

Ma question sera suivie de quelques commentaires factuels et d'une suggestion :

Étant donné la volonté maintes fois exprimée par notamment des citoyens-nes de CDN-NDG pour leur réelle participation quant aux choix à faire en matière de développement socio-économique, de patrimoine architectural, d'urbanisme et de qualité de vie dans leur ville ou quartier, je souhaiterais savoir si votre Commission ou certains de ses membres songent à proposer que la tenue des séances régulières du Comité consultatif sur l'urbanisme (CCU) soient ouvertes au grand public dans leurs arrondissements respectifs, voire pour l'ensemble de la Ville de Montréal ?

En effet et sous une forme ou une autre, il semble que plusieurs arrondissements (Roxboro-Pierrefonds, St-Laurent) et autres grandes villes (Gatineau et Québec) permettent déjà, et parfois depuis plus de 15 ans, une participation du public aux séances régulières de leur CCU.

De plus et à titre d'exemple, dans l'arrondissement CDN-NDG et en vertu même de l'article 16 du Règlement sur le CCU, les séances régulières de cet organisme (essentiellement consultatif et donc, non-décisionnel) pourraient être temporairement ou dorénavant tenues en public et ce, sur simple vote majoritaire des membres de son Conseil d'arrondissement.

De même, je vous soulignerais que le CCU de l'arrondissement CDN-NDG siège déjà en public en matière de démolition et que cela semble se dérouler efficacement et dans le respect de toutes les parties impliquées, soit les promoteurs, les commissaires et les citoyen-nes ordinaires qui assistent à ces séances spéciales du CCU.

À titre de suggestion et sous réserve d'une évaluation publique subséquente, l'établissement d'un projet-pilote d'une durée minimale de 12 mois dans notamment l'arrondissement CDN-NDG pourrait peut-être mieux faciliter l'introduction et la mise-en-oeuvre de la tenue en public de toutes les séances des CCU, dans l'ensemble des arrondissements et du territoire de la Ville de Montréal.

Au besoin, répéter la question au 1er paragraphe....

One UPC works fine in public

*CDN-NDG's stays private,
St. Laurent works in the open*

BY JESSICA MURPHY
The Chronicle

St-Laurent may be the only urban planning committee (UPC) in Quebec to be fully public, but it works well nonetheless.

"We've found that an open process leads to better decisions," St-Laurent Mayor Alan DeSousa said. "We're able to identify the problems early in the game, and we're able to do something about them."

The borough's UPC has been public since its inception in 1990. It has six members, two of which are elected representatives. A public notice is published in local papers prior to each monthly meeting that includes information on the agenda. This allows residents to attend meetings on projects that have a direct impact on their area.

Citizens regularly attend the meetings. There are usually about 20 citizens at each meeting, said St-Laurent spokesperson Johanne Houde.

During the meeting, projects are presented individually, and applicants can explain them to the committee and the public.

"There are no formalities. It goes from a simple citizen, who can talk freely and openly, or a contractor and architect with a very technical project," DeSousa said. "It's done in complete openness and transparency."

"It allows the committee to get all points of view," he said. "Based on that public input, the committee formulates recommendations to the council."

A UPC's mandate is to study and make recommendations on municipal activities related to urban planning, like zoning and construction. Borough council can then accept or refuse any of the recommendations during council meetings. In CDN-NDG, it's made up of seven volunteer community members, and chaired by Borough Mayor Michael Applebaum.

There have been discussions in CDN-NDG as to whether this borough's meetings should be held in public. A public UPC is supported by councillors Marvin Rotrand and Warren Allmand, but other councillors have raised concerns that public meetings would create a backlog in projects being treated, or that they would lead to increased speculation.

DeSousa noted that St-Laurent had no problems with speculation. The borough is also having a growth spurt, so the committee treats a "significant volume" of files.

In 2005, the committee treated 186 files – including 97 new construction projects. In 2004, they worked on 257. The UPC also oversees demolition projects.

"It's far from being a limited committee and a permissive committee," he said. "It's a very productive committee."

In fact, having the applicants and the UPC meeting together allows them to accelerate projects when necessary.

"It's something that works well for us, and it does seem to be getting us results," DeSousa said. "It's part of our municipal culture."