

Minutes of the Council of Beaconsfield

Minutes of the City of Beaconsfield's special Municipal Council meeting, held at City Hall, 303 Beaconsfield Boulevard, Beaconsfield, Québec, on December 19, 2022, at 7:30 p.m.

WERE PRESENT:

His Honour the Mayor Georges Bourelle and Councillors Dominique Godin, Martin St-Jean, Robert Mercuri, David Newell, Roger Moss, Peggy Alexopoulos

ALSO PRESENT:

Patrice Boileau, Director General, Nathalie Libersan-Laniel, City Clerk and Director of Public Affairs, Eva Vyncke, Executive Assistant, Robert Lacroix, Director and Treasurer, Finance and Treasury

1. OPENING OF MEETING

His Honour the Mayor calls the meeting to order.

2. AGENDA

2.1 Adoption of the agenda of the City of Beaconsfield's special Council meeting of December 19, 2022, at 7:30 p.m.

2022-12-486 It is moved by Councillor David Newell, seconded by Councillor Roger Moss and **UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** to adopt the agenda of the City of Beaconsfield's special Council meeting of December 19, 2022, at 7:30 p.m., as presented.

5. PUBLIC QUESTION PERIOD

The City Clerk announces the beginning of the public question period.

His Honour the Mayor reveals that Council has received several similar questions, he explains that he will read all the questions and then he will answer with a global response.

His Honour the Mayor presents four questions:

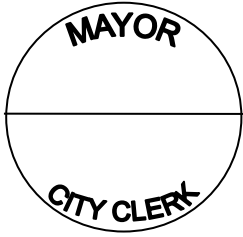
1- A resident is concerned with the unjust Agglomeration taxes caused by the missing neutrality coefficient in the algorithm. He would like to know what is the neutrality coefficient that has been missed out since 2019. He also asks why Mayor Bourelle, as the Vice Chairman of the Agglomeration Finance Committee, was unable to resolve this issue.

2- A resident states that he was told by the taxation department that City taxes would go up around 15% and that no information is available for the other taxes. He suggests that the City reduces expenditures as this tax increase is unacceptable.

3- A resident is concerned with the tax assessment hike of 12% for 2023. He asks if the Mayor and Council shared their concern with MNA Gregory Kelley on the outrageous fees demerged municipalities are paying. He then adds that considering the services the City of Beaconsfield receives from the Agglomeration, the amount paid is abusively unfair. He states that the MNAs of minority parties should be concerned with this situation, especially, as it impacts local seniors on fixed incomes.

4- A resident describes in a preamble the increase of her home assessment. She then states that the exorbitant increase is shocking. She also explains that from her point of view, the City is already provided with a significant source of revenues from the 'welcome tax' calculated on the new sales prices. She adds that this situation stresses long-term and now retired residents of Beaconsfield. Finally, she asks how the City of Beaconsfield justifies the increase.

His Honour the Mayor answers to the four questions. He says that the issue of Agglomeration taxes is a complicated issue and to better understand the problem that exists right now with the sharing of quote-

