.

<sup>1</sup> Municipalities' directory, *Municipal Affairs, Régions et Occupation du territoire du Québec* (MAMROT). mamrot.gouv.qc.ca (page consulted on June 18, 2010)

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*

The following report introduces the organization of the Citizens' Summit including the methodology, the municipality's present condition<sup>3</sup> where yesterday's choices control today's reality, the analysis of data collected during the two evenings dedicated to the Citizens' Summit as well as all written comments from the citizens, before and after the event, as well as a conclusion to the report. Furthermore, an annex recaps the list of moderators in charge of the workshops and notes taken by the workshop secretaries at both sessions.

<sup>3</sup>Based on the Citizens' Summit speech by Mr. Nicolas Bouchard, executive director for the municipality of Deux-Montagnes

# **Section 1: Organization of the Citizens' Summit**

## **Introduction of the Citizens' Summit:**

The Citizens' Summit is defined as a democratic exercise which implies a meeting between the population and its elected officials. Elected officials or designated officials, depending on the case, call the population to the Citizens' Summit when problem occur, more specifically, with respect to finances.

## **History**

In France, in the Middle-Ages, it was customary for the king to invite his representatives, the clergy and the population to meet within the confines of one room for the purpose of discussing the kingdom's financial difficulties. Between 1302 and 1789, when the last Citizen's Summits (known locally as "États généraux") were held in France, the king convened the population 16 times. Moreover, the convening of the last Citizen's Summits coincided with the onset of the French revolution, proof positive that when the population takes part in governmental affairs, events of great magnitude can occur.

## **Objective:**

The objective of holding a Citizens' Summit is to make the citizens aware of their responsibilities with respect to the management of their municipality. The lack of interest for political and administrative issues is a social phenomenon which has been manifesting itself throughout the entire country, especially over the last twenty years. It is essential for citizens to take part in the decision-making process simply because every action undertaken by the city is made possible through taxes paid by those citizens. It is, therefore, their right but also their duty to take their place in the decision making process. At the end of the day, it is the citizens quality of life which will be enhanced because of their input into what they wanted to see happen.

## **Methodology**

Preparing the Citizens' Summit was a long-term project. Every possible participant had to be involved and met with.

The first meeting took place in the city of Deux-Montagnes on February 8, 2010 with Mr. Marc Lauzon, the mayor of Deux-Montagnes. Pursuant to this meeting, a planning schedule was set forth.

## **Contributors**

We worked in close collaboration with elected officials, general management, the office of the mayor and the communications department. As well, various meetings took place with the managers of the city's various services including a few individual meetings. Two strategic planning meetings were also held on Friday, March 19 and on Monday, April 26. These provided an in-depth view and analysis of the city of Deux-Montagnes' present situation.

## **Pre-Citizens' Summit Meetings**

In order to prepare the population of Deux-Montagnes for the Citizen's Summit, two informative evenings were held, the first on May 19 and another on May 20, 2010. During these evenings, the city's executive director, Mr. Nicolas Bouchard and all service directors, each introduced their respective service mandates to the population. People could then get a more complete picture of the service mandate details budgeted for 2010, ask the directors any relevant questions and better understand the overall financial situation of the city.

## **Moderators**

The city of Deux-Montagnes Citizens' Summit was held in focus group format. Organizers offered this form of workshops to make discussions easier between citizens and field officials. To manage this, each focus group or workshop was

hosted by one or two moderators who were carefully selected according to their personal and professional skills. These moderators first received general training on May 11, 2010 and then, each one was met individually by the officer in charge, Ms. Julie Boivin, in order to personalize their workshop and ensure that their role as an event host was well understood.

### **Secretaries**

Not only were there moderators, each workshop required one or two secretaries in order to take down the minutes of everything that was being said during the citizens' meetings. The officer in charge selected and assigned secretaries who took down the information pertaining to each item under discussion during the workshop meetings. The present report is based on these notes. Pursuant to the two Citizen's Summit evenings, the secretaries had a week and more to complete their notes and submit them.

### **Sequence of Events**

The sequence of events for the two nights dedicated to the Citizens' Summit was as followed: words of welcome from Marc Lauzon, mayor of Deux-Montagnes, followed by an introduction to the municipality's situation by the director, Mr. Bouchard. Then, workshop formats were introduced by the officer in charge of the Citizen's Summit, Ms. Boivin, after which the citizens were invited to select a workshop among the eight offered, according to their personal and/or professional interest. Workshops lasted a little over an hour. The citizens were then asked to return to the hall for a plenary session. During this session, the moderator of each group was invited to outline a summary of the discussions, the priorities and findings, etc. which emerged, during discussions within their own group. In closing, Mr. Lauzon spoke briefly.

## **Comments**

As well, various means were provided to citizens so they could submit their comments about the city of Deux-Montagnes' situation. A few weeks before the Citizens' Summit, a form had been set up on the city's Internet site and copies of the form were also available in various municipal establishments including City Hall and the library. Citizens could also send comments through an E-mail to the mayor's office or to the city of Deux-Montagnes' communications department.

At the time of the summit, a second form was also available for participants. First, on the front of the form, citizens on hand could complete a personal and professional section which was later used to initiate a data bank. This data bank will be an asset for elected officials who might want to meet again with the participants of a specific committee to review certain elements which had been decided upon during the summit evenings or to develop an action plan, submit new ideas or ask for citizens' opinions. Then, on the back of the form, three questions were asked of the participants, namely what two items they would like to change in Deux-Montagnes, the one item they would like to maintain in Deux-Montagnes and finally, their comments about the evening or about their city's present situation.

## **Workshops**

Workshops were divided among eight themes. These themes represented all the challenges and issues which were at stake in the municipality. Each workshop was attended by approximately 40 to 50 participants during the French evening and by approximately 25 to 30 participants during the English evening. Those eight themes are specified hereafter:

## Themes

1. Community programs
2. Oka road, commercial, residential and industrial development as well as renovation
3. Library, arts and cultural activities
4. Police, firefighting services and traffic management
5. Sports and recreation activities
6. Snow removal, garbage collection and major infrastructure projects
7. Environment, sanitation and services to citizens and governance
8. Finances: revenues, expenses and debt.

## Sampling

Numerous citizens answered the mayor's call and took part in the Citizens' Summit trying to help shape the city's future. We could, therefore, call this participation a non-random sampling which was chiefly made up of voluntary participants. These citizens accepted the challenge and took part in the summit because of their personal beliefs and for the good of the community.

The size of the sample is estimated at 600 participants,<sup>4</sup> and allows us a 5% margin of error<sup>5</sup> with respect to the various findings drawn from the qualitative research carried out through the Citizens' Summit as well as a confidence level<sup>6</sup> of 95%, again according to the data drawn from these same conclusions. The fact that the sample is representative of the population enables us to apply these findings to citizens as a whole.

<sup>4</sup> Participants were estimated at 400 for the French evening (June 1) and 200 for the English evening (June 2).

<sup>5</sup> The margin of error represents the difference between the real value computed for a characteristic within a population and the difference estimated through the sample.

<sup>6</sup> The confidence level is the probability that the real value of the population is found within the sample under study.

## **Section 2: Yesterday's Choices, Today's Reality**<sup>7</sup>

The city of Deux-Montagnes was born at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. In 1921, it was known as St-Eustache-sur-le-Lac. At that time, the city was characterized mainly by its tourists who formed a summer holiday population. For example, in 1931, the city had only 215 permanent residents and almost 2,000 summer residents.<sup>8</sup>

It wasn't until the 1960's that large infrastructure work took place as in many cities in Quebec. At that time, the drinking water treatment plant was built as well as the sewer system, aqueduct system and the outdoor swimming pool.<sup>9</sup>

Then, in 1963, the city changed its name and became the city of Deux-Montagnes, the same name as the lake which runs alongside a major section of the municipality.<sup>10</sup>

From the 70's on, residential development steadily increased. However, the recession of the early 1980's brought about major repercussions for the municipality. Among other things, the municipality was taken up with new streets developed in the Coteau sector, behind Deux-Montagnes secondary school, including all required infrastructures but without any homes being built. This situation lasted for many years.<sup>11</sup>

In the 1990's, in an effort to boost residential development, the municipality undertook to build mostly first-buyer homes, smaller and less expensive.

<sup>7</sup> This section of the report is based on the speech of Mr. Nicolas Bouchard, the city's executive director, which was introduced to citizens during the two Citizens' Summit evenings.

<sup>8</sup> PLANTE Stéphane, *Ville de Deux-Montagnes 1804-1994*, City of Deux-Montagnes, Helvetica computer publishing, 1993, page 53

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, pages 80-81

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, page 17

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, page 111

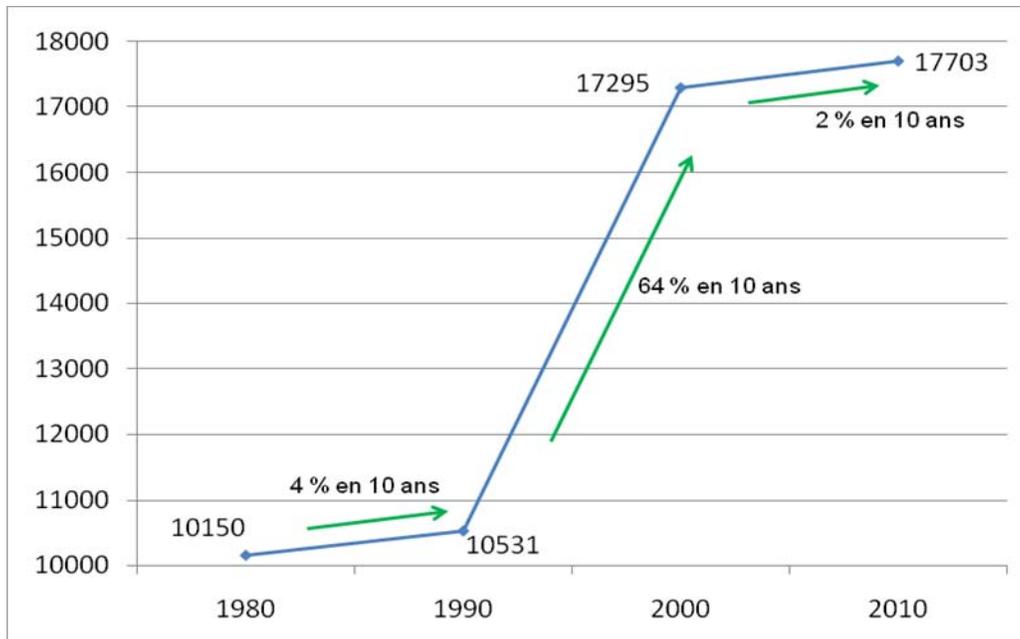
Then, on to the year 2000, when the residential territory of Deux-Montagnes became saturated. The population realized that the housing sector had come to full expression. The size of the population could no longer increase in any significant manner.

The increase of various costs, the application of new governmental reforms and the age of the city's infrastructures all contributed to the situation which the residents of Deux-Montagnes now face and which brings us to the major choices existing in 2010.

### **Increase of the Population**

Among decisions which were made in the past, some have contributed greatly to the increase in the city of Deux-Montagnes' population. Among other things, in 1987, the construction of an industrial park in the Coteau sector was contemplated, but, in 1990, a residential zoning was preferred to that of an industrial zoning. These various choices brought about a major increase of the population between the years 1990 and 2000, that is, a 64% increase as is depicted in Figure 1.

*Figure 1: Increase of Deux-Montagnes' Population between 1980 and 2010*



Source: Official Gazette

Author: Julie Boivin

The result of this major population increase was to see the city develop into a bedroom suburb where residential zoning was given priority over commercial and/or industrial zoning. As it stands, the residential zoning of the city of Deux-Montagnes represents 90% of the tax base, as specified in Table 1.

Table 1: Allocation of Revenues According to the 2009 Tax Rate.

Source of revenues from property taxes		2009 Tax rate	% of revenues generated
<b>Residential</b>	95.31 %	\$0.94/\$100	90 % of the bill
<b>Commercial</b>	3.93%	\$2.40/\$100	10% of the bill
<b>Industrial</b>	0%	\$0	

Source: Profil financier 2009 from MAMROT

Author: Julie Boivin

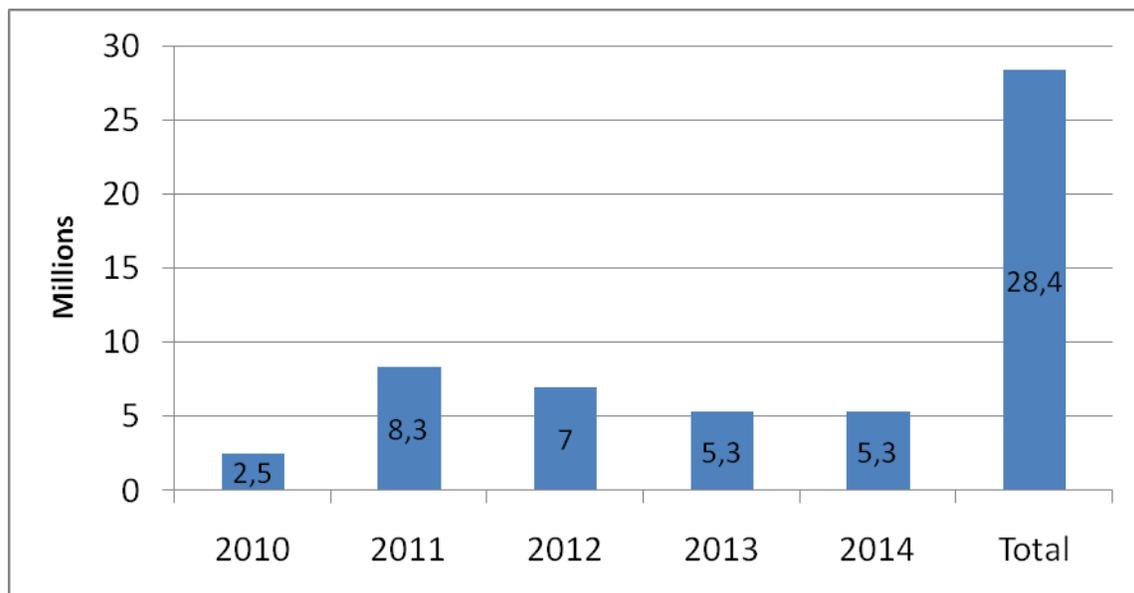
As well, it is important to point out that, looking at Table 1, the very few businesses established in Deux-Montagnes pay 10% of any bill which has to be assumed by the city, because the business tax rate is higher than the residential

rate. Another finding is that the average value of houses in the city of Deux-Montagnes is \$184,344, as a result of having favoured first-buyer homes which again puts a cap on the municipalities' revenues.

