

FECHIMM express

April 2010

English translation

A word from the president

Build on our values

2010 AGA April 23 and 24

We need to consider taking new actions to deal with the numerous challenges we are facing, which actions could be decisive for our future. This season, with the method adopted for FECHIMM'S general assembly we want to give preference to reflexion and exchange.

The Board members strongly hope that at this 2010 AGA they will have the opportunity to make the necessary observations and to find the solutions needed to be able to pursue the construction of a solid Movement.

We believe that the various activities on the program at the annual meeting of the housing cooperatives of the Metropolitan Montreal will feed this much needed reflexion to put into motion the Federation's action plan.

The workshop « My co-op at a glance » will allow the participants to make their own evaluation of the health of their own collective enterprise. Afterwards, the discussion on the future of our cooperatives, bringing together five panelists from different backgrounds will be an opportunity to reflect on the values and actions that should be prioritized to ensure the sustainability of the housing cooperative in our territory.

Recent events have shown us that there are reasons to act. In Quebec, the harsh budget of the Charest government has not cut into the AccèsLogis for next year, but neither has the Coalition for Community Housing received a commitment on a multiyear basis.

This news, combined with data from a study by the Canadian Federation of Municipalities showing that the gap between the richer rich and the poor has widened in the Montreal area in recent years tells us that we cannot lower our guard.

There is no doubt that our group is better able to defend and propagate the cooperative housing model, it is up to our 435 member cooperatives to use their collective strength to get there. The next step in this endeavor is the 2010 AGA and we hope to see you there in large numbers.

Louis-Philippe Duperré
President

News from the Board of Directors

November's orientation symposium

FECHIMM' Board of directors will invite its members to an orientation symposium, to be held on Saturday, next November 27th. The activity aims to prepare the Triennial Orientation Congress of the Confédération québécoise des coopératives d'habitation (CQCH) to be held in May 2011. 34 cooperators constitute FECHIMM's delegation to this event according to the regulations of CQCH.

The decision to hold this orientation symposium has led the Board to give up the idea of organizing an education seminar in the fall. However, it is still possible that major workshop activities will be scheduled before the end of 2010.

Reducing the use of paper

Following the guidelines proposed in the policy framework for a green and fair FECHIMM, adopted in 2009, the Board of Directors of the Federation has significantly reduced the use of printed materials at these meetings. Thus, since the beginning of the year, laptops have replaced the piles of paper documents for board meetings. In addition to reducing paper consumption, the transition to the electronic age also allows administrators to view a variety of reference materials at these meetings.

In the news

Canada's economic action plan 5,8 millions to housing cooperatives and to NPOs of the Montreal region

Sixty-two housing cooperatives and non-profit organizations interested in housing located in the greater Montreal area received more than \$ 5.8 million under the Economic Action Plan of Canada, under investment in renovation and improvement of social housing. These data published by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) in February are not limited to FECHIMM's territory, they also include the housing cooperatives in Longueuil.

A second wave of grants should be confirmed this spring. Housing cooperatives had until February 22 to submit their project. Across the country, 75 million dollars should be handed over as part of Phase 2 of the plan. Eligible work includes general improvements, energy-efficiency improvements and adaptation of housing for persons with disabilities. Cooperatives who have submitted requests should receive the decision of the CMHC in the coming weeks.

1229 new cooperative housing units on FECHIMM's territory

The cooperative housing stock continues to grow on FECHIMM's territory. In 2009, 450 housing units in 10 projects have been delivered and 779 housing units were in the process of being delivered in 15 other projects. Carried out under AccèsLogis Québec and Affordable Housing Québec, the 1229 new cooperative housing units were done with the support of the Société d'habitation du Québec. Of the total, 1125 units will be built in Montreal and 104 others in Laval.

2010-2011 Quebec Budget 3000 community housing units, but no long-term vision.

The Coalition for Community Housing, in which the Cooperative Housing Movement is involved, welcomed the funding announcement that will allow the construction of 3 000 new community housing units in the coming year with the AccèsLogis program. It also welcomed the announcement of additional aid for projects in the regions and in small municipalities.