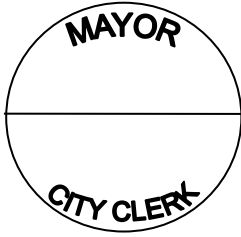


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part taxation, we need to go back to an agreement that was signed in 2008. It was signed by all 15 demerged municipalities, the City of Montreal and the Minister of Municipal Affairs at the time, Ms. Nathalie Normandeau. This agreement established the relative weight for each city's sharing of agglomeration expenses. This relative weight was to remain constant for future evaluation roles and only new development could change the relative weight up or down. It was also agreed that a new calculation algorithm at every evaluation role would ensure that neutrality be maintained. In 2017, a consensus was reached to accommodate a specific situation: the transfer of the Veteran Hospital located in Ste-Anne-de-Bellevue from Federal to Provincial jurisdiction. This created a distortion for Ste- Anne in establishing its real estate wealth. The consensus was to have a temporary agreement to solve this issue. It was agreed that this temporary agreement would end at the end of 2019 before the 2020 evaluation role became official. It was also agreed that during the period from 2017 to the end of 2019 that negotiations would take place to find a new fair and just formula to share agglomeration expenses between the demerged municipalities and the City of Montreal. Unfortunately, the City of Montreal stonewalled the negotiations and there was no new agreement signed and agreed upon by all 15 demerged municipalities, the City of Montreal and the Provincial Government. Most important, the 2008 agreement was never rescinded or annulled. The 2008 agreement should have kicked back in for the 2020 and 2022 evaluation roles and the relative weight as determined in the 2008 agreement maintained in order to assure neutrality. Montreal did not do this. By not applying the neutrality rules set in the 2008 agreement, the City of Montreal is able to reduce its share of agglomeration expenses by \$122 million and increase the share of the demerged municipalities by \$122 million for the period 2020 to 2025 which covers two evaluation roles. That is also why Beaconsfield's share of agglomeration expenses will go up by 11.9% compared by 2.7% for the City of Montreal and an average of 8% for all demerged municipalities. There is no increase in services to justify such an exaggerated increase. In Beaconsfield for 2023, the average home will pay \$488.38 more for agglomeration taxes. On the other hand, local Beaconsfield taxes in 2023 for the average home will go up by \$94.43 or 3.98%. The real problem is the governance of the agglomeration. The City of Montreal has 87% of the vote and demerged municipalities 13%. As a result, decisions at agglomeration council meetings are rubber-stamped by demerged municipalities. We are not consulted in the preparation of the agglomeration budgets. We are not consulted on decisions affecting the agglomeration expenses. An example is the decision to add 250 SPVM police. No one ever came to the demerged municipalities to discuss this decision and the benefits for demerged municipalities. We just pay! In 2019, it was established that the residents of demerged municipalities paid about 60% more than the City of Montreal residents for the same agglomeration services and this is now even worse since 2020 because neutrality in evaluation roles is no longer respected. Demerged municipalities are cash cows for the City of Montreal. Without proper representation. The agglomeration was created by the Provincial Government and only the Provincial Government has the power to make changes. I highly recommend to Beaconsfield residents who are unhappy and dissatisfied with the scandalous agglomeration tax increases to write to Ms. Andrée Laforest, Minister of Municipal Affairs and copy your MNA Gregory Kelley as well as me as your Mayor.

A resident asks to explain where the data comes from in order to calculate the value of residences for the 2023 budget. He states that his single-family home, whose value is below average, has increased by 45%, versus the average residence which increased by 41% in 2023. He adds that this means that his house, which is worth 15% less than the average, will have a higher-than-average net tax increase.

His Honour the Mayor asks Director General, Mr. Patrice Boileau, to answer the question. Mr. Boileau explains that the data comes from the new property values filed on September 14, 2022, by the Montreal Assessment Service and is reflecting the market values as of July 1, 2021. These assessments will come into effect on January 1, 2023, and will be used for the next three years. On the other hand, during the previous roll 2020-2022, it is possible that the value of the property has increased less than the average. In this case, the taxes will have been



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below average.

A resident is concerned with the notice of assessment dated November 21, 2022. He asks for the City to justify the increase of 45% in the total municipal tax roll for fiscal years 2023-2024-2025, with the enormous increase of 58.7% for the building portion, when all that has been done in 10 years is regular maintenance and no major renovations.

Mr. Boileau states that the increase of the evaluation of a house is based on the real estate market as of July 1, 2021, different sectors may have a different evaluation. Nonetheless, this evaluation is used for this assessment. The market was very strong lately, consequently it shows on the property evaluations. He reminds residents that they may file an application, before May 1, 2023, for administrative review and request a revision of the evaluation of their home from the Montreal Assessment Service. He also cautions residents that there is a cost for this review and suggests that the residents research the market for their sector before applying for a review.

A resident asks when the overcharge lawsuit against the City of Montreal will be going to court and how much has been spent for this initiative.

Mr. Boileau indicates that the City hopes to be in court as soon as possible but realistically speaking we may have to wait another year in a half to three years. Meanwhile, there are still some legal steps to be undertaken by the lawyers before a hearing date is scheduled. The City has spent \$234,314 net taxes to protect our resident's financial interest. In January 2023, the contested amount that is being paid under protest since 2020 will reach 10M\$ and will increase by 4M\$ a year, for the two following years of the roll, if the situation is not corrected.