### Investments

The condition of Deux-Montagnes' infrastructures is critical and various investments must be undertaken in the years to come. We are looking at buildings and infrastructures, as well as roadways and city vehicles and equipment. In all, a total investment of more than 28 million dollars must be anticipated by the year 2014 as illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Total to be Invested in Long-Term Assets (in Million \$)



Source: City of Deux-Montagnes

Author: Julie Boivin

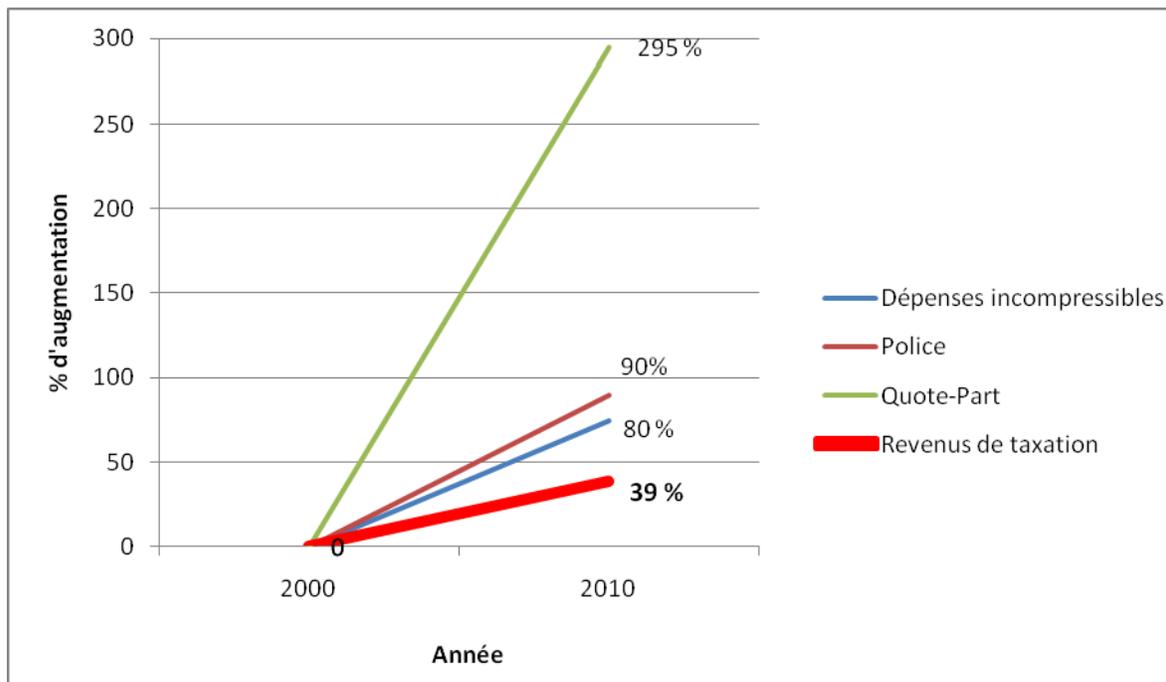
There are some subsidies which are available to the city for some of the work and the municipality will do everything in its power to secure these subsidies thereby helping reduce the costs associated with the various works and

consequently reduce the financial burden which has to be assumed by the citizens.

### Increase of Expenditures

In order to explain the present financial situation, we must understand that as well as experiencing only a very low population growth (therefore, no new revenue sources), a major increase of expenditures has occurred over the last 10 years, as is illustrated in Figure 3:

Figure 3: Increase in % of Expenditures and Tax Revenues over the Last 10 Years



Source: City of Deux-Montagnes

Author: Julie Boivin

Upon looking at the details, we find that expenses which cannot be reduced are in fact costs which have to be assumed by the municipality, such as electricity, insurance, gasoline, salaries, etc. For example, electricity costs went from

\$285,000 in 2000 to \$668,000 in 2010, and insurance costs went from \$86,072 in 2000 to \$219,000 in 2010.

As for police services, they have also increased dramatically since 2000. Note that in 2002, the department of public safety made it mandatory for the various CMM cities (Communauté métropolitaine de Montréal) to have a level II police service available, which greatly contributed to the increase in the cost of these services. In fact, police services cost \$3,298,654 in 2000 while they now cost \$6,280,200.

Co-payments which have to be assumed by the municipality have also greatly increased over the last decade. For example, while the CMM did not exist in 2000, its cost to the municipality today is \$223,000 per year, or again, the share assumed by the city of Deux-Montagnes for the CITL (Conseil intermunicipal de transport Laurentides) which cost \$83,000 in 2000, has now risen to at least \$728,000.

Finally, and still referring to Figure 3, one must notice the considerable increase of expenditures over the last 10 years while the increase of tax revenues certainly has not followed the same path, remaining at 39%.

### **Decisions Made over the Last Five Years**

How did the city proceed in order to pay the bills while trying to maintain taxes levels for its citizens? The municipality has made various decisions over the last five years.

Among those decisions, the city decided to sell some land, reappropriate the municipal pound, purchase 1502 Oka road (the old Caisse Populaire Desjardins), sell the Jean-Guy Bergeron building, restructure various municipal services (e.g. 5 full time positions were eliminated and various cuts were performed throughout various services) and the city introduced the user-pay principle which has

generated increased revenues of \$800,000 annually. In addition, maintenance and asset expenditures were carried forward, helping protect citizens against an increase of their tax bill.

These measures, however, served only to postpone the real impacts to our bedroom suburb. We must now face this reality and determine which choices have to be made.

### **The Strengths of Deux-Montagnes**

The city must now face this situation but, in so doing, the city has major strengths which are representative of its environment.

One of the major assets is the city's geographical location, only a few kilometres away from the Greater Montreal area where one finds a population of over 2 million people. As well, the proximity of autoroutes 640, 13 and 15 and two major railway stations offer first-rate transportation possibilities.

17,000 consumers in Deux-Montagnes and almost 3,200 daily train commuters and 1,500 vehicles which are present at peak times on Oka Road are an indisputable economic strength.

Nor should one forget the proximity of the Lac des Deux-Montagnes and the Mille-Îles River and the well-entrenched green areas, which lend charm and a quiet calm to the city.

The biggest asset for the city, however, is undisputedly its population. The strength of the population, its involvement within the community, the presence of various social, community, sports and other organizations clearly demonstrate that the city of Deux-Montagnes is ready to face its future. Furthermore should be noted the specific linguistic characteristic of Deux-Montagnes which sees

English- and French-speaking citizens working side by side on an everyday basis along with the presence of various religious communities on the territory.

Deux-Montagnes' population is proud, enriched by its history and ready to put shoulders to the wheel in order to protect its accomplishments and move forward towards a new future, one more representative of its needs, its expectations, one where the quality of life will be advantageous for all.

## **Section 3: Report of the Citizens' Summit in Deux-Montagnes**

### **Data collection**

Data collected for this report stemmed mostly from information gathered during the two evenings dedicated to the Citizens' Summit. The secretaries for the eight French workshops and eight English workshops took note of everything which was discussed at the time.

As well, approximately sixty people were present when the fact sheet was being completed which enabled the collection of additional comments and viewpoints from participants.

Approximately thirty citizens took the time to fill the Website form and those available in the various municipal buildings in order to submit their comments, opinions and requirements.

Finally, nearly a dozen citizens sent open letters, briefs, analysis and comments via E-mail to our communications department, to their councillor or directly to the mayor's office.

### **Analysis**

Within the framework of the Citizen's Summit, a qualitative analysis of the data collected was performed. After perusing and studying all documents received, we were able to break down the major directions to be taken and thereby summarize the population's requirements and expectations. Because of the representative sampling achieved from the documents as mentioned earlier in this presentation, we are now able to apply the results to the population as a whole.

First, let's recap the eight themes which were broached during the two evenings of the Deux-Montagnes Citizen's Summit:

1. Community programs
2. Oka road, commercial, residential and industrial development as well as renovation
3. Library, arts and cultural activities
4. Police, firefighting services and traffic management
5. Sports and recreation activities
6. Snow removal, garbage collection and major infrastructure projects
7. Environment, sanitation and services to citizens and governance
8. Finances: revenues, expenses and debt.

Four major objectives emerged from the reflexions stemming from the discussions around these eight themes:

1. Prioritize investments with respect to the city of Deux-Montagnes' infrastructures and facilities
2. Optimize the city of Deux-Montagnes' revenues and revision of management methods
3. Create new wealth in Deux-Montagnes by optimizing its economic development
4. Ensure the continuity of Deux-Montagnes' quality of life.

In the next section, we will identify various opinions expressed by the citizens of Deux-Montagnes in order to try and meet the aforementioned objectives.

## **Prioritize Investments with Respect to the City of Deux-Montagnes' Infrastructures and Facilities**

### **1<sup>st</sup> Specific Objective: Invest in Deux-Montagnes Infrastructures**

#### **Infrastructures**

- This was a unanimous opinion from all participants: this should be the first priority for administrative personnel and elected officials.
- As soon as possible, the city must address repair or replacement issues pertaining to the pumping station and underground infrastructures.
- Participants would like to see immediate action taken and would like to see the city catch up with the delays accumulated over the last few years.
- The city should strive to avail itself of all subsidies available in order to reduce the financial burden which has to be shouldered by citizens. It was also mentioned that the city should wait for these subsidies before the work begins, with the exception of emergency cases.
- The work should be staggered over a few years and envision a suitable time schedule while prioritizing actions so that all work would be completed within a reasonable time taking into consideration citizens' ability to pay.

#### **Sound barrier**

- Participants unanimously decided to reject the sound barrier project. This is not a priority but rather a luxury the municipality can ill afford under the present circumstances.
- It was suggested that this project should be revisited when the city's financial situation is in better condition and should not move ahead, in any case, before the population has been consulted.

- One of our citizens proposed the erection of a natural sound barrier by planting trees (willows, among others).

## **2<sup>nd</sup> Specific Objective: Evaluate the Municipality's Facilities in Order to Prioritize the Required Investments.**

### **The Olympia**

- A very strong majority would like to see the municipality hold on to the Olympia. However, eliminating the deficit is a priority.
- Oncoming repair work of the Olympia was supported by the population which would like to see their arena in better condition. Many citizens questioned the fact that the Olympia is in such a state of disrepair after such a short time in use and wondered if maybe there was room for taking action against the builders. As well, seeking available grants should be looked into in order to reduce the financial burden to citizens.
- Considering the freon ban is also a priority at the time the work will be performed, so as to avoid re-doing the work. Citizens also wondered if government grants would be available to municipalities to help them abide by this new law.
- Various suggestions were put forward by citizens for optimizing the performance of the Olympia:
  - A large majority suggested that if shows are not commercially feasible then, the city should stop offering them or simply invite those artists who will fill the Olympia to capacity and who would, therefore, generate a profit (artists who would be welcomed by the French population as well as the English population).
  - It was also suggested to have paid parking in effect on those nights.

- A large majority of citizens suggested leaving the ice all year long. This could be promoted within as well as outside the city and user fees could be charged accordingly.
- It was, therefore, suggested that ice be made available throughout the entire year for the following purposes:
  - For double-letter and triple-letter leagues who have games and practices much later in the season
  - For ice sports camps which take place in the spring and summer seasons
  - For men's hockey leagues
  - And to offer sports day camps over the summer.
- It was also suggested to offer other events:
  - Rollerblading in the summer
  - For example, trade shows, circuses, boxing matches, dog shows, exhibitions (sports vehicles, boat shows, etc.) as well as dinner theatre events, etc.
  - Use the location for holding day camps offered by the city.
- The city should not hesitate to charge full price to other municipalities and private businesses who would like to rent the premises.
- Offer a franchise instead of a canteen which would bring in additional rent to the Olympia and help increase revenues.

### **Outdoor swimming pool**

- The vast majority of citizens are against investing in a new outdoor swimming pool in Deux-Montagnes. According to these citizens, investing in a new facility which would only be used two months of the year is not a priority in the city's present situation.
- However, the population is concerned about the users of the service, more specifically with respect to children.

- Some citizens recommended the construction of a water park instead of the present pool which would give children access to water games during the hot summer months but would cost far less than a new pool.
- Other citizens recommended that, eventually, an indoor swimming pool should be built, which could be used all year long and would be a better investment for the city of Deux-Montagnes. As well, a partnership with another city or with the school board could be looked into.
- The majority of citizens are against the installation of a dome over the present pool to make it available all year round.
- And finally, there is no consensus between participants to implement a user-pay principle for the pool. While some citizens think this would be a suitable way of keeping the swimming pool open, others think that less fortunate citizens would find it difficult to pay for using the municipal pool and that the service should be free.

## **Library**

- Participants unanimously agreed that the library should not be closed. It represents the heart and soul of the municipality and citizens want to continue to be involved in it.
- Applying an access cost was also rejected. Based on various studies, patronage often decreases when access fees are involved.
- It was suggested that the number of activities taking place at the library be increased and new ways of increasing revenues be sought (sales, renting rooms to organizations, book signing sessions (French and English authors), etc.). As well, promoting services offered would be an asset for the municipality.
- It was also suggested to lengthen the opening hours, some mornings for the benefit of schools and on weekends in the summer.
- Several citizens would like to see the standardization of fines for late returns, where everyone would be subject to the same penalties.

## **Petite école jaune**

- The vast majority of the population would like to keep the petite école jaune which is a legacy for the community. As well, this centre promotes culture and there are very few of these in Deux-Montagnes.
- On the other hand, citizens do not want to invest in the work required to maintain the establishment. So, because they would like to maintain the petite école jaune, various methods of making the school profitable (and paying for the renovations) should be investigated, as well as the various subsidy outlets available from the government which could help with the renovation work.
- The following possible solutions were also put forward:
  - The majority of citizens would like to see the school sold to the cultural association of Deux-Montagnes and if need be, a clause should be inserted in the sales contract with respect to keeping intact the heritage character of the petite école jaune.
  - Other citizens suggested the implementation of a private-public partnership (PPP) with a promoter or to sell the building to a private investor, but always keeping in mind the heritage and community character of the premises.
  - Optimize the use of the petite école jaune by using it as a small theatre.

## **Legion**

- The vast majority of citizens would like to keep the Legion but consider it essential to optimize its profitability. Furthermore, it was noted that an increase of leasing fees would be possible as they are presently quite low (more specifically for functions stemming from outside the city).
- It was also suggested that the rooms could be rented all year long, during the day as well as at night time for weddings, parties, community dinners, special events, etc.

- As well, there might be subsidies available from different government levels (mostly from the federal government) because the building was built for war veterans.

### **Manoir Grand Moulin, phase 1**

- The vast majority of citizens would like to keep Manoir Grand Moulin, (phase 1). However, it should be made profitable.
- Among other things, it was strongly suggested by the population to try and find financing sources from various government levels as was done for Manoir Grand Moulin, (phase 2).
- Another suggestion put forward in order to try and reduce the Manoir deficit was to encourage a private-public partnership, for example by selling the establishment's name rights.
- Increasing rents was not an option
- It appears that part of the deficit stems from the cafeteria. It was suggested that this service be reviewed so it would be managed differently, (at a lower cost, without changing the quality of the food) and by inviting residents of Manoir Grand Moulin (phase 2) and those of the Cascades building to come and eat at the Manoir Grand Moulin (phase 1) cafeteria.

### **Central Park Building:**

- Even though the building is not a priority among citizens, the building itself has some value because it houses the Maison des Jeunes. It was thus suggested that the building be kept while investing in it should be kept to a minimum. Young people who use the building should be in charge of performing the work required, finding subsidies or carrying out fundraising events.
- It was also suggested by a few citizens to relocate the Maison des Jeunes and to donate the building to the Soccer Club to be used for their tournament.

# **Optimize the City of Deux-Montagnes' Revenues and Revision of Management Methods**

## **1<sup>st</sup> Specific Objective: Increase the City's Revenues**

### **Taxes:**

- The population realizes that, because of the major infrastructure investments required, a tax increase is necessary and imminent in order to maintain the city's level of operation as well as the quality of life citizens are accustomed to.
- It is requested, on the other hand, that the city establish a plan over a few years in an effort to catch up on its financial situation in order to regain a suitable financial flexibility and be able to pay for the oncoming expenditures.
- Based on this plan, citizens have asked that the tax increase be in line with their ability to pay.
- For that matter, some citizens have asked to never allow a tax freeze over such a long period again, as we can see the results of such an action today.
- Some citizens suggested that retail businesses operating from a residence be the subject of a special tax to make things more equitable.
- Finally, citizens would like to see tax notices as detailed as feasible so they can better understand where the money is spent and how the municipal structure operates.

### **Debt:**

- The majority of citizens would like to see the long-term debt repaid. Regardless of the fact that repayment of the debt is a major aspect, it is not a short-term priority. It is more advisable to invest in infrastructures while implementing a long-term plan for repaying the city's debt.

