



Ville de Saint-Lazare



Mayor's office



*Saint-Lazare (Québec)
February 8, 2010*

A word from the Mayor

Communications Policy

Dear fellow citizens,

The Town of Saint-Lazare has decided to formalize an official communication policy for dealing with the media.

The policy seeks to ensure that accurate information is communicated to the media in an appropriate and timely fashion.

It also seeks to allow directors of our departments to focus their time and energy on their work rather than on politics and the media. Directors are not authorized to address the press since they do not speak for the city; this is the role of the elected officials and of the director of communications. Accordingly, media are to direct all of the requests to the director of communications or members of council. Council members are always entitled to speak to the public in a truly democratic system. Other city employees are not authorized to answer queries from the media and shall certainly not return phone calls. Their time is best used servicing residents.

Residents can always contact city hall and their query, relating to their personal matters only, will be directed to the responsible person. An improved complaint management system is admittedly required at city hall.

Until now, some media felt entitled to repeatedly call city employees and to call several city employees searching for a "newsworthy" comment. As mayor, I did not feel this was the proper use of city employee time. Our directors must be committed to servicing residents and to advancing projects that have been mandated by the council. It was not in the collective interest of residents for directors and other employees to use their time in telephone interviews with the media, nor to react to the sense of entitlement by media that their repeated calls be returned promptly. This was not proper use of their time and hence of taxpayer dollars. Moreover, it subjected city employees to abusive language as well as confrontations and conflicts outside their job description.

In short, the official communication policy will serve the collective interest of taxpayers and of employees. The details of the official communication policy will become public once it has been communicated with the media itself.


Pierre Kary, mayor