However, it disapproves of the fact that the Government has not yet reinstated this program in a multi-year planning as envisaged by the 2008 election commitment to extend the AccèsLogis program for 5 years at a minimum of 3 000 community housing units per year.

The Coalition believes it is necessary to continue with the AccèsLogis program in order to provide better housing to Quebec households who face a shortage of affordable housing units and to meet many other needs such as for the homeless people or the elderly for example.

The findings of the Coalition is also shared by many social actors and by more than one hundred municipalities in Quebec, including major urban centers that have requested again this year, an extension of the program over 5 years.

The 2010 AGA

It is under the theme "Building on our values" that the 434 cooperatives members of the Fédération des coopératives d'habitation intermunicipale du Montréal métropolitain are invited to attend the 2010 Annual General Assembly.

The AGA to be held on April 23 and 24 at the Holiday Inn Select, in the heart of Chinatown, will propose to the delegates to continue the discussion initiated in the 2009 Education Symposium on the management practices most likely to ensure the sustainability of the housing cooperatives.

Discussion on the future of our cooperatives

Actors in the Movement involved at different levels, will participate in a discussion on the values to move forward and prioritize actions that will allow our cooperatives to face the upcoming challenges.

François Saillant, coordinator of FRAPRU, Denis Plante, administrator at FECHIMM and responsible for the political action committee, Pauline Filiatrault, who initiated a solidarity cooperative project for Seniors in Saint-Jerome, André Fortin, analyst Services SOEs to the Caisse d'économie solidaire Desjardins and Jean-Guy Lague, educator and pioneer in the development of housing cooperatives in Montreal, will take part in this exchange.

The discussion will be led by Mrs. Constance Ramaciere who will chair the general assembly in 2010. Lasting one hour, this will take place in a framework which encourages interaction between guests and participants in the room and will start at 2 p.m. on Saturday, April 24.

The facilitator will stimulate the discussion according to major issues that our cooperatives face, such as participation, development of new cooperatives, the end of Operating Agreements, the need to renovate, how to encourage social diversity, the disappearance of rent subsidies. The discussion will be filmed in anticipation of a broadcast on the website of the Federation.

My co-op at a glance

Delegates at the 2010 AGA will be invited to participate in an exercise allowing them to build a picture of the health of their cooperative according to administrative, associative, financial and property requirements. The questionnaire presented and explained to the participants will then be available on the FECHIMM's website that boards of directors from cooperatives can use to determine the self-portrait of their cooperative.

Participation of Laure Waridel and of Steven Guilbeault

Special guests are expected at the FECHIMM's 2010 AGA. Waridel, pioneer of fair trade and responsible consumption in Quebec and Steven Guilbeault, co-founder and assistant coordinator of Équiterre will take part in the event.

Laure Waridel, spokesperson for the Caisse d'économie solidaire Desjardins, main sponsor of FECHIMM's 2010 AGA, will speak on April 23 around 8:50 p.m. about the consumption and socially responsible investment. On April 24, at 11:30 a.m., Steven Guilbeault will be invited to speak about the reasons that motivated him to join a housing cooperative, the characteristics of the project of the cooperative Coteau Vert in which he participated and the links he draws between his environmental values and his choice to live in a housing cooperative.

Election of the administrators, the delegates and commissioners

Five of the nine director positions at FECHIMM are up for election at the 2010 AGA. Delegates will also elect the 8 delegates who will complete the FECHIMM delegation for CQCH's annual congress, in May, in Orford in the Eastern Townships. Delegates from cooperatives owning preferred shares from FECHIMM may also elect three members to the Commission de crédit.

CHANGES TO THE REGULATIONS OF THE DEVELOPMENT FUND OF THE COOPERATIVE INVESTMENT PROGRAM

The amendments proposed by FECHIMM's Board of Directors to the Regulations of the Development Fund of the Cooperative Investment Program (PIC) is to put beyond any doubt, in the text of the regulation, the non-profit character of the Fund. The proposed amendments strictly provide clarification as to the past practice for the payment of interest on preferred shares of Classes A, B, C and D and do not alter in any way, the conditions of preferred shares previously issued or alter the goals of the Fund.