## **Partnerships**

- The majority of citizens mentioned their interest in public-private partnerships (PPP). These partnerships would allow the municipality to take part in private investment and thereby reduce the city's expenditures.
- Whenever possible, many citizens would favour partnerships with neighbouring municipalities in order to reduce the city's expenditures (sports organizations, municipal services, etc.).
- A good many citizens would like to continue partnerships with the school board.

## **Applying the User-Pay Principle**

- The majority of citizens agree with the user-pay principle, with the exception of community programs, because people using these services are those who do not have the financial means to pay for those services which provide help to them, and also library services, as mentioned earlier in this report.
- Using the user-pay principle for all other municipal services is highly favoured (recreation department, environmental services, etc.).
- As well, numerous citizens recommended that the user-pay principle be applied with moderation. If citizens have to pay an admission fee for all the services at the same time, many of them will see their quality of life greatly disrupted because they will no longer be able to afford those services.

## **2<sup>nd</sup> Specific Objective: Future for the Municipality**

### **Fusion**

- This is a last resort, because the population would like to be in a position to review the present situation and restore their municipality. However, most of the population is open to a merger with another municipality, provided that no other solution were conceivable.
- In the event of a fusion, the municipality of Saint-Eustache is the one widely preferred by citizens.

## **3<sup>rd</sup> Specific Objective: Review of Modes of Governance**

### **Regular Municipal Council Meetings**

- Very few citizens attend the monthly municipal council sessions. Many would like to see these sessions more accessible to citizens, in terms of terminology and understanding of the various resolution processes which are difficult.
- The overwhelming majority of citizens would like to be made aware ahead of time of the agenda and items to be discussed, so they could be better prepared and their attendance would, therefore, be more productive.
- The idea of Webcasting the sessions is not a bad one, but is not a priority and did not meet great enthusiasm on the part of participants.

### **Review the Citizen's Role within Municipal Affairs**

- It was also suggested that citizens have a greater say in municipal affairs. Meetings, such as the Citizens' Summit, where citizens occupy a prominent place, should be repeated.
- Citizens would like to be better informed about municipal affairs or special projects. They feel more involved when all relevant information is available to them. It becomes much easier to make an informed decision.

- Some citizens would like to see an Open House Day in the municipality so they could become better acquainted with municipal affairs and politics.
- Using the Internet site to communicate with the population is a useful tool but let's not forget that numerous residences still do not have access to the Internet.

#### **4<sup>th</sup> Specific Objective: Reorganization of Municipal Services**

##### **Police Services**

- The population understands that the city is obliged to provide the population with a level II police service and that the costs have greatly increased because of this situation. However, many citizens question the fact that the provincial government makes this service compulsory (along with associated costs) without offering any financial help to municipalities to help absorb additional costs. Some citizens even requested that an official complaint be lodged against the provincial government by the citizens of Deux-Montagnes, formally denouncing this situation.
- While striving to reduce costs associated with police services, various citizens suggested that the regional police services of Deux-Montagnes be merged with that of Saint-Eustache or still, that the financial contribution of other cities be increased.
- Citizens have requested that the number of police on duty in Deux-Montagnes on weekends, be increased, particularly on Saturday nights.
- Many citizens also requested that specific attention be paid to speed on Deux-Montagnes territory.

##### **Firefighting Services**

- Citizens want to feel safe. Therefore, any investments to be made in firefighting services are essential and desirable.

- Investment for the renovation/expansion of the present fire hall or for a new hall is approved of by citizens. However, they ask that, if a new fire hall is to be built, it should be located in the best possible location on the territory.
- Various citizens discussed false alarm fines. It is widely proposed that they should be increased or that the user-pay principle be applied in those instances.

### **911 Services**

- The great majority of citizens feel they are not able to make an informed decision on the subject at this time. First, they would like to peruse the findings of the 911 study which was performed recently and also suggest that the study be made accessible to the public.
- In addition, most citizens would like to be consulted before any decision is made on the subject by municipal officials.

### **Snow Removal**

- It was strongly suggested that snow removal services be reviewed. Citizens are not happy with the snow removal company which was hired for the 2009-2010 season.
- Numerous citizens would like the municipality to be in charge of snow removal over the entire territory.
- It was suggested that businesses and citizens who push the snow onto the street, be fined.

### **Garbage and Recycling Collection**

- The majority of citizens suggested that garbage should be collected every two weeks during cooler months, that is to say, from November to April.
- In general, citizens would prefer municipal employees to be in charge of garbage collection.

- It was also suggested that each household have only one garbage bin. This would reduce collection times and foster recycling.
- As well, promoting the various household waste collection services would make citizens aware of the inherent costs.
- Priority should be given to home composting.

## **Create New Wealth in Deux-Montagnes by Optimizing its Economic Development**

### **1<sup>st</sup> Specific Objective: Review of Retail Proposal**

#### **A Harmonized Development Plan**

- Citizens overwhelmingly want to see a strong retail offering in Deux-Montagnes. However, the development of this plan should be performed in an intelligent and structured manner. Citizens would like to see a comprehensive plan put into place which would include a forecast for the future.
- As well, it is essential that this development plan be structured in a way as to have a central core so retail businesses can interact with one another. Citizens in general think it would be better to opt for a theme and to maximize this theme, rather than have businesses spread out in various economic fields trying to compete with big-box stores.
- In an effort to encourage businesses into setting up shop in Deux-Montagnes, property taxes could be reduced (for the first few years, for example) and renovation subsidies could be extended to new potential store owners, etc.
- Marketing techniques with respect to new retail business should be increased to highlight those businesses already in place and in order to promote new ones. It was also suggested that the municipality should acquire a signature and logo which would foster more comprehensive communications and boost commercial marketing efforts.
- Special attention should be paid to parking problems around commercial areas. Extra parking spaces should be included in the city's commercial development plan.

- The municipality should not ignore the presence of outside support which could assist with the development of this retail offering (Chamber of Commerce, local development center, RMC, etc.). Furthermore, some citizens suggested that the municipality should seek specialized economic development expertise or professional expertise to manage this project thereby increasing the chances of success.
- It was also suggested that some franchises or brand names be sought out to set up shop in Deux-Montagnes. Among other names, a majority would like to see a Tim Horton's in Deux-Montagnes.
- Workshop participants also voted strongly in favour of including such areas as the train station and other active areas of the city, in the development plan.

### **Oka Road**

- The great majority of citizens would like to see Oka Road developed into a major commercial route in Deux-Montagnes. This crossroad is the city's main lifeline because of its geographical position and history.
- Citizens see the potential and the atmosphere that could be created.

### **Promenades Deux-Montagnes**

- According to the vast majority of citizens, retail offering at Promenades Deux-Montagnes should be reviewed.
- Moreover, some participants highlighted the fact that the building is in need of major repairs to make it more attractive for possible retailers.

## **2<sup>nd</sup> Specific Objective: Developing Tourism in Deux-Montagnes**

### **Promote Lac des Deux-Montagnes' Shores**

- The shores of Lac des Deux-Montagnes are an incredible asset for the city and represent a major economic potential.
- It was suggested to set up on the banks:
  - parks
  - picnic areas
  - retail stores
  - beaches
  - a marina
  - extend the bicycle path so it reaches the shores
  - venues for festivals, parties, events, meetings, etc.
- It was further suggested to use the water for the following purposes:
  - developing a water corridor between Deux-Montagnes and Laval for canoeing, kayaking, swimming, etc.
  - boat racing and regattas on the lake
  - promoting ice fishing in winter would also be interesting.

### **Promotion of Activities**

- The various festivals, already in existence on the territory, should be further promoted to attract people to Deux-Montagnes.
- Citizens would like to see activities promoted such as the Santa Claus Parade, the Jeudi Show, the painting symposium, etc.
- It was also suggested that Deux-Montagnes should find a niche which could be developed into a business hub in the area.
- The idea of a cultural event on the shores of Lac-des-Deux-Montagnes was suggested and could meet several objectives at one and the same time.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Specific Objective: Review Construction Standards as well as Renovation Regulations**

#### **Densification**

- Once again and unanimously, citizens would like to see an urban program implemented over the entire territory.
- Developing more building areas is desirable providing it is not damaging and is integrated into a plan.
- There is no unanimous consensus with respect to the height allowed or number of stories for new buildings, but in a general manner, citizens think about five stories should be permissible.
- It is strongly suggested that the areas surrounding the two train stations, be developed, while allowing retail business on the bottom floors and, in residential dwellings, on upper floors.

#### **Renovation**

- The majority of citizens favour the obligation for owners to renovate neglected or abandoned houses.
- Furthermore, it was suggested that the municipality should intervene in this regard because several homes are in such a state of neglect that citizens question the safety of these buildings. The problem of these buildings' attracting vermin was also broached. It was suggested that there should be a greater number of inspectors and that suitable fines be handed out, if necessary.
- Opinions about expropriation are divided but the majority of citizens favour the public interest.
- It was suggested, once again, that a specified plan be implemented, which would establish benchmarks to be adhered to by all citizens. Within the framework of this plan, it was suggested that a specific clause be inserted pertaining to the obligation of renovating when a neglected residence is

sold. New owners would then be obligated to renovate the dwelling in accordance with established municipal standards.

- As well, it was suggested that a value-added tax credit plan be implemented when properties are renovated.
- The one problem with all these actions is the fact that some houses are neglected because owners cannot afford the required repair work. This should be taken into consideration, unless the dwellings have become dangerous for residents.

# **Ensure the Continuity of Deux-Montagnes' Quality of Life**

## **1<sup>st</sup> Specific Objective: Continue Supporting Community Life**

### **Maintain Subsidies for Community Organizations**

- The majority of citizens do not want to see subsidies to community organizations end because they help the community, especially when children, mothers and elders are concerned. However, these organizations should be looking into finding self-financing methods.
- The majority of citizens ask that the method of allotting subsidies be reviewed. As well, it is essential to evaluate the list of organizations on an annual basis and review their activities for the purpose of establishing the merit of these subsidies. The popularity of these organizations should also be looked into and subsidies awarded accordingly.
- It was suggested to put a cap on subsidies (an annual maximum per organization).
- Finally, some of the community organizations in attendance mentioned the lack of public housing in Deux-Montagnes.

### **User-Pay Principle**

- Asking citizens who benefit from community assistance to pay for services is counterproductive. Citizens are worried that the municipality would apply the user-pay principle to community assistance programs.

### **Promote Community Assistance**

- It was suggested and deemed necessary to hold consultations with community organizations in Deux-Montagnes for the purpose of making the population aware of the community assistance programs, in order to avoid duplication and allow networking among these organizations in order to optimize services.
- It was suggested that the municipality should promote these organizations through the various communication media available.

## **2<sup>nd</sup> Specific Objective: Continue Support for the Various Sports Activities in Deux-Montagnes**

### **Support for the Various Sports Activities in Deux-Montagnes**

- Participants would like the municipality to continue its support of the various sports associations in Deux-Montagnes, especially when children are involved, as sports keep children active, helps them develop team spirit qualities and thereby makes them less inclined to take part in any mischief.
- As for the User-Pay Principle, citizens would prefer it be applied to adults and not children.

### **Investment in Sports Infrastructures**

- The importance of sports in Deux-Montagnes is widely accepted as a priority. Because of the municipality's present financial situation, citizens agree that investments in sport infrastructures should be done progressively and should begin with those which are most urgent. As well, these investments should ensure that the various facilities are made compliant in order to attract more visiting teams who presently refuse to come to Deux-Montagnes because of the poor condition of Deux-Montagnes' facilities. This would also generate additional revenues for the municipality which could then host various sports competitions.

- Deux-Montagnes could become a hub for sports activities in the area.
- Some citizens suggested that subsidies awarded by the city to sports associations be representative of the popularity of the sport concerned.
- Moreover, for each sport practised in Deux-Montagnes, it was suggested that, whenever possible, the city should establish partnerships with adjoining cities in order to reduce the costs incurred by citizens as well as by the city.
- **Soccer:**
  - Citizens would like to have their own soccer club as well as their soccer premises in Deux-Montagnes.
  - Artificial turf was a large expense for what little time it is presently in use (5 months of the year).
  - It was also suggested that the number of fields be reduced and those remaining be better maintained.
- **Softball:**
  - Softball fields are not in good condition either and need to be renovated. The surfaces are too hard and could cause injuries, there are various holes in the grass, fields are not levelled, etc.
  - As it was suggested for soccer, the number of softball fields should be reduced and those remaining should be better maintained.
  - Various citizens suggested that a canteen, or franchise should be set up in the softball clubhouse, much like the one at the Olympia.
- **Basketball:**
  - Citizens unanimously suggested that maintenance and repair costs of basketball fields and baskets should be shared with the school board as it also uses these facilities.

- **Outdoor Rinks:**

- Annual maintenance fees surprised the population as a whole, who found them very high. As well, the majority of citizens admitted they were not happy with the present rink maintenance situation.
- It was suggested to have fewer rinks (keep the ones which are busier) and better maintain those remaining.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Specific Objective: Promotion of Arts and Culture**

- Art and culture brings the population together and lets them express themselves. The vast majority of citizens would like to preserve the art and culture component in Deux-Montagnes. This could also be a venue for forming partnerships with other municipalities while developing art and culture programs.
- Many of the citizens would like to increase the promotion of arts and culture in order for the city of Deux-Montagnes to be recognized as a city which highly prizes arts and culture. This aspect could also become a new financial opportunity to be taken advantage of.
- It was suggested to form an art and culture committee which would oversee the implementation of an action plan for years to come. This committee could also serve for consultation among the various arts and culture organizations.
- It is thought that a communication/marketing plan is essential for promoting arts and culture in Deux-Montagnes in order to increase the impact on the city's population.
- The user-pay principle was not much discussed within the arts and culture arena, but various opinions were put forward which favoured the application of the principle, albeit, with moderation.

#### 4<sup>th</sup> Specific Objective: Review of Special Event Support

- Within the city's present financial framework, the majority of citizens think the municipality's support for special events should be reviewed.
- As well, citizens would like to see the following events reassessed:
  - **Family Day:** this celebration is not popular enough among citizens and citizens in general would like to see the event cancelled or completely reassessed.
  - **Saint-Jean-Baptiste:** citizens would like to see this event cancelled as they prefer the Saint-Eustache celebration: Art en fête.
  - **Canada Day:** opinions are divided on this subject. However, those who would like to see the celebrations remain, think it should become a major event which would attract tourists to Deux-Montagnes.
  - **Santa Claus Parade:** citizens think this event should be preserved and better publicized so it becomes more popular.
  - **Jeudi Show:** this event should be preserved as it helps the population through the Agapé fund-raising campaign. It was suggested to hold the event during a weekend to attract more people.
  - **Painting symposium and painting night:** to be preserved and further promoted.
- Most of the citizens think it important to preserve some of the events which bring people together but to choose the ones which have an impact on a greater number of our citizens. It is also essential to publicize these events so as to reach as many potential participants as possible and consequently make those events more profitable.

## 5<sup>th</sup> Specific Objective: Preserve the City's Green Image

### A Green City

- The vast majority of citizens would like to preserve the ecological character established by the city over the last few years.
- Trees: it is also thought that the city should plant more trees. As well, many citizens would like the city to clarify the public/private situation with respect to cutting trees as some institutions (such as the school board) have cut numerous trees on their land.
- It would appear to be a general consensus that the city should plant more trees and flowers in the various parks, including Moir Park.
- It is also suggested that a polluter-pays principle be implemented to fine those who do not adhere to the city's ecological vision.
- The implementation of an ecocenter was also suggested but the investment from the municipality should be kept to a minimum. Self-financing or the user-pay principle should rather be the preferred method of implementation.
- Communications within the city should also take on a more ecological approach. There is still a lot a paper floating around and it should be reduced.
  - The city's news bulletin and calendar could be printed on recycled paper, in black and white, while removing all marketing ads, etc. Or still, they could be available on the Internet and only a few printed copies could be made available in public buildings.
- The city should intensify the fight against vehicle idling and increase the number of infractions issued.
- Citizens wondered about the program against biting insects. Because many people noticed a difference, they would like to see the program continue but only if the program is harmless to ecosystems and if costs incurred are relatively low.
- Awareness programs should be endorsed by the municipality.

