

Respect for Democracy Begins with Respect for the Facts

Longueuil, February 18, 2021 - During the City Council meeting on February 16, the elected officials unanimously adopted the Declaration of Commitment of the Union des Municipalités du Québec, "Democracy in respect, out of respect for democracy". Ironically, the last Council was marked by several inaccurate and false statements from the elected officials of Action Longueuil. Today, Longueuil Citoyen's elected officials want to rectify the facts, because they believe that democracy requires that we first tell the truth.

The tutelage of the Office municipal d'habitation de Longueuil (OMHL):

Councillor Tommy Théberge and Councillor Monique Bastien, who is also Chairman of the Board of the OMHL, said that the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing had put the organization under tutelage following the request of the 5 elected officials from the Agglomeration of Longueuil who sit on the Board of Directors of the Office.

That's false! In her February 5 press release, the Minister said, "I have read the [SCE group's] report and the facts in it are very disturbing. As Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, I cannot tolerate such a situation, which endangers the well-being of tenants and employees [...] I am therefore starting the process leading to the tutelage today [...] I also informed the Mayor of this."

"Not only is their version contradicted by the Minister, but it does not even take reality into account. It took 2 weeks, 4 board meetings and the leaking of the damning report to the media for the majority of the members of the Board to send a letter to the Minister before the official announcement of the tutelage. How about a formal resolution from the Board of Directors instead of a letter written at the last minute? I don't think they were diligent. I rather think that Ms. Bastien and her colleagues elected on the Board of Directors are clumsily trying to save face" according to Councillor Michel Lanctôt.

Let us note that once again, the Mayor did not comment on the crisis that is shaking the OMHL during the last City Council meeting.

The remuneration of Councillor Robert Myles:

Councillor Bouchard went with a completely gratuitous attack by maintaining that the remuneration of Mr. Robert Myles was \$152,000 between 2013 and 2017, higher than the Mayor at the time.

That's false! Mr. Myles' total remuneration was \$103,310 in 2016. This figure is representative of the 2013-2017 period. Robert Myles was then President of the Borough of Greenfield Park and Leader of the Opposition.

In addition, we should mention that before 2018, the remuneration of elected municipal officials was governed by Quebec law. In Longueuil, the maximum remuneration of a councillor was limited to 90% of the remuneration of the Mayor. The mayor's salary was around \$140,000 and the maximum salary for an elected official was around \$125,000.

Since 2018, there is no longer any ceiling and so far the Mayor has refused to restore a certain limit for the overall remuneration of elected officials, as proposed by opposition officials.

Attacking City Council officials by spreading disinformation on their remuneration seems to us to be a bad strategy on the part of Mr. Bouchard to defend the remuneration of over \$250,000 for the Mayoress of Longueuil.

The elected officials of Longueuil Citoyen invite Councillor Bouchard to retract and apologize for having misled the population about the remuneration of his colleague, Mr. Robert Myles.

The status of the Borough of Greenfield Park:

Councillor Bouchard also questioned the relevance for Greenfield Park to have three elected officials, including two borough councilors, while the districts of Longueuil are represented by a single elected official for a similar population of 15,000 inhabitants.

Let us recall the facts! As a result of municipal mergers, some former towns, including Greenfield Park, have been granted the status of borough, itself governed by a borough council made up of elected officials. This status is now protected in the Charter of the City of Longueuil, which is voted by the National Assembly of Quebec.

"If the Mayor wants to go back on the consensus concerning the special status of the community of Greenfield Park, she will meet with strong opposition from us. Our citizens are very attached to their identity and ask for nothing less than respect from the Mayor and her colleagues. It seems to me that Longueuil should have other priorities than reopening old quarrels", said Robert Myles, the President of the Borough of Greenfield.

Skating rinks in Longueuil for the 2020-2021 season:

Councillor Tommy Théberge said that "this year the overall ice rink supply has been reduced, so I think it's wrong to say there are no rinks. In fact, in Longueuil there are skating rinks. We have more than 40 accessible rinks."

It's false! Although Longueuil normally has 40 rinks in total, the Mayor announced last fall that only 27 of them would be open to the public this winter. She cited reasons related to sanitary and labor requirements as the official opposition denounced a decision taken without Council approval. Citizens have also expressed their dissatisfaction for several months with this situation.

For the leader of the opposition, Xavier Léger, "such behavior shows the double talk of the Mayor and her team when it comes to respect. One wonders whether the code of ethics for the elected officials applies only to independent elected officials and those of the Official Opposition. For the latter, "the Mayor shows once again that she is incapable of raising the bar in the City Council".