



Ville de Saint-Lazare



Mayor's office



Saint-Lazare (Québec)
January 27, 2010

A word from the Mayor

The Ethics Committee

Dear fellow citizens,

In December 2009, as you know, I supported the decision to create an **Ethics Committee** whose members (elected officials and residents) will be given the mandate to write the **Code** to which all elected officials shall conform. Indeed, in a common concern for transparency, not only rules, but also elements of reflection, will be brought to this document to help us better play our role as elected officials.

In the meantime, while we are still at the stage of selecting the members of this committee and before reaching a final and satisfactory document, I did provide members of Council with some guidelines for conducting meetings in the scope of their work, more specifically meetings conducted with promoters.

If it hasn't already happened, some promoters will certainly try to discuss their specific business file with elected officials. I am a firm believer that private conversations between a promoter and an elected official are inappropriate. On their own, Councillors cannot commit the Town in any way, shape or form and cannot openly discuss a matter for which no resolution has been adopted. Furthermore, meetings held in the absence of a department Director run a higher risk of being less productive, for lack of having all the relevant information on hand.

In the past, elected officials have found themselves in precarious positions. As elected members and members of a Council, we have a responsibility to be loyal towards the Town. Let's not forget promoters are in business to succeed. They will not hesitate to use privileged information to their own advantage or to disclose the content of a conversation should they be able to benefit from it. An elected official who agrees to meet with a promoter behind closed doors may be held liable, may be called to testify against the Town and may, consequently, be found in conflict of interest.

For all these reasons, private meetings held between an elected official and a promoter or an interest group will be met with a lot of scepticism during our working table meetings and other meetings. As Mayor, I advise against private conversations between a Councillor and a promoter or a pressure group. I believe to be credible and well documented, meetings must include it is the Town management.


Le maire,
Pierre Kary