## **Access to Nature**

- The vast majority of citizens would like to keep the wooded areas.
- As well, and as mentioned previously, access to Deux-Montagnes' shores is of major importance and could be developed into a great asset for the city.

## **Cleanliness**

- It was mentioned that the wooded areas around the Grand-Moulin station are littered with cigarette butts and that the upkeep is inadequate.
- Graffiti is also problematic.
  - It would be important to continue making young people aware of the impact of their actions (campaigns in schools and at the Maison des Jeunes, etc.).
  - Oka Road and Grand-Moulin dam should be a priority.
  - Some citizens asked about the efficiency of surveillance cameras as it seems to many to be an exercise in futility as far as Grand Moulin dam is concerned.
  - Some concerned citizens asked that police increase their vigilance with respect to graffiti.
  - Cleaning costs should be 100% assumed by perpetrators (polluter-pays principle)
  - It was also suggested to provide one wall to young people for them to express their artistic talents.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, we would like to emphasize the success of the event which took place in Deux-Montagnes on June 1<sup>st</sup>, and 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2010. The atmosphere of calm and trust which reigned during these exchanges was very special. As well, another distinctive characteristic of this event was the fact that all age groups were represented, coming together to share their ideas and build solid bases for their municipality in order to ensure a bright future for generations to come.

Amid the various discussions which took place during the Citizen's summit, some priorities emerged with greater conviction:

- ✓ It is urgent to proceed with the repair of underground infrastructures. This is the first and foremost investment which should be undertaken by the city.
- ✓ It is important to maximize the use of all public buildings (Olympia, library, the Legion, the Petite école jaune, etc.). There is a vast economic potential which could be tapped into via these various facilities.
- ✓ The population would like to see the city implement a plan for the future, a global plan which would include economic, residential and commercial aspects of the city's development. Citizens would like to have a glimpse at what their city will be like in five, ten and fifteen years.
- ✓ Citizens would like to get more involved in the city's decision making process with respect to municipal affairs. Comments pertaining to the Citizens' Summit are widely positive. The population appreciated being consulted, being able to understand what is at stake and taking part in various decisions. Citizens would like to maintain this position and continue to be kept informed and consulted.
- ✓ Citizens have come to understand that because Deux-Montagnes has become a bedroom suburb, they must assume the cost associated with

the quality of life in Deux-Montagnes. They are conscious of the fact they must face a tax increase but would like this increase to be fashioned according to their ability to pay.

- ✓ Lastly, citizens have come to understand that because Deux-Montagnes has become a bedroom suburb, they must assume the cost associated with the quality of life in Deux-Montagnes. They are conscious of the fact they must face a tax increase but would like this increase to be fashioned according to their ability to pay. In view of the great challenges, the exercise has raised the necessity of developing new and innovative avenues for the short-, medium- and long-term development and betterment of the city.

One last word: we would like to thank all the citizens of Deux-Montagnes who took the time to take part in the Citizens' Summit and thereby helped fashion the future of their city. Special thanks are extended to all moderators and secretaries who put time and energy into this process.

A special thank you to Mr. Marc Lauzon, mayor of Deux-Montagnes and the councillors who put together this event and had the conviction that the population should be at the forefront of the decision making process. We also would like to take this opportunity to thank Nicolas Bouchard, General Manager, for his time and dedication to the city of Deux-Montagnes, as well as all service directors and municipal employees, including Anne Gauthier and Fabienne Côté, who brought forth a better understanding of today's reality in Deux-Montagnes.

In the coming weeks, municipal council will put together a development plan based on the population's requirements, expectations, wishes and aspirations. Hope is alive and well in Deux-Montagnes.

# **Notes:**

# **Annex 1:**

## **Leaders and Secretaries**

For the evening of June 1st, namely the Citizens' Summit session in French, the leaders and secretaries for each of the workshops were:

**Community Programs**

Leaders: André Ouellet and Wesley Peach  
Secretary: Jocelyne Rochette

**Oka Road, commercial, residential, industrial development and renovation**

Leader: Louis Cyr  
Secretary: Fabienne Côté

**Library, arts and culture**

Leader: Martin Lavigne et Perry Mandanici  
Secretary: Nathalie Morin

**Public Safety: police and firefighters**

Leader: Ron Kessler  
Secretary: Line Dubé

**Sports and Recreation**

Leader: Guy Labelle  
Secretary: Michel Cadieux

**Major Infrastructure Projects, snow removal and garbage collection**

Leader: Martin Angers  
Secretary: Vincent Pintal

**Environment, sanitation, citizen services and governance**

Leader: Julie Lachapelle  
Secretary: Jacqueline Catudal

**Finance: revenues, expenses and debts**

Leader: Nicolas Bouchard  
Secretary: Lise Vézina

For the evening of June 2nd, namely the Citizens' Summit session in English, the leaders and secretaries for each of the workshops were:

**Community programs**

Leaders: Dave Byers and Martin Hensen  
Secretary: Heather Brown

**Oka Road, commercial, residential, industrial development and renovation**

Leaders: Jim Colmer and Paul Goyetche  
Secretary: Fabienne Côté

**Library, arts and culture**

Leaders: Valerie Glover-Drolet and Darlene Gargul  
Secretary: Jacqueline Power

**Public Safety: police and firefighters**

Leader: Ron Kessler  
Secretary: Mélanie Hutchison

**Sports and Recreation**

Leaders: Troy Ewenson and Bob Fordham  
Secretary: Barbara Baur

**Major Infrastructure Projects, snow removal and garbage collection**

Leader: Myrna Goyetche  
Secretary: Andrew Green

**Environment, sanitation, citizen services and governance**

Leader: Catherine Doe  
Secretary: Évangeline Frigault

**Finance: revenues, expenses and debts**

Leader: Nicolas Bouchard  
Secretary: Sylvia Schatrowski

**Annex 2:**  
**Secretary Notes**  
**June 1st session (French)**

## **Workshop: Community Programs**

### **Le Manoir Grand-Moulin**

- Suggestion of selling the building, not upheld by the group
- Converting it into housing units for very low-income families, not upheld by the group
- Maximizing returns by encouraging Phase 2 and Cascades to use the cafeteria, strongly upheld by the group
- Expanding phase 1 to obtain a certain number of housing units in order to maximize returns

### **Subsidies:**

- All are worried about the “user-pays” concept, so the city must maintain its involvement in terms of organizations
- Those who can’t afford it and/or it isn’t the role of some and/or each organization should shoulder the costs. We suggest that there be an organization that could be in charge of evaluating the pertinence of “user-pays” applications. Obviously, that organization will have to have the necessary funds.
- The city will be able to allow for a place or wall where young teenagers could demonstrate their artistic abilities instead of incurring costs for graffiti. A project or activity to be developed with the Youth Centre.
- Discussion regarding a round table where community programs would be defined and the % that the city should attribute to them.

### **Conclusion**

- That the city starts a process leading to obtaining low-cost housing for families
- The round table (defining community programs and the % of the city’s budget to be attributed to them.)

## Workshop: Oka Road, commercial, residential, industrial development, renovation

**Commerce:** Do you believe it's important to provide Deux-Montagnes with a strong commercial proposal?

- We aren't the first city to face such a situation, library research to see which solutions have been introduced elsewhere to revitalize
- Example of Ste-Thérèse which started to build vertically, increase the height of buildings to increase density; if nothing is done, the tax account will double, see annexation to St-Eustache
- Two railroad stations in our city, put businesses around stations, focus on stations for commercial development, lack of parking space for stations, put + stores around
- Dormitory town = results real estate development promoter, urbanization plan needed for sensible balance, wish for commercial development, impose an urbanization plan on developers
- Wish for strong commercial offer, make Deux-Montagnes Promenades attractive, there's no offer, lack of megastores, make space profitable, what would we like, Oka Road + cultural, limited potential because of the situation of the shopping mall split between 2 cities
- Multi-level shopping mall
- DM strengths: families (have them come and spend at DM), create recreational tourist attractions, develop waterside (3 parks), shores not accessible and nothing to purchase.
- Like water sports; DM doesn't take care of it, expropriate land to create beaches; DM's strength is the lake, use frontage land
- Make current commercial offer known, city should set up "operation charm"/marketing operation, go seek professional services offer, involvement of the city to make it known
- Bring (new) buildings closer to sidewalk and create parking behind to enhance, redesign for new buildings
- The city doesn't help much in making businesses known, it's the city's job to call upon businesses, canvassing to call upon businesses
- Oka Road, great potential, create synergy, lasting environment to be created, development 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue/Oka Road = important intervention for surroundings, selling the city to businesses, take advantage of waterside, organize parking, motivate people of DM to shop on Oka Road
- Businesses confronted with heavy trends (ex. Rosemère Place = millions \$ invested, affluent environment); competition of major forces (megastores) vs. these businesses, it would take a specialized offer, Ex. Niagara, Tremblant ... strength in DM = inhabitants, annexation to St-Eustache = would become a bigger and more important city; for DM = access to development, financial stability.
- Resident for 63 years, DM has grown but businesses have decreased, says no to St-Eustache, let's rebuild our businesses, lower the commercial taxation rate, end of 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue = land for sale; make a centre of attraction for young people, boats

- Oka Road, careful not to fight against things that are too big; synergy of businesses ex. SAQ beside IGA, harmonize business permits; municipal activities = have exterior assets intervene (ex. chamber of commerce)
- We can't force businesses to come; socio-demographic study to evaluate markets and needs

What motivates a merchant to get established in a city?

- Tax relief, subsidies, business promotion organization
- Opinion of a DM merchant: megastores are killing small businesses, important to promote our local businesses

Why don't our citizens go shopping in Deux-Montagnes?

- The offer isn't concentrated enough
- Group businesses, parking and walking, have people of DM shop in DM, improve the water sector, recreate stimulation for businesses, create businesses around the Grand Moulin station, lack of atmosphere, parking, quality of businesses, reorganization of traffic lanes to facilitate access to Oka Road
- Have municipal regulations (ex. for parking, seeking consultant service to correct, not to act under panic, involves a cost, reflection but will pay off)
- Oka Road = soul of DM, restaurant businesses, using commercial development to give a soul to DM
- Recondition Oka Road: no tax abatement, rather make Oka Road more beautiful, reflection = proceed by expropriation of businesses that are going to waste.

### **Densification**

- Mainly in agreement with the densification principle, but it is important to have an urbanization plan. Densification can be dangerous, thus the importance of having a global development plan.
- Allow leasing within single-family residential sector; allow professional services in residential zones
- Densify especially the sectors of the two stations which are our assets; having high buildings (no cars, etc.)
- The city has been improving for 8 years, densification near the stations, including commercial on the ground floor; capitalize on "success stories," ex. Café Lola, Jun'eau, Constantin, focus between 8<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> avenues, access to water with view from above
- Integrated development around the stations, emulating the European model or the example of Fleury Street for atmosphere
- Expropriation is unfair
- Old arena of DM: making sure that there is densification (DM rink)
- Underground parking

### **Renovation**

- The city should intervene to encourage renovation: by show of hands, mainly in agreement
- Expropriation: for public interest, for the development of the city
- Expropriation, renovation: it takes a well-defined plan to coordinate well
-

## **Industry**

- It is too late to review this choice
- Think rather of light industry, no manufacturing unless ecological and noiseless, research.

## **Arts, culture and tourist activities as wealth generator**

- Refer to comments on Oka Road, DM Promenades
- Atmosphere to recreate, increasing individual wealth, access to shores by bicycle, harmonizing rate setting train/transport/negotiation MTA to promote transport towards DM
- Promenade concept in the old Grand-Moulin sector, landing stage
- Gastronomy festivities, market near the stations
- It requires parking or public transport or cyclists; revitalizing the waterside, recreational tourism on lake banks towards Oka Road, inn, festival taking the two linguistic cultures into account; harmonization of languages, getting involved in a negotiation with the SEPAQ; using the Legion; Synergy with “Art en fête” which is looking for a place to hold Quebec’s national festivities (St-Eustache); having a marina; improvement of cycling network

## **In conclusion**

- It is essential to create wealth in Deux-Montagnes
- Suggestion for the city’s signature
  - DM, a lifestyle
  - DM, a pleasant atmosphere
  - To try it is to adopt it
  - DM, a city of two cultures

## **Workshop: Library, arts and culture**

### **Arts and culture, economic generator**

- The Olympia
  - Is it a corporation: answer: yes
  - Why is there no profit? and why can't it be used more often?: answer: \$ every time, deficit every time
  - People want to know the situation... (lack of details to make an informed decision)
  - There is a private arena next to it, so sell the Olympia to the private sector (some agree)
  - Keep the arena functional all year round if we can make it profitable (sports, hockey, etc.)
  - Citizens would like to be informed of the possible law as it pertains to the changing of technology to Freon (why)
  - No consensus among the participants (some want to keep it, others to sell it)
- Deux-Montagnes Polyvalent
  - Is the solution to renovate DMP and its installations and offer shows year round. (better-adapted facilities and thus the Olympia would be used for skating year round...)
  - Some are against the investment \$\$ to the DMP auditorium facilities since children already use the premises of the DMP
  - If we use the DMP auditorium, it is important not to infringe on the school board's time (ex. using it only on weekends)
  - The project could be viable if more information is shared with the population and the investment from the municipality is adjusted downward.

### **Subsidized activities**

- Cancel Family Day since it isn't a success and participation isn't strong
- St-Jean and Canada festivities aren't popular and are to be cancelled since Art en fête (Art Festival) in St-Eustache attracts a lot of people, so why also celebrate in Deux-Montagnes?
- Want to remove the activities that aren't worth it and that don't work
- Group several activities at the library (ex. Painting night) and turn them into a festival
- Grante subsidies to activities bringing together a lot of people (ex. Santa Claus Parade, Thursday show)
- Review the Thursday show to have it during the weekend, could attract + people, but keeping it, because it attracts a lot of people besides helping the community
- People don't know the activities (ex. the Winter Carnival), so the city should determine which ones are the most profitable and cut accordingly.
- Amateur-painting symposium: to be kept and improved
- If it is to be redone, the committee wishes to have the investment breakdown for each event in order to better target what is to be kept or cut.
- The population wishes for a global reorganization of cultural events
- Several wish for the status quo, but insist on the importance of preserving arts and culture in Deux-Montagnes

## Library

- A unanimous “yes” that the city must carry on its involvement in the library
- An impact study on public libraries exists: each invested \$ is profitable through the education level of residents, people are becoming more schooled
- Several agree it’s important but are disappointed that the library doesn’t accept donations (Answer from the director: against the law)
- Library: place of culture, using the conference room + and charging an entrance fee (ex. \$5)
- Library sale like Laval = donations + resell at \$2.50/kg
- Comments: donations require a lot of management and space. The donations would be offered to the Lions Club which would give back \$1,500 in subsidies to the library
- Increase business hours (opening at 10a.m. instead of 1p.m.)
- Want more business hours and more books in the collection
- Fee setting: a categorical “no”
  - A public library must be accessible to all and it is mandatory that it be free
  - Charge each family slightly = loss of \$8,000 in government subsidies (non-consensus)
  - Fee setting is a deterrent to attendance
- The population wishes an increase in services at the library.
  - + activities
  - Create partnerships with the school board
  - Ask schools to require that children have their library card
  - Continue to offer activities = positive
  - Accept donations (although space is limited and has decreased lately)
  - Open the library on weekends during the summer
  - Creation of a citizen committee to get involved
  - Creation of an advantage card like Laval + include discounts to other city services

## The Petite école jaune

- The city mustn’t continue its involvement
- Careful: heritage building
- Close of the school and bring the activities to the library
  - Could the cultural association buy it?
  - Private buyer to turn it into a house?
  - Sell the école jaune for the land (demolish)?
- Would there be a way of carrying out subsidized work since it’s a heritage building (RCM, culture department, Canadian Heritage ...)
- If we remove the école jaune, we lose a part of our heritage history...
- A lot of people want to try to keep it
- Create an Arts centre (artist exhibition room) that could generate \$\$
- Privatize so that we don’t have to pay = ok, but specify in the contract that the building must keep its heritage character (non-consensus)
- Could we help with the creation of a PPP?
- Question on the current use of the Petite école jaune?
- We must preserve it, it’s important, we could use volunteer work to renovate it and thus create a small entertainment venue (like the St-Eustache church)

- Are there still courses and workshops offered there? If not, how to maximize its use?
- During the day, there don't seem to be a lot of activities (finding)

### **The Legion**

- Rental costs: obviously increase costs, isn't used much during the day; used more in the evening.
- Publicize the rental of rooms on the Website (and the charges incurred for people not from DM)
- It isn't a good venue for small groups
- The room is in competition with the Olympia
  - Must find another role for the veterans' room
  - Turning it into a concrete object, Legion or making the room profitable
- Legion = military = possibility of government subsidies?
  - Possibility of moving the legion (organization) to another building of the city
- \$200,000 beneficial, instead of investing \$200,000 on the école jaune, use the Legion for + activities
- +++++ promotion, people don't know they can rent the room, Raise people's awareness regarding the Legion building.

