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PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

The Foyer de Charité site must remain for the benefit of the population

Sutton, December 6, 2023—The municipal council of the Town of Sutton wishes to inform the population of a situation that is, to say the least, worrying, surrounding the future of the Foyer de charité de Sutton, and more specifically with regard to the decision of its Board of Directors to reject out of hand the community project proposed by the Town.

Since the final closure of the Foyer de charité de Sutton on July 27, the Town of Sutton has made numerous approaches to the directors of the non-profit organization Villa Châteauneuf Inc. which is responsible for managing the assets.

However, the Board of Directors has always refused to discuss a community centre project with the Town of Sutton, the mayor or his representatives.

“We made an offer of mediation, we proposed a meeting with them and local leaders, but both were refused. The board members’ objective is unequivocal: to block the Sutton project. And yet, it seems logical and beneficial to develop a project in collaboration with the various partners, whose spin-offs will benefit all our citizens,” explains Robert Benoît, Mayor of the Town of Sutton.

A unifying, multifunctional project

Essentially, the Town wishes to create a non-profit organization to manage the community centre in order to accommodate several social organizations and make it a unifying, multifunctional space.

“We propose an exciting project, defined by the community, chosen and transparently managed by the community through a non-profit corporation to be set up. A project that would bring together Sutton’s community, economic and cultural groups! The need is there, and we have a heritage gem that could be fully occupied, while fulfilling the ambitions of the patron, Mr. Eugene Dyer*, who donated the land and a considerable sum of money that enabled the construction of the Villa Châteauneuf building. Indeed, it was his wish that the donated plots of land should be used, employed and enjoyed forever by the said donees and their successors, for educational purposes, in the English and French languages, in the village of Sutton”, says Mr. Benoît.



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The community project in jeopardy

The Board of Directors of Villa Châteauneuf Inc. appears instead to prefer to offer the entire property to the Le Chaînon organization. “As noble as their mission may be, we believe that the project we are presenting respects the vision of Eugene and George Dyer and his current family, who have given us their agreement,” insists Mayor Benoît.

At this stage, the Town of Sutton believes there are two options for a reasonable resolution to this situation:

1. Le Chaînon needs to renounce acceptance of the donation offered by Villa Châteauneuf, so as not to aggravate an already polarized situation;
2. The Chairman of the Board agrees to meet, along with representatives of the Diocese of Saint-Hyacinthe, a delegation of the Town Council and citizens of Sutton to discuss the terms of a harmonious transition towards the creation of a community centre in the Foyer de Charité building for the benefit of the citizens of Sutton.

“We would like to make it clear that the Town’s position in this matter is in no way against Le Chaînon. We recognize the organization’s very positive social record, but for the good of the Sutton community, the Town intends to continue to make every effort to ensure that the site and building benefit Sutton citizens first and foremost,” concludes the mayor.

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Source
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* To find out more about Eugene Dyer, click [here](#).