A resident states that he has recently received his property evaluation and sees a significant increase. He asks what is the relation between the property tax increase and the budget, considering the rate of inflation.

Mr. Boileau answers that the evaluation of a property has nothing to do with the City budget. He explains that the budget is based on the residents' needs. The City has been trying to keep the increase in budget under the inflation rate. He mentions that the budget presentation can be consulted online for residents that did not see it yet. He adds that currently the inflation is at 7%, the budget will be at around 5% and the City's portion of the taxes will be under 4%. He explains that the budget applies the numbers of the evaluation, but it is not directly related to the property taxes. He agrees that the first year of the roll there might be a wider spread but the following years the spread is about the same for everyone.

A resident suggests publishing on the City's site, a pertinent example when to apply for an adjustment to the municipal assessment roll. He congratulates the City of Beaconsfield for its sound management of taxes. He then asks if somebody from the City of Montreal could come to Beaconsfield to answer the questions from the residents concerning the Agglomeration part of the taxes and explain the unfair increase.

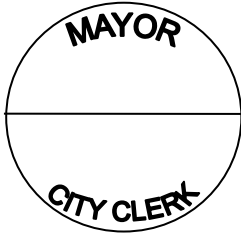
His Honour the Mayor indicates that he does think anybody will accept the invitation. He invites the resident to attend the next Agglomeration Council meeting and ask why the Agglomeration taxes of the related cities have gone up 8% when they went up 2.7% in Montreal, he adds that in Beaconsfield it is actually 11.9%.

A resident shares his concern regarding Agglomeration portion of the taxes.

His Honour the Mayor strongly suggests that the resident attends the next Agglomeration Council meeting.

A resident asks for an update on the lawsuit against Montreal.

Mr. Boileau answers that the parties are gathering the information needed to present to the judge, from there a hearing date could be confirmed. It is expected to wait at least 12 to 18 months before getting a hearing date.



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A resident, as President of the Beaconsfield Citizen Association, invites residents to consult the BCA site which includes different tools to help citizens: template letters for MNA, ministers, etc. The BCA supports the City's initiative concerning the legal action on overtaxation. He then suggests having a group of people from Beaconsfield showing up at the Agglomeration Council meeting. He explains that as the City's lawyers are confident the results of the legal action are promising, why are the surplus revenues not used to compensate the excess of the Agglomeration tax. He finally asks to explain the different phases of the Imagine project and the costs related to each phase.

His Honour the Mayor thanks the resident for his support and adds that letters sent or a group of people showing up to the Agglomeration Council meeting will not attract enough attention. He explains that only the Provincial Government has the power to act and indicates that 15 buses going to Quebec City would be an action taken seriously. He explains that the surplus is already used to reduce the Beaconsfield portion of the taxes, but is not used to support the Agglomeration overtaxation. The City believes in reducing the City's portion of the taxes and uses the remaining surplus for the different City projects. Mr. Boileau explains that the City is still in anticipation of a grant. The different phases are related to an Architecture contest, the preparation of plans and estimates, the beginning of the construction in 2025, the breakdown is not fixed at this time.

The question period ends at 8:19 p.m.

30. FINANCE AND TREASURY

30.1 Adoption of the 2023 budget of the City of Beaconsfield

2022-12-487 It is moved by Councillor Dominique Godin, seconded by Councillor Martin St-Jean and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to approve the 2023 budget in the amount of \$57,766,400 for revenues and expenses.

30.2 Adoption of the three-year Capital Expenditure Program for 2023-2024-2025

2022-12-488 It is moved by Councillor Robert Mercuri, seconded by Councillor Peggy Alexopoulos and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to approve the three-year Capital Expenditure Program for 2023-2024-2025.

95. CLOSING OF MEETING

It is moved by Councillor Peggy Alexopoulos, seconded by Councillor Martin St-Jean and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to close the special meeting at 8:20 p.m.

MAYOR

CITY CLERK