### **In conclusion**

- The city should have + evenings like this one.
- Weaknesses = distribution of costs /events or buildings
- Avoid the expression "bedroom community" we should become + cultural, + arts in order to attract businesses
- Establishment of a library committee
- Establishment of an arts committee
- Granting a larger budget to the library than to the other arts and culture buildings
- During the meeting, there wasn't enough time dedicated to the library
- Compared to other cities, the library has a smaller budget than the average of other libraries.
- There mustn't be budget cuts at the library
- There mustn't be personnel reductions at the library
- There's not enough sense of belonging to the city. The only way of creating it is to invest in culture.
- Perhaps we have to sell buildings (non-consensus)
- Under-utilized buildings: we must redefine the vocation of two buildings: the Petite école jaune and the Legion
- \$200,000 (school) involves what kind of work (expansion?)
  - Rooms are small, not safe according to the standards of the building department ?
  - Expensive per square foot?
  - Actually, it will cost us 3 X \$200,000
  - There is a kitchen at the Legion, why not create a day-care centre for children
  - If we dispose of the Legion, community organizations will lose their room?

- The city is big enough? Why not buying outdoor publicity signs as in St-Eustache for + publicity
- Library: in terms of fines (lateness), why apply the same fees for everyone (standardize lateness fees) ex. \$0.15/book/person
- Petite école jaune: a lot of volunteering, ask for the population's involvement
  - We must compromise, but we mustn't get rid of it, since it's heritage
  - Integrate an expansion to the work: it lacks cultural activities, there are apparently some but there is not enough publicity
- People want more publicity: inform the population of activities
- Should seek promoters
- Have + publicity (Facebook, Internet, use the communication department more)
- Lack of coordination between the various cultural services
- Several buildings that have a double vocation
- People are willing to pay more taxes if it means keeping what we've got
- Want + publicity, + coordination, + self-subsidized
- Railway track, using it to publicize Deux-Montagnes. Do Laval and Montreal know that the city exists?
- Want to put Deux-Montagnes on the "map" of Québec

## **Workshop: Security: police and firefighters**

### **The cost of police services**

- Question of costs in Deux-Montagnes vs. other cities: Answer: meaningful tabulation, good, very comparable, not in a losing position compared to other cities.
- Question: St-Joseph returned with police, have they paid? How much? Still in dispute? Have returned since last year.
- Question: \$3 million is this since the beginning? Not really since cities pay for their share.
- Put cameras for speeding violations:
  - Pilot project for one year, can't implement it now
- Proposal: Team for traffic = already implemented
- Does DM contemplate Quebec Police: must remain level II, since moratorium (of provincial government)
  - How many police officers & how many per work shift: 3 groups/day, 49 police officers and 7 temporary police officers. 5 groups. Summer = park team. Schedule explanation by Mr. Frenette.
  - Workforce cannot change, determined by collective bargaining agreement: Answer: could add a lot of personnel, but it would be way too expensive & you wouldn't like your tax account
  - Question: how many police officers for level II? Answer: 50, currently 49.
- Too many police in DM and not elsewhere, too concentrated in the same place.
- Saturday night, traffic not in service during summer, 4 police officers at night. Citizen asks whether it's enough: no
- Mr. Kessler explains, answering to a citizen's comment regarding youngsters selling drugs, how to file a complaint: calling and mentioning where drugs are being sold, meeting will be held and monitoring will ensue
- Neighbouring municipalities have asked for supervision. Has DM studied supervision possibility: Pointe-Calumet and St-Joseph have requested it.
- Will there be a scooter campaign: yes & trained officers for this type of problem issues.

### **Sectors where police vigilance could be exercised with more regularity**

- Henri-Dunant and 18<sup>th</sup>: speed-noise-problem issues.
  - Have contacted Mr. Racicot since September, nothing done.
  - Several school bus accidents, speed.
  - Mr. Kessler suggests communicating with Mr. Leduc
  - There isn't enough patrolling: proposal of positioning on 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue, rather than on 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue
  - Citizen said there are too many stop signs, which is why people are jaded & don't oblige anymore. Adding stop signs isn't a solution.
- Lake Boulevard and 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue
- Ovila Forget: note vehicle + licence number to signal speeding: answer from the station: can't do anything, but we'll knock on doors to make the person aware.

Citizen mentions he had the impression his call was meaningless. Mr. Kessler tells them to call back to know if it's been done.

### **The cost of fire services**

- What will happen since Ste-Marthe is expanding for the workforce and sharing of services?
- Will they have time to reach their destination?
- Law = a certain number of firefighters for a certain number of citizens. Explains that the two fire halls are located to allow for an intervention time in accordance with the standards.
- Coming reform, must visit all houses.
- Currently: presentation in schools and retirement homes. + time for all houses
- Equipment, vehicles, are we well-equipped? Answer: 2 pumps and 1 ladder for each city. We respect the standards for vehicles.
- Must we increase the workforce? Answer: We respect the standards
- All vehicles are monitored according to the standards
- Citizen compares to Mtl and says that we must not be safe and in keeping with the standards: Answer: the number of vehicles is according to the number of houses. However, the citizen believes there aren't enough.
- The leader asks: Would you be willing to accept a tax increase for more protection services: Answer: YES
- Question: Cost linked to each increase in vehicles and workforce? Answer: not necessary since currently our service is very good.
- The leader asks: Do you think it's important to invest in the fire hall, rebuild or renovate? Citizen asks how much?
- Is the fire hall in a strategic place: yes, according to the standards. Would there be another place?
  - Currently: the fire hall is the problem issue.
- The effective number of firefighters and the operation mode during an emergency: no permanent team at all times

### **911 service**

- 911 service: Are we really saving money or as tonight, not quite true?
  - Offer = expensive, handed to the city
- Proximity: Is it a good thing because St-Joseph is far from 911?
- We can go with others, but after map analysis & recommendations given to the city
- Will unionized employees be respected in a merger: YES
- If 911 is relocated, will there still be people at the police station?
- Firm hired for the 911 service
  - Has the city received the results? Answer: don't know
  - Citizen asks that the study be made public.
- 911: for services that will offer 911, require 10-year contracts.
- Citizens want to have their say on the 911 service.

## **Workshop: Sports and Recreation**

### **The Olympia Arena**

- Percentage among sports associations
- Use the auditorium facilities, is it profitable?
- Ice time rental, is it all rented?
- Rent ice time year round, is it profitable?
- Study on the profitability of selling it to the private sector
  - In the private sector, are rentals expensive?
- The given restaurant is franchised (ex. Tim Horton's, McDonald's)
- Free skating = "user-pays" (cost for skating)
- In the summer renting for in-line skating, badminton, to make the building profitable
- Create a partnership with the other cities to write operation costs down
- Rent the arena to a garage league
- Charge costs to users from other municipalities (ex. St-Eustache,) which charge us everything.

### **The outdoor swimming pool**

- 40% of citizens present among the group tonight are users of the swimming pool
- Are there any entrance fees?
- Invest the \$300,000 for the swimming pool
- Share the costs among the cities, creating a partnership
- Conduct a survey with the whole population of DM for the utilization of the St-Eustache swimming pool
- For the addition of a dome, idea rejected.

### **Soccer**

- How much does soccer profit the city?
- The synthetic field, very expensive cost
- Are there too many fields (to maintain) for 750 players?

### **Softball**

- Are fields standardized for children and not for adults?
- Maintenance cost for the fields?
- Charge a % to associations for field maintenance
- "user-pays"

### **Basketball**

- Schools must maintain their fields

### **Outdoor rinks**

- \$10,000 for rink maintenance (it's too expensive)
- Less rinks for better maintenance
- Lights turned off too late at night

### **Partnerships**

- Rather than establishing a partnership with St-Eustache, using our money to invest in the swimming pool
- We must continue our partnerships with school boards  
We must invest in our sports infrastructure

### **In conclusion**

- Increase park monitoring
- Specialized day camps (ex. circus ...)
- The topic of day camps has not been addressed; two ladies are disappointed since they had been told the topic would be covered tonight.
- Reward volunteers in the sports associations
- Charge \$50 more per tax account per residence and redirect in each sports activity sector.

## **Workshop: Major Infrastructure Projects, snow removal and garbage collection**

### **The swimming pool**

- Replace by a less expensive infrastructure, ex. water games
- Estimating real customer traffic of this swimming pool
- Service no longer free of charge: “recurrent suggestion”
- First of all, solution implementation: ascertaining who the real clientele is, targeting young children, Dome represents a too-expensive and geothermal solution
- Diversify the aquatic service offer, rather than a big infrastructure that engulfs all the costs

### **The Olympia arena**

- Contemplate the possibility of disposing of the arena.
- Building history - lawsuit if necessary
- Ascertain who the real clientele is and see to sharing only the costs among users
- Diversify its use towards shows and other cultural activities
- If we must pay for repairs, we might as well pay more, but increase the quality of the building.
- Fee-parking for show evenings
- The Olympia is an asset for the city. We must keep it and:
  - Diversify the offer
  - Turn it into an exchange point for the youngsters of DM
  - Find inputs through + activities.

### **The central park building**

- No expansion, it's a luxury, can't afford it.
- Involve youngsters in the maintenance and development of the premises (social involvement)
- Use school rooms, agreement with the school board
- Being realistic and maximizing current use
- Make an inventory of the rooms already available in the city. School and city buildings

### **Pumping and septic system station**

- Act and get subsidies
- Innovate by creating a basin, being open to all possibilities. Recovering this water?
- Fix the problem at the source
- Do not “patch,” immediately start rebuilding the network. It's a priority

- Review the workings of the rainwater and wastewater network
- Assess the cost difference between fines and the construction of a basin
- Summary: Increase the tempo of infrastructure reconstruction: it's a priority

### **Underground infrastructures**

- Subsidies from the various levels of government to carry out the work
- Spread out costs
- + awareness-raising on the use of water in the city
- Network diagnosis, where are the losses? Global inspection?
- User-pays? Water meters
- Excavation limitations, + great use of the sheathing technique
- The sectors in question pay for their local problems

### **Sound wall**

- Only concerns residents of this sector, thus, user-pays.
- Bird project "what is their solution"
- Isn't a global responsibility, for all citizens, local only
- It's secondary for the city
- No intervention, isn't essential.
- Prioritize expenses in the infrastructures first

### **Domestic wastes and recycling**

- Is regulated by the city
  - Advantage of being regulated by the city: important savings.
- Weekly collection of bulky waste.
- Decrease the collection frequency, modulation according to the seasons.
- More regular inspection
- Collection of compostables
- A single waste receptacle per residence
- Eco-centre
- Label \$\$ per additional bin "user-pays"
- Encourage citizen initiative, garbage sorting
- Fee charge according to weight

### **Snow removal**

- Review snow removal techniques, this year wasn't better than last year?
- Full width all winter, widening snow removal
- Citizen restraint in private snow removal to avoid engulfing the street.
- Businesses: zero tolerance for deposits in the street.
- If blown, blow on the yard
- Cover yards with snow for + security
- Managed, for the whole territory by city employees

## **Workshop: Environment, sanitation, citizen services and governance**

### **Intensification of green actions**

- Decrease garbage to be buried by doing a collection of compostables as in other cities, by reducing the amount in tonnes to be buried this method would be self-financed
  - Clarify the jurisdiction on land like the school board, several trees have been removed which doesn't seem to comply with the visions of the green city that we are. (other piece of land mentioned, the Florès parking lot)
  - Should plant more trees such as along the flower beds of 20<sup>th</sup> Avenue and the cycling path. For instance, the trees that haven't been taken by citizens during horticulture days could be used. (A lady tells us to be careful, on the other hand, of not blocking the view of cyclists who may not see the cars)
  - Would like to see Moir Park maintained; no flowers and the trees are not maintained.
  - Cleaning of the lake banks and wooded areas should be presented as a community program project to the school board.
  - A lot of cigarette butts in the wooded area and around the Grand-Moulin railway station, not well maintained, cycling path not well maintained either.
  - Offenders polluting the banks and wooded areas should be punished by fines, more police presence would be required, especially during peak hours (polluter-pays)
  - After the melting of snow, everyone should pick up a broom to sweep their part of the street in order to save on street sweeping. If it isn't done, hand out fines. Not a good idea since elderly people won't be able to do it.
  - For biting insects, people have seemingly seen a difference but are wondering a lot whether it's expensive, polluting and disrupts the ecosystem. We cannot answer this kind of question since we aren't experts in the field but this information should be made available to citizens. The majority seems interested in keeping it in place but would like more details.
- \*\*\* We generally want a lot of trees and we think that we cut way too many.

### **Development of an ecocentre**

- Ecocentre interesting; yes only if self-financed
- Collection of all kinds, already don't think it would be necessary.
- "User-pays"
- If possible using the ecocentre to recover some recoverable/recyclable materials.
- Must now pay \$15 for branch collection because we maintain our yard and the bulky waste collection is expensive since a company is in charge and users aren't charged!!
  - Not logical. We should charge for bulky waste collection in order for it to be self-financed (user-pays)
- Careful not to end up with a new problem such as fridges in the wooded area.
- Focus our efforts in order to promote ecology rather than punishing people.

- Environment should be high on the agenda over and above the costs, we must promote ecology.

### **Graffiti**

- We are questioning the pertinence of installing cameras. There's a camera at the Grand-Moulin dam and there's a lot of graffiti.
- Perhaps cameras throughout the monitoring system could be dissuasive.
- Is it possible to obtain the information of delinquents caught in the act with the help of cameras, just the figure of individuals observed and arrested to give us an idea on the efficiency of the system.
- Several graffiti on fences, sometimes even on grass.
- Requires more police presence and more lighting, dark corners have more graffiti. Police officers could patrol on foot in the evening in places where such mischief is more likely to happen.
- In Europe, painting merchants must note the buyer's address which facilitates tracking with analyses. Others distribute vines to counter the problem.
- Maybe during the regular police school tours, there could be awareness-raising for the youngsters.
- Youngsters should incur the costs linked to graffiti-cleaning depending on their age, reparative justice "if they are caught in the act"
- A lady has witnessed the arrest of 3 or 4 youngsters who were caught in the act, their parents had to incur the costs and the youngsters have a criminal file.

### **Neglected land and properties**

- Several are wondering about the city's way of enforcing its regulation. What is the scope of the regulation, is there a prescribed grass height? Answer: yes (for a maximum grass height) So let's make sure it is enforced, city cars must patrol more often.
- Some buildings as well as the land are real dumps; which are the measures taken for these people to be apprehended? The city should be allowed to inspect houses since many of them must be rotten and dangerous, firetraps. Brings vermin to the neighbours which also depreciates the value of their houses.
- More inspector monitoring; we ask the inspector to enforce the regulation with more fines if needed.
- Encourage people to renovate with public funds, people who let their houses decline likely have low income.
- Several illegal businesses, thus a lot of lost taxes... +++ monitoring from inspectors.
- We can't do without the planning authority, we need more inspectors in the field.

### **Our communication methods**

- The Internet is correct as it is, there's already a lot of information and we don't want to invest more

- Keep the municipal newsletter but in newspaper format, we don't need the Express to be in colour, filled with advertising and printed on non-recyclable glazed paper.
- The calendar is also printed on non-recyclable glazed paper. We should think about changing that.
- Remove all marketing.
- Stop trying to look good and communicate well instead.
- Registration during working hours, not sure since we are a bedroom community, there should be better-adapted hours for workers. Internet registration good for them, but not everyone can do it that way. To be seen to.
- Come pick up the Express at determined locations; yes, but we'll be polluting while going to pick it up!
- Yes it's a good idea to reduce the number of printed copies since those who can will read it on the Website and can also be on the mailing list.
- Several people are wondering about the way to notify about, for instance, watering restrictions. Some have gotten a phone call but most didn't. Doesn't work if answered by an answering machine. Some prefer the car with speakers. Non-consensus.
- Use the Olympia billboard to inform people of the news but not in that location and don't want to invest for a new one, install in a specific place and have the news scrolling quickly enough for people to have time to read the news while stopped at a red light.
- Think green

### **Governance**

- The Website is very efficient. When you send a request, the reply is always there.
- 3 people out of a group of 30 have already been to a council meeting, their viewpoints: Actually, only the question period is interesting for citizens, since for the rest they aren't aware of all the resolutions and don't know the issues that have been seen ahead of time and only require the council's vote. Topics are not made accessible enough to a large audience.
- Would like to have the possibility of knowing the topics to be brought up ahead of time in order to understand.
- A Webcast of the council doesn't seem interesting, interested people should make the effort of going and citizens should be encouraged to go. (a citizen)
- Maybe organizing an open house at City Hall to initiate people to the political/municipal world. (once or twice a year)

### **Conclusion**

- Running engines are no longer accepted in Deux-Montagnes; several people don't respect it. Have a look around railway stations, many engines are running for a long time. Especially on rainy mornings. Will infractions be handed out?
- Adding fees for the train parking lot since people aren't all from Deux-Montagnes to cover certain fees. To be seen with MTA.

- Several questions regarding protected wooded areas versus the condos behind Pharmaprix. Several trees have been removed....
- Encourage inter-generations to densify the population.
- More monitoring is required from inspectors and police officers.
  - Stricter: 1 written and clear notice and then fines. (Regulatory nuisance)
  - Police fines for not respecting pedestrian crosswalks.
  - Stricter fines for people with dogs who don't pick up after their dog or walk them without a leash.
- Working towards citizen awareness for the maintenance of their land.
- Working towards citizen awareness for the maintenance of wooded areas (this year with advertising 40 volunteers versus 5 last year for cleaning.) Involving CSSMI. More support from PW (labour + bag collection)
- More support from PW (gravel on the road and weed control)
- We cannot cut in the means necessary for our city to be clean.
- Would like to have the possibility of creating a committee for citizens who wish to help in general.

## **Workshop: Finances : revenues, expenses and debts**

### **Tax freezing**

- For the majority, freezing taxes isn't wished and would be a last resort solution
- An increase is conceivable but without exceeding the cost of living

### **The debt**

- Impossible to completely eliminate the debt.
- See the capacity of paying without exceeding the cost of living.

### **Options to counter cost increase**

- Have a more global outlook on the short, middle and long term and determine according to priorities
- Openness towards partnerships (shared unanimously)
- Consider service mergers which wouldn't cause any tax increase but would bring greater wealth. (shared unanimously)
- Invest in the water and wastewater system infrastructures; it's a priority (shared unanimously)
- Repairing the swimming pool isn't desirable since it isn't cost efficient, most citizens already have a swimming pool in their yard.
- Some suggestions were brought to the fore:
  - Make buildings owned by the city profitable by increasing services and selling if the building isn't profitable (Olympia)
  - Streamline profitable buildings in order to decrease the deficit.
  - Reduce operating expenses
  - Ask for an additional contribution from partner cities to maintain the level II police service.
  - Merger of the 911 service
  - "User-pays" policy for all services
  - Install parking meters
  - Install water meters
  - Reduce electricity consumption by turning off one streetlight out of two

### **Revitalization of downtown**

- Incite entrepreneurs to come and establish themselves with us using possible subsidies or credits of some sort.
- Modify building parameters

### **Power station**

- It would be a conceivable situation
- No infrastructure for the creation of this possibility
- Citizens generally agree but would need more explanations

### **Corporation**

- Self-financing of companies

### **“User-pays” policy**

- Unanimous yes except for essential needs
- Even water should be included in this solution
- Library: create a family card and subsidizing people with low income

### **Subsidies for infrastructure work**

- Partnership with the other cities for human resources in that field
- Salary paid according to the percentage of obtained subsidies
- We must wait to obtain subsidies before conducting significant infrastructure work.

### **In conclusion:**

- Settle priorities (ex: water and wastewater systems)
- Service merger (ex: 911)
- “User-pays” policy for all services
  
- Better use of the electronic tools (calendar, newspaper)
- Better profitability for buildings belonging to the city through sales, cost decrease, service-tax increase.
- Level II police – increase in the contribution of other cities
- Subsidies granted before the beginning of work
- Partnership with the other cities for resources
- Investment not desired for the DMP, Moir Park and the municipal swimming pool

Unanimous

For most of the citizens who were present, a merger with St-Eustache would be the best solution to be considered regarding several services including the police, the 911 service, the swimming pool, etc.

Moreover, the “user-pays” policy would be another conceivable solution for various services to the population including the swimming pool, the installation of water meters, etc.

**Annex 3 :**  
**Secretary Notes**  
**June 2nd session (English)**

## Workshop : Community Program

### Manoir Grand-Moulin

- How much do the units cost? [We were not given that information, which might have been useful for our discussion.]
- It was indicated that the cost of the \$100,000 was the remainder of money owed as a result of the three million dollars loan that the City took to purchase and renovate the Manoir Phase I as the building had been empty for several years and had deteriorated during that period of time. It had not brought in any revenue while it was empty. It was reopened with 37 apartments and none are available for rent now.
- A question was asked as to why there were no other governments participating in paying for this housing? People wanted to know if it had been asked for, or if it could be asked for to get certain Provincial or Federal grants to support these affordable housing units?
- We do not want to go back in history, but to step forward into the community's future. This building has social and financial value to the community. We may want to get to live there someday and may not be eligible due to the waiting list, or the point system.
- There are three buildings, The Cascades, Phase I, and Phase II.
  - At Phase I there has been one empty in 3 years.
  - Phase II is ½ subsidized. Rent, 90% of average rent to the public. A 4 ½ apartment is about 700\$ with electricity, cable and security.
- In real terms with the economy.
  - In question x apartment, cost per person?
  - Figure out rent different, not include value of building still building and land.
  - Operating cost per person.
  - \$100,000 \$ loss per year. Purpose Ready to assume deficit.
  - Go to Government to get dollars.
- Pay full rent, pay rent at Cascades, make so that only people with certain income levels can live there. Under that, who subsidizes their rent? The Government pays. Autonomous, meals in kitchen, keep also. Why not done before? Ask - what to do? Election, take it? Won election. We are not qualified to make decisions. We can make suggestions. Clarify, take? Take it back; stop losing \$100,000 per year.
- In last year's 2005 the deficit was 250,000 per year, now it is \$100,000 per year. That is a lot better. A step to be made, Need \$ to keep running and not pay anything out. Get rid of the deficit over five years. It seems able to pay it off in two and a half years.
- Control of aspects of expenses. Pay off at same rate will we make money? Cut expenses, not able any longer.
- The food as a service could be run more intelligently.
  - \$8 per meal -> \$4 each.
  - Good meals at a better rate.
  - Schedule people in the kitchen, too much ineffective lights, slowly going in the right direction.
  - Closer to reduce 100,000 debt, make \$.

- Question: When will the debt be paid off? Answer: About fifteen years.
- Question: Can the residents afford to pay more for their apartments? Answer: They are expensive now for the people who live there. Private – more expensive. The only service is the food.
- Question: What is the number of staff there? Answer: The number of staff members is a total of eight or nine people with the same or less hours in the kitchen.
- Suggestions:
  - Get grant from Federal and Provincial governments.
  - Have Private and Public Partnership infrastructure
  - People from D.M. in the building with extra taxes for those who move there from other venues.
  - Sell the name to a private corporation.
  - Make sure that the services are adequate for what is coming in 2036 when there will be more elderly people and those between zero to fifteen years of age.
  - Perhaps some daycare centres could also be used for seniors at the same time as for children intermingling two different demographics.

#### The subsidies

- Review involvement – consequences or stay with \$ given.
- Most of the groups are pillars of the community.
- Meals on Wheels is a self-financing organization which only once asked for a subsidy for the purchase of a freezer for the food that is sold as meals to seniors and handicapped people who might lose the ability to eat well or live alone if food is not prepared for them and delivered to their homes.
- As for funding – the city cannot give what it doesn't have. If the funding needs to be looked at or eliminated then do it. If funding is given year after year, it is a natural thing, and groups think: if x gets it why shouldn't we?
- \$35,000 to social services, WTO under review, other organizations.
- Question: Why does the Lions' Club get \$10,000? Answer: The Club receives the money from the City and then it provides the Seniors' Day, the Carnival, Fete national all of which are done by volunteers and the money goes back to the community.
- It was indicated that the figures given to the organizations were only taken from one year, and that an average over a five year period would not have given such a skewed picture of the funds that had been allocated.
- Question: Freeze, cut or reduce the funds to some degree? A: Necessary in form now. 90% good. Committee to decide, continue support on a percentage of the city's expenses.
- People help other people at less than city is capable of spending, or they would have to increase taxes. Cost more, neighbours help each other.
- Every year the list should be reviewed. Consequences, costly in social context, support or meals would be needed in another sector. Always review, submit yearly statement future subsidy, rated statement not guaranteed to be renewed each year.

## In Conclusion:

- Website – Question on some organizations, specifically sports receiving income from two different sources such as the General Subsidy Fund and also from the Sports and Leisure budget. Apply to more than one area for subsidies.
- **Federal Government** : What the buildings service. Maison du Citoyen courses in learning to cook, Meals on Wheel, SOS Jeunesse, Library, CSSS.
- Comment: The **SOS Jeunesse** has other sources of revenue, like the CSSS we already are paying provincial taxes for that to provide supervised visits with endangered children. It is being piggy backed onto everything else. Answer: For the office downstairs in the library the organization has provided \$25,000 to outfit the office. They are just given a place by the city. The Rose of the CLSC is to provide wheel chairs and walkers but they lend them only for four weeks and after that payment is required.
- **New Horizons Centre** : Many organizations use this location: Al Anon, Guides, Scouts, Seniors Bingo Group, Deux-Montagnes Lions' Club, Soccer Club, *and Community Connection* to hold meetings and get together socially. It is a place where seniors can break their isolation away from their own homes.
- The cost of the electricity in the slide presentation included all of the buildings that are serviced by the city.
- **Maison des Jeunes** – helps to keep young people off the street and provides them with things to do in their spare time. If they did not have this place to go to there would be additional costs of having them doing graffiti or being in jail. The social cost of closing or reducing the services of the Maison des Jeunes would be enormous.
- **Veterans' Hall** – Many groups meet there: WTO, Golden Agers, Navy League, and the Lions' Club has their Book Fair. There are many fund raisers to take place there. If a private person uses this venue there should be a charge to those individuals. It should be a fair system.
- Question: Too many buildings? Does the city have more buildings than they need to cover all the usage necessary? What is the use ability of these buildings? Are they used to capacity? Answer: It is difficult for any organization to have a time and place to have a meeting. For the Santa Claus Parade Committee to use the Horizon Centre, or the basement of the library everything is taken if you want to use a place. You have to arrange for a hall in advance.
- Question: Is there too many buildings? Is there a maximum use of the buildings? Is there down time? What about the old Caisse Populaire at 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue, and closing it then moving the Maison du Citoyens from one side of the basement of the library to the other side?
- There is at the Library: SOS Jeunesse, Maison du Citoyens, Meals on Wheels, Bridge, Guides, Al Anon, Tai Chi, and Yoga. There are many organizations in place there which provide social activities and services. Maison des Jeunes a place for kids to go. Damages would be incurred if it was not there.
- What do we do? Did the City spend unnecessarily during that move? They decided to close the 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue building and move the Maison de Citoyens to the other side. Answer: The roof of the building at 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue had to be replaced; the sale of the building does and will bring revenue from the regional Municipal Court that is now situated there.
- Comment: The Olympia is a white elephant. Should we keep it? Everything -> 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Parking? The Jean-Guy Bergeron building is rented out for a profit.

- Comment: The population is too small for all the services that need to be provided not to want to merger. We are fenced in. We could merge with St. Eustache or Ste-Marthe-sur-le-lac. But can we afford to merge with Ste-Marthe?
- Question: What do we do? How do they present it in the light? Ste-Marthe has plenty of new development going on at present and they are not likely to share it with other cities. St. Eustache is in worse shape than Deux-Montagnes. On the flip side taxes go up exponentially.
- Comment: I pay about \$4,000 in taxes now, I don't want to see that more than double to \$9,000. How would that affect the price of my house to sell it?
- Taxes. Do you want amalgamation, to continue with it or don't you?
- Deal with St. Eustache. We have no industrial land.
- Mr. Jensen: Do you want it or not, and at what cost? Answer: We must know how much it will cost.
- Future: We want to find out what do you feel? Decisions will be made from your comments.
- Question: What will they be charging for next? Fresh air? \$000/more – not do it. 17,000 tax payers. Every cent all wasted.
- Go to the Council meeting and ask questions. There are four or five citizens who always go to do that.
- Control costs – expenses of the city double of other cities. We don't want to go further into debt or into trusteeship.

#### **Summary :**

- Subsidies reevaluated – could lead more vandalism if you cut the Maison des Jeunes. The group did not feel qualified or well informed as to make decisions on the questions raised.
- For the Grand-Moulin Phase I that is losing money the people indicated that they wished the city to keep ownership of the building, but that you would like the city to find additional subsidies from Provincial or Federal governments.
- For the Associations: The consensus was that the groups should continue to receive the money they get on a percentage basis of the city funds. The funds for each group should be re-evaluated each year, with a review of their finances required.

## **Workshop : Oka Road, commercial, residential, industrial development and renovation**

### **Retail businesses**

Do we have enough retail establishments?

- Not enough retail establishment, McDonalds or fast-food restos give people more choices
- We need action retail stores, Tim Horton's could bring more people, has city enough grits to expropriate, bring in franchises
- Large store, market need to be supported
- Competition with other cities
- Figure how we can brand ourselves, brand our road, small shops
- Do not repeat commerce's, balance mix of businesses
- Tim Horton's near train stations, better advertising for businesses

Should we try to attract other new businesses? Which ones and how should this be done?

- Small engine repair shop, lake
- Size of population, unique area ; Many people pass through Oka Road, attract with auctions we do not use our lake, we do not proud ourselves, use our waterway, retail business related to water, marina
- Go to Oka because the water, something should be done
- Review municipal to incentive business, need parking to walk around

What motivates merchants to set up a business in a city?

- Make it easy, regulations
- Use website to encourage people to come
- Business want to make profits, publicize

Why do our citizens go elsewhere to shop?

- Nothing attracts, we need more to offer (ex, St-Sauveur, Lachute and its festivals) Promenade DM = very limited, stores need major face lift, need government services
- Some specific events should take place, proper marketing

What can be done to encourage our merchants to invest in their own business?

- Embellishment of the buildings and need tax refund / credit
- Face lift

### **Renovation**

Should we intervene to ensure that some owners perform the repair work required to refit their homes?

- Be careful on that ; ask minimum standards enforce renos so they meet city standards ; look for government programs to encourage subsidies or municipal

Should this be done when the house is sold while ensuring the new buyer is committed to performing the required work?

- Kind of hard to expect, nobody would want to buy house
- Take one by one, use humanity vision

Should we implement a tax credit program or other incentive program for renovations?

- Yes

Should we be concerned about the short- and long-term financial impacts these programs would have on the City?

- Yes

## **Densification**

Do we want to go that route?

- Require zoning changes
- Go further in improving zoning in the train station areas and commercial sectors
- 3-4 stories buildings with retails at bottom + residential above = win-win situation, do we have capacity to increase population ?, offer more access to services

If so, what height should be allowed for new buildings?

- Not more than 5 stories, not put higher buildings at the wrong place
- Mixed consensus = go to 10-12 stories ... 5 is majority

Which areas should we favor?

- Near 640, near shopping center
- Could there be professional services in the Promenades DM shopping center?

## **Arts, culture and tourist and recreational activities acting as wealth builders**

What are the benefits for a city such as Deux-Montagnes to have a strong tourist and recreational sector?

- Use the waterfront to attract theatre in PDM, arts in the park, bixie bike program on the path to Oka also at the train stations, bike path does not go down (connection) to the water = too bad because nice area
- + restaurant and coffee shops
- Have arts and culture area

Do you think that interesting tourist and recreational venues could attract and retain visitors who pass through our City by commuter train?

- Possibility of auditorium/multiuse facility

What are the tourist and recreational attractions in our city?

- Have English artist for shows in DM (Olympia)
- think outside of DM and use train to have people come here
- attract to Olympia

What can be done to improve these venues?

- Former market
- Have a beach area

Do we want to remain a bedroom community regardless of the constant tax increases and decrease of services?

- No
- Comfortable city with reasonable taxes
- Bring the line on expenses that don't bring anything control of the expenses, control taxes increase

### **Industry**

- No room
- Where?
- No polluting industries
- Industries bring big revenues but ...
- Green or clean industries could have an avenue, no demolition of residential properties

### **In conclusion**

Do we want to create wealth for Deux-Montagnes?

- Yes

What branding should the city have, what should its trademark be?

- Look at areas that have revamped themselves, ex. Burlington, Lachute
- Car shows
- Breathy things, family things, go to the country, use our name = Deux-Montagnes / forces on the mountains
- Access the water, mountains, forest, bike paths

## Workshop : Library, Arts and Culture

### **The Library**

Should the city continue to be involved in the library?

- One participant informed us that she moved here because of the Library. The library is the heartbeat of the community, It is one of the very few cultural meeting places.
- Kids are able to do their homework there. There is a good collection of books in English and French although there are not enough English books for adults; the bilingualism of the books and services is an asset.
- We should not put a price tag on the Library. Persons moving to a city look at these services being offered. Arts and culture are not necessarily profitable but they are very necessary to have a healthy society. The library is pivotal in this regard.
- High degree of passion for the library services.
- For youth, thank god for the library because some kids cannot have a quiet place in their home to do their homework which the library gives them this space. It helps them with their research and to continue to expand on the quality of their education.
- They have great activities for children like reading hour, on special occasions they have special events at the library with a small budget.

Reduce opening hours?

- Reducing hours would be a disaster; the library should build a volunteer service to help the library with keeping the library open longer hours. The library should open earlier during the day. 1 PM is too late and should be open earlier and longer.
- It is not open enough!

Charge a service fee?

- A service fee would reduce the accessibility to the population unless a subsidy was available to persons in need. Also a service fee might prevent the library from accessing the grants it now gets.
- A service fee could be charged for people outside of Deux-Montagnes who might want to access the services. One idea was to open the library to the English-speaking population in the whole MRC who do not have English books in their own libraries.
- A fee at large for renting books.
- The library has free Wi-Fi access within the library.

Do away with some services?

- No, One citizen asked is the library as essential with internet available? Several responded many do not have internet, especially seniors. Our library provides much more than the internet can to every age group.

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

- More promotion
- Promoting our authors – to add English authors to the list.
- Promote the whole bilingual aspect which opens to more of the population
- To have a service fee for residents outside of the town and to promote its bilingual services to persons outside of the community.
- Services of the library should be promoted more because one participant advised that she has been here for 20 years and did not know the services offered at the library.
- Signage and accessibility to the library like how to get to the library and parking lot should be improved.
- Accessibility from the main road should be clear because it is awkward and difficult to get in.
- Should request donations of books and do fundraising events for the library---this was unanimous.
- Focus on the multi-cultural aspect
- We need the library because the Lake of Two Mountains High School library has been cut 40%, so the library is essential for our youth. With cuts in the future, a well stocked library and space is very important.

### **La Petite école jaune Art Center**

Should the City continue to be involved?

- Universal consensus is promotion is lacking for the Cultural Association and the Petit Ecole Jaune.
- This is one of the few spaces for ongoing cultural events.
- There is no alternate site in Deux-Montagnes for Arts and Culture events such as art classes, symposiums, networking etc except the library.
- It is the only gathering place for artists. They have no other space to meet or network. 5 out of 14 participants were not aware of the services offered at this venue.
- Yes it is important to maintain it.
- We should create a volunteer bank to repair it, like Habitat for Humanity which could be handled by the citizens.

Would it be better to sell the building to a private enterprise?

- We need historical landmarks and to promote our city. No to privatizing the building. It was unanimous except 1 participant.
- If it goes private, they fear it will no longer service the citizens and private will want to make a profit.

Or to the Association culturelle of Deux-Montagnes?

- Is there a permanent exhibition (historical – touristique)?
- Do they have pictures of the history of the building? Better SBL – Association Cultural, non-profit, subsidies. We need to go for grants to improve the building heritage?

What would the consequences be of such a gesture?

- Would like to see a permanent exhibit inside exploring our history and /or the work of our many good artists which could be open to the public at least during the summer when no classes are in session. It could be used as a little museum or it could have a variety of exhibits at different times.
- There is little known about what goes on at PEJ and nothing about the Cultural Association. They need to be visible at family day and other events just to promote what they are doing.
- To be promoted better and linked on the website to the city and to have a summer student to keep it open.

## **Legion**

What should we do?

- It is very useful and well used.
- To advertise on the city website.
- To advertise the availability and rates.
- The kitchen needs repairs.
- It is a great space.
- Groups need to be aware that this hall is not expensive to rent. It is not well known that private citizens can rent the facility.
- The kitchen is badly in need of repairs.
- We need to use our human manpower in the community. We have talented people who can volunteer their time to do repairs in almost every field—refrigeration, electricity etc.
- Can we separate the hall, physically? Yes.

Increase rental fees?

- Yes, increase the rent for outsiders, but we need to fix it up first before we can make a profit!

Aim for profitability?

- It could be used for weddings, special events, etc. The private rental only started 2 years ago.
- It is a wonderful kitchen to have community suppers, different citizens groups, sense of community and its assets but it needs repairs and equipment.
- This building caters to organizations in the community about 200 times a year.

Privatize the building?

- Definitely do not privatize

Continue to favour our local organizations?

- Yes, we should still favour local organizations. Unanimous. It probably could be used more frequently than it is now.

## **Subsidized activities**

Should we decrease our contributions?

- Most of these activities are not well known. Need better promotion.

- Long time residents of the community do not know much about these activities.

Should we increase our contributions?

- Our community needs to pool our resources within our neighbour communities, like St. Eustache.
- Holiday, Fête Nationale Day should be held in St. Eustache.
- Holiday, Canada Day should be held in Deux-Montagnes.
- Family Day, Regional (MRC)
- We need to promote our Santa Claus Parade more outside the community and have the local businesses more involved so that they can profit by the event as well.
- To build on the resources we already have and promote our bilingual identity.
- To share with other cities around us, like promo printing, etc.
- To combine resources

### **Arts and culture, an economic stimulus**

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

- Yes, but it depends on the nature of it. Let's not do more of what does not work.
- We should open it up to St. Eustache and surrounding areas, Ste. Marthe-sur-le-Lac and St. Joseph-du-Lac.
- Is this space being used to maximum capacity? No.

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

- There could be multi uses of the Olympia.
- It is a great location and space for the following activities:
  - Indoor soccer / roller blading / jogging/ hockey
  - Boxing/ martial arts/bull-fighting
  - Halloween party
  - Boating shows
  - Dog and cat show
  - Agricultural exhibitions
  - Food fair
  - Something to tie in with the apple festival
  - Circus
  - Masquerade
  - Could be known as a manifest place
  - Trade shows, but cheaper than the Bonaventure shows.
  - Theatre – dinner theatre style.

What are the ways we can use Arts and Culture to promote Tourism dollars?

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

- Coordinate with train schedule when the events are scheduled.
- Pool our resources with other communities.
- Not duplicate every event but piggyback on what other communities are doing or work with them to develop the events.

- Promotion pamphlets for Olympia.
- It was unanimous that everyone felt that Arts can contribute to economic vitality by building on our own assets. The following ideas were presented and accepted unanimously:
  - There is support for one large “Art on the Riverside Festival” type of event for 2011. The event is seen as more than ‘only art’, encouraging intergenerational work and building on the resources that exist in the community. Working with local businesses, putting a lot of energy into publicizing the event beyond the town, beyond the region (i.e. attracting people from Montreal) and collaborating with French-speaking organizations were identified as key. ( for specific ideas see the results of the forum held on May 15<sup>th</sup> )
  - There is interest in organizing specific art, culture and tourism events (although many of the ideas could be incorporated into a “Riverside Festival” type of event). The main events suggested were: visual art activities, theatre events, an event for dog owners (Dog Days of Summer), events to take advantage of the river (riverboat dinner theatre, water-based activities) and “meet the author” events in collaboration with the library and many, many others.
  - Working collaboratively and a plan for sustainability are key. For any art, culture or tourism events collaboration among community organizations is important; specifically building strong links with French-speaking organizations. Also noted was the importance of working with local businesses for mutual support and building intergenerational links that promote young leaders

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

- Average Montrealers don’t come this far to participate in events unless there is a great drawing card and an interesting reason for doing so. We have to be creative in our approach to attracting visitors and in what we offer them.
- Better advertising
- Should this be under sports and recreation?
- This building is too big to be used only for hockey and skating –we have to find other uses for it.
- Advantages:
- Great space
- Near the train station
- 30 minutes to get here from Montreal.

## **In conclusion**

Should we reduce the arts and culture budget?

- No

Should we reduce personnel?

- No, but a Volunteer Community Committee should be created.

Should we sell some of the buildings?

- No

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

- Yes
- To integrate with the schools

Are their sufficient places to do the Arts in Two Mountains (culinary, visual arts, etc)?

- No

Five main points that came from our discussion that were shared in the plenary:

1. The City must maintain involvement in cultural activities and in those organizations that promote cultural and educational activities. (bilingual).The library and La Petite Ecole Jaune are key spaces for these activities and must either be maintained or new facilities found.
2. We must build on the assets we already have – bilingualism - some great events, a really active volunteer base etc. We must promote things that we do well outside the community----more and better publicity.
3. Use spaces for things other than what it was designed for. Multi-uses for Olympia like indoor soccer, rollerblading, agrotourism, food fair, etc. We have to be creative and think outside the box.
4. Pool resources with other communities. We don't have to duplicate everything. We should piggyback on what other towns are doing.
5. Promotion / Promotion / Publicity are essential.

## **Workshop : Safety: police and firefighting services**

### **Police services**

- Citizen find that force and expenses keep increasing but do not feel that they are getting a better service
- They feel that the police should give better service than we are actually getting

### What could we do?

- Could we transfer our Police Force to another municipality as the main Police Headquarters?
- Could we go back to a smaller Police Force?
- If the government is demanding that all police forces conform it “level 2”, why do they not help finance this transition? Could we not get some financial help from somewhere to help defray costs associated with this transition?
- Is it possible to regress back to “level1”? Would it save costs ? Answer: It is not possible to regress back to level 1. Even if it was possible, service would decrease as well.
- Are any measures currently being taken to try cutting costs? Answer : Yes, one thing being done is to spend surrogate for course dates instead of having to pay overtime to the arresting officers.

### Intermunicipal agreements

- Do all municipalities involved pay their fare share? We need to ensure that they do and that the bulk of the financial responsibility does not fall on DM

### Sectors where police vigilance could be practiced

- Better effort should be made to prevent or catch graffiti artists in our town (particularly at the dam)
- Could police provide better patrolling in “out of the way” places or “dark” areas, such as behind Holy Family Church (broken stained glass window, twice) and at the school yard of Sauvé School?

### Methods of managing traffic

- Suggestion was made to sit patrol cars at regular intervals along Oka Road.
- Suggestion to stagger shift changes to prevent all police cars from being off the road at the same time

### Is car speed

- Car speed is excessive !
  - To many drivers drive too fast. Example : Oka road at night, racing under the train bridge
- Could the speed limit be lowered on 20<sup>th</sup> avenue?
- Comment from Crossing Guard (9<sup>th</sup> & Oka): She has trouble with cars being impatient and honking their horns while she’s trying to get children across the street
- Schools (Emmanuel-Chénard) would like to see a police presence at the end of classes, particularly when busses are loading.

- Big problem with stop signs on bicycle path: cyclists do not stop! This creates major problems for drivers and could be dangerous.

### **Firefighting services**

- Ron Hunt explained the structure of our fire department to the citizens as well as the coming reform.

#### Fire hall

- Why not just renovate the old Fire Hall ? Could it be expanded instead of building a whole new fire house ?
- Instead of renovating both Ste-Marthe-sur-le-Lac and Deux-Montagnes, maybe it would be better to combine resources and build one new Fire hall

#### Beef up the regulation, perhaps increase fines

- City should beef up regulations and / or increase fines for false alarms

#### Hire a fulltime fire prevention inspector

- For new reform, is it necessary to actually hire a full-time inspector ?
- When governments start legislating reforms, we could try telling them that we can't afford to make the required without some kind of funding help
- Suggestion was made to install a call box outside the Fire Station linked directly to a cell phone for emergencies.

### **911 services**

- What is happening with 911 Service? Are we keeping it or is it being transferred to Saint-Eustache ? What kind of cost is DM looking at?
- Could the public be advised of the results of the 911 study before any decisions are made?
- What happens to employees if service is transferred?
- Will someone be present at police station to greet citizens who show up?

## **Workshop : Sports and Recreation Activities**

### **Olympia Arena**

- Cannot understand why such a major expense is now after 15 years time
- Building badly constructed
- About the governmental regulations banning the use of Freon gas
  - Is there a fine if not changes right away
  - Time allowed 1-2 years perhaps
- Subsidized largely before 2012 ?
- Close arena down for summer shows instead of hockey, etc. Who is losing money – with ‘venue shows or hockey (hockey hardly generating a constant flow of \$)
- Presently being evaluated
- Summer camps-gymnastics + other activities of interest cost quite a lot as well for coolant ice – indoor soccer or floor hockey
- Base (indoor summer camp) roller blade area & refreshments
- Share partnership with other towns – more population attending activities, marketing

### **Outdoor Swimming Pool**

- Worked hours at swimming pool, broken down
- Idea : joint venture to build indoor pool with other schools. Students = training/swimming/waterpolo several people
  - High School partnership with pool, how will access be on evenings, weekends ...
- Consider a dome for existing pool, many social tool impact for youngsters
- St-Eustache pool too expensive – rather have DM pool closed
- Indoor pool day, evening + outdoor (restoring ?)
- Still needed
- Not too much difference to start over + rebuild how much pacification is there actually ? no \$ generated

How should this work be financed?

- City is trapped for cash – means estimates are crucial, revenue generated is very important
- Diving team/surf/kayak/new sport brings new \$ - Can this be brought in for teams + local promotion
- \$ spent on outdoor still only able to use in summer
- 12 months year round would mean fuller access more revenue could be brought in over more time
- Subsidies \$ for indoor pool ?
- Sharing for an enclosed pool

### **Should we use the user-pay principle?**

- Yes, would increase cost to use

- Outdoor family day, sports, pool
- Moveable wall/glass windows for pool – is this a possibility
- Roof, wall
- No industry – partnership
- Does not agree with user-pay/basic facility (+ basic sport), should be available as free access to all children and adults
- Against user-pay : lower income families in the area
- Joint venture sports, recreation activities = \$ regional
- Sponsor : large events training centre because pool too small to have proper standards for sport.
- St-Eustache lost contract because pool length not large enough
- Many water available in outdoor parks

### **Softball**

- Large gap between \$ 200 000 – \$ 400 000
- Seems like too much fields, too much expense within our means
- Revenues can be brought in through softball teams/events
- \$ 400 000 seems very high estimate
- Upgrading large term – what is wrong – No fence
- Sand too hard – rock hard like cement
- Bad for injuries
- Lighting week – no night sports
- Grass hole issues – cannot play properly
- Better fields would generate more participation + can generate
- Is 1,2 or 4 needed ? 1-2 would be better then 0
- Attractive field is much better
- Kids don't play softball, but kids are at park constantly for other sports /leisure. Not even easy on walking (~~~~~)
- Reduce costs – joint subcontractors are costly when dealing with a city higher costs
- Interested in joint dirt contract venture
- Would majority be spend on lighting?
- Volunteers from sports to help bring in revenues, canteen in Olympia was doing well
- Restaurant business interested in making canteen project happen
- Safety important issue! Spend on safety

### **Basketball**

- Basketball could be done for \$100 000
- Joint effort city/school
- City use indoor school gymnasium for activities pays \$ towards needs
- Cannot run an event , won't come
- LTM Run for fun – town does not help rent art gym
- City out grass – basketball lacking !
- Trucks coming in for deliveries parking lot / basketball area = not safe

- \$\$\$ needs to be put in, keep kids out of the street, generate \$ through tournaments
- DM too small, we need to accept partnership
- General comment : town does not do well : no publicity to promote our activities/benefits of living here

### **Soccer**

- Soccer artificial field can be used for 5 months
- Indoor touch football, temporary dome use for winter
- Partnership with Ste-Marthe/St-Joseph/Pointe-Calumet
- Tournament labour day best avenue, many teams refused to come here : grass/maintenance/drainage/level
- Lion pushing to have field (artificial) soccer/football teams. Full equipment football team now
- Maison des Jeunes bad identity – need an office
- Partnership – all are underfunded
- Considering sports fee + give back to associations to counteract losing good sports volunteer coaches, etc. Other cities paying better – we are losing good people
- Cost to getting kids off the street-social ... less graffiti, more activities

### **Outdoor Skating Rinks**

- \$10 000 estimates are too high
- St-Eustache has amazing site 120 large X 70 wide X 10 tall
- LarryCool, dog park : 150 ft + rd 450 ft could easily build 2 – 1 public day camp 2<sup>nd</sup> league
- DM could get outdoor leagues Oka/St-Eustache
- Love hockey. DM could perhaps bring down the cost
- Bonisoir/Subway promotion
- Outdoor skating park : only negative line is slippery !
- Quality of watering of rinks is poor
- Need to look at costs of expenses, not services – fine tuning
- Outdoor rinks are part of our heritage, can't take it away, too important
- Outdoor rinks are dangerous, young kids have no restricted area to stay safe from hockey players

### **In conclusion**

- Partnership for all fields and activities improvement
- Promotion of city benefits and activities to keep social awareness + kids better occupied and off the streets
  - City signs – electrical notice boards/city website wider portal to include associations
- Improvements will generate revenues through tournaments
- canteen facility
- intercity events

## **Workshop : Infrastructure projects, snow removal, garbage collection**

### **Outdoor swimming pool**

- Question from citizen; does the 1.5 millions include all costs? Does that include grants? Response from a city appointed employee present: That is just an estimate. No real study has been done yet. Numbers based on other city's with similar problem. 1/3 of the money is from governments and 2/3 city of Deux-Montagnes.
- Q; How many people use the public pool in Deux-Montagnes?
- R: No survey has ever been done. However, about 100 people take lessons. On a hot day, there are about 200 peoples at one time and a total of about 500 people in one day will frequent the pool.
- Affirmation by a citizen; One lady wishes to talk against pay as you go user fees. Feels it advantages the rich.
- Another citizen: Wants pool to stay free of charge.
- Question: What is the annual cost right now to run the pool? R; I do not have the numbers with me (electricity, leaks, pumps and filtration system)
- Suggestion :
  - Why not use and outside filtration system instead of doing the entire repair work.
  - Run the pool the way it is, and then have a subvention from the government when it is available.
  - Look for a government proposal and then act on them. Wait to do the work until the government offers us something.
- DOME;
  - Adding a dome is a good idea, however what is the cost?
  - Suggestion : 2 studies that have been done before for the city of Deux-Montagnes and the city never followed through with them.
  - Another lady says pay as you use is good. People should pay for activities they like.
  - Another person says that we should put a cover on the pool in the winter so the pool will not crack.
  - Another person says that we should not put a dome on the pool, and that we should try to reach a new agreement with the pool in St-Eustache.

### **Olympia arena**

- Freon; Do not wait to change the system because the cost could be greater if the government decides, yes we must change the system and then gives us a deadline.
  - Another says – Cost of Freon? And how much do we use?
  - In reference to the Freon: If it is forced on us to change the system, will we get grants to do so? Will we be given a short or long term period to do the changes?
- If we patch the roof is it like the Olympic stadium (Montreal) – white elephant, guarantees? Warrantees? Legal action?
  - Is there a grant available or subsidies for repairing the roof.
- Suggestion : Increase the commercial use of the building. Create partnerships

- A large amount of participants are against selling the Olympia to a private corporation (big reaction).
- Q: Is the private sector looking to buy the building? Suggestion: Selling to the private sector is a one shot deal. We will get little tax in return.
- Suggestion: Possible to run the arena 12 months a year. Put boards on the floor like at the Bell Center for shows.
- It would be cost feasible vs. cost override.

### **Central Park building**

- What do we do ?
  - Leave it the way it is.
  - Sell it or give it to Maison des Jeunes so they can do their own repairs and keep it up
  - Lease where the city has no responsibilities and Maison des Jeunes must do own upkeep but the city retains ownership of the building.
  - Fund raising for building and group; do not let the building become an eye soar, or let the kids run down the building and destroy it.
- Suggestions: It costs so much to keep giving away buildings to non-profit organizations yet paying organizations such as soccer never get a building!
- What about combining associations? Suggestion: Can we transfer Maison des Jeunes to another building and give back the soccer building, so they can use it for tournaments ECT. Suggestion: This is one place to cut. Associations should make their own fund raising!
- Another says; it is important to keep kids structures so they don't go elsewhere.
- Another says; the soccer tournament is very important.
- Question; Do other cities that use our fields pay for them?

### **Pumping station**

- Q; by changing the 7 km along the 640, would that relieve pressure on the Larry Cool station? R; no, according to city manager. There is more water entering the pumping station than the city of Deux-Montagnes is pumping out to the citizens.
- Q; where is the extra water coming from? Is there 80% of water going to station that we do not know where it came from? R; there is 5000 cubic meters coming in a day to the station. Suggestions; can we have rain water go to sewage station?
- Q; can we pump into the lake? R; no, because the water contains sewage and the law does not allows us to do that.
- Q; how many times did the station overflow last year? R; it overflowed 16 times. It was less this year because we received less snow in the winter and less rain in the spring.
- Q; if the plant and system is only 10 years old why is it not working? Can we start legal actions against the people that built it? Was it bad engineering?
- Q; Do we share cost with other cities? R; no, only our water is shared not the waste or its treatment.

### **Underground infrastructures**

- We need to address the situation right now. We are not the only municipality with this problem. We have no choice but to invest.
- Q; instead of asphalt, is it possible to put concrete on streets? Concrete vs. asphalt. Suggestion : Look at what other cities are doing and compare. See what Subsidies are available from the government. 75% of the work may be subsidized. Look at it as soon as possible so the situation does not get out of control.
- Comment: A citizen was told by an employee of the city that if the water is rusted when it comes out of the tap, then why not just let it run for one hour or until the problem went away.
- Suggestion: Most people sitting in on the focus group believed that we must start the work now. Prioritize the areas of the city that need the work the most.
- Strategy vs. prioritize
- Look for government help and ideas.

### **Sound barrier**

- Comment: not a good idea. The people that purchased houses along the 640 know that the auto route was the there first. I.e. Dorval airport. Suggestion: Ask the citizens that need the sound barrier if they are willing to absorb the cost or at least part of the cost to install the barrier. – do a survey with them
  - Get them involved
  - Government subsidies
- The people in the focus group do not wish to pay for the barrier for the citizens that are asking for it.
- Comment: the sound that people are complaining about may come from the rumble strip that Transport Quebec installed along the auto route.
- Response from city employee: After a survey of 24 hrs, the noise is not just from the rumble strip.
- Comment : He moved there knowing the 640 and the sound and is living with his choice.
- \*If we had extra money maybe, but this sound barrier it not a city priority and most people in the group widely agree.

### **Garbage collection and recycling**

- A city employee presents a plan with numbers for the city of Deux-Montagnes to do its own pick up using our own employees. He believes the savings could be as much as 340 000\$ a year.
- Q; where do we send our garbage at the moment?
- Q; Save money yes, but what will it cost extra to the city
  - CSST
  - Truck repairs if they break down
  - Extra employees for the city
  - Employee benefits
- If we were to push down garbage consumption (create less garbage) would we pay less. R; we pay for garbage drop off. It is all the same price to pick up garbage as all the houses have garbage bins. If we create less garbage (reduce,

- reuse, recycle) then when the trucks arrive at the dump we will reduce costs at the dump.
- Suggestions: we need to better promote awareness of the need to reduce our garbage and the alternatives, such as
    - Recycling
    - Composting
  - We need to create programs to reduce our garbage consumption.
  - Suggestion: create a call center for compost and recycling so the large garbage trucks do not need to go up and down every street wasting gas and time.
  - Suggestion: there are other cities doing their own pick up using city employees and this could be a good idea.
  - Suggestion; the city of Kingston Ontario has a program that has it citizens using a composting bin just like garbage and recycling. This bin is picked up just like garbage and recycling on a scheduled date. This also brings down the cost of garbage.

### **Snow removal**

- Q; why does the snow plow during snow falls seems to push larger loads (distribution) of snow more often to one side of the road than the other? Is it possible to have them rotate this process each snow fall or every year?
- Suggestion: why doesn't the city do its own snow removal? Would it not be more cost effective like the garbage pickup?
- Suggestion: we should do a study and see the costs for the city.
- Comment; people found that the contract snow removal drivers drove faster and were louder than the city employees that did the same work.
- When the snow is not removed properly or on time there should be fines or penalties to the contract companies.
- Some people were not happy with the snow removal this past winter.
- We should have a contremaitre drive around and asses the work done during snow falls and clean up.
- Suggestion: we should blow the snow onto the front yards of the citizens making the streets larger in the winter. The city own the first 5 feet anyway.
- Comment: The cost of snow removal may go up if we expect more from the contract such as better and faster work.
- \*\*The citizens of Deux-Montagnes are not willing to pay more for snow removal than what we must already pay.

### **Other questions**

- Look at long term city budget.
- Stop spending money on all sorts of small projects and studies.
- Live within our means.

## **Workshop : Environment, sanitation, services to citizens and governance**

### **Ecological welfare**

Should we do more?

- Have a clean energy audit
- City cut trees all the time wherever they want. No more trees should be cut
- Cutting trees should apply to the City not only citizens.
- Type of trees being cut down should be considered
- City should put in place a plan to replant trees
- Selling compost

Program against biting insects

- Need more info on the spraying system in place

Regulation for branch collection

- What is the new regulation ?
- If you pay a contractor to cut branches, he should bring the branches
- User-payer

Compost

- Should be done in own back yard
- School composting, education needed on composting

Drop off point

- Good idea

### **Graffiti**

- Prioritize Oka Road
- One employee from the city, ½ hour every morning to clean graffiti
- Work with the kids, have a plan
- Put a wall in school for painting
- Give money at the end of the year to school committee to encourage paint on the wall
- No selling of paint to anybody less than 18 years old in the City of DM
- No easy way out

### **Neglected properties and homes**

- Lot of older people who can't afford it
- Renovation incentives, tax credit would help
- Hard to tell people what to do with their own home

### **Communication**

- Web cam so that people can watch from their home
- Telephone – in emergency – Very good
  - Should extend to cellular
- Eventually : e-mail
- On Guy street, people were informed the last day they were blasting
- Apartment building on Guy Street : people are not informed what it is

### **Governance**

- Web site
  - A place to sign so that the messages are sent to e-mail address
- Lot of people do not have a computer

### **Conclusion :**

- Urban planning : Apartment buildings on 20<sup>th</sup> avenue (Other side of the street) near the train : Will the town have to deal with the noise ? How are they going to handle it ?
- Replacement of 3 vehicles : Any new vehicles will be better than older types. Don't have to go hybrid ... cost more in maintenance.

## **Workshop : Finance: revenues, expenses and debts**

### **Tax freeze**

- Not possible
- Raising cost of living
- They do not want to be increased 25%
- Consequence : seniors on limited incomes cannot afford increase

### **Controlling our debt**

- Yes we should decrease, one idea being define pension plan for employees
- Slowly reduce the det instead of rushing it
- Create Régie Générale / with Ste-Marthe / St-Joseph work as partners
- Fire dept. covering larger territory, ex. St-Joseph

### **Totally eliminating our debt**

- Yes

### **Create new revenues**

- What is it going to cost ?
- Work with cars dam
- Old lights system maybe more economical to change them
- Surplus of electricity and sell it to hydro
- Compensate what the city uses

### **The impact of affiliated**

- Manoir Grand-Moulin should not be treated as a business
- Olympia : Use all year : rent it
- Performances – lost fixes cost from no attendance
- No more shows

### **User-pay principle**

- Yes for user fees, but not go crazy
- Once a year : membership for library

### **Subsidies**

- Share services, example : St-Eustache
- Apply for federal grants
- Hire a lower pay person with a commission

### **New subsidies before carrying out major projects**

- Prevent increase of cost – fiscal responsibility
- Prioritize what we spend or buy

**The revitalization of their downtown**

- The city should not spend money
- City should create incentives for business
- Tax reduction for existing businesses
- Charge a permit for business vehicle parked in residential areas

**Conclusion**

- Make the investments
- If it's not urgent, why repair it
- Use your logic and common sense
- Do it ! Do what you need to do
- Need more explanations on tax bills on where the money goes
- Great job Mr Bouchard