Participant's kit to the 2010 AGA

To be well prepared for FECHIMM's 2010 AGA, visit www.fechimm.coop and download the participant's kit to the 2010 AGA.

Featured co-op

The Coopérative d'habitation Lézarts A leading player in an emerging cultural hub

The Centre-Sud neighborhood in the eastern Ville-Marie borough, has suffered from deindustrialization that has hit the old working-class neighborhoods east of Montreal. On Parthenais street, artists and artisans have given a new vocation to the industrial buildings.

Located just steps from the Grover factory, a landmark for artists and other designers and the Chat des artistes, a new center of artistic creation, the Cooperative Lézarts has been involved since 2002 in the revival of the sector.

Bringing together visual art and media artists, the Lézarts Housing Cooperative moved into a former children's clothing factory, formerly known as the Manhattan Children's Wear. The building was recycled in 2002 and now houses 33 affordable housing units and a viewing room: The Boiler (La Chaufferie).

With generous windows, the majority of homes have 12 foot high ceilings and many are on two and three levels. The surface area of 33 housing unit/workshops vary between 570 and 1070 square feet.

The architect responsible for designing the cooperative Lézarts, Colin Munroe, from the CDH Technical Resource Group won the 2002 Canadian award for housing in the "concept and design" category by CMHC.

Both a dwelling, a creation, production and exchange place, the Lézarts Housing Cooperative wants to promote the development of the artistic career of its residents. One of its housing units is also used as a residence for artists invited by the Conseil des Arts et des Lettres du Québec.

An exhibition on the past of the building, housing the cooperative

The Maison de la Culture Frontenac hosted this winter an exhibition of the artists who are members of the Coopérative Lézarts. Called « The Manhattan Children's Wear presents its new exceptional collection », the exhibition was interested in the past of the century-old building that houses the cooperative. Around fifteen works including paintings, photographs, videos and installations have allowed us to go back into the past of the textile industry in Montreal.

Lézarts and international aid

Interventions from Lézarts residents are not only artistic. On April 11, the Cooperative organized in its backyard, a sale of empenadas for the benefit of disaster-stricken indigenous people of Chile, after the violent earthquake that struck the country in February.

FECHIMM welcomes its new members

Four cooperatives joined the Federation since the beginning of 2010. They are Francoeur, Clairière de Mainbourg, Les deux écus and Coop de solidarité intergénérationnelle lavalloise cooperatives. Their membership brings to 438 the number of members at FECHIMM, which represents today, more than 10000 cooperative housing units in the Metropolitan Montréal.

A federation at the service of its members

Group purchasing

Two new partners for FECHIMM

FECHIMM has just signed new partnership agreements that will result in significant economic benefits for housing cooperatives that choose to avail themselves of the services. These involve the provision of electrical equipment and distribution of natural gas.

Electrical supplies

The partnership with JD Paré électrique will allow cooperatives that are members of FECHIMM to benefit from very competitive prices on a wide variety of electrical supplies and lighting products. The two-year agreement will allow them to obtain these products at wholesale prices.

J.D Paré électrique will offer cooperatives assistance visits to help with their orders and in identifying products; they may also make the verification of material owned by the cooperative. According to the needs of the cooperatives, the partner could visit them on a monthly basis. JD Paré will pay for delivery costs for all orders of \$ 100 or more.

Wholesaler and distributor of electrical supplies, located in Trois-Rivières since 1978, JD Paré is already working in the Efficient Co-op Program as a business partner. The company is the only vendor to offer a turnkey service, including preparation of forms for cashback from Hydro-Québec.

Natural Gas

FECHIMM concluded a partnership agreement with the firm Athena-Energy, a Quebec supplier of natural gas. This partnership aims to enable cooperatives consumers of natural gas to gain a collective buying power allowing them to obtain a better rate and especially to make them immune to fluctuations by offering a flat rate for a predetermined period.

The company offers a supply service and an expertise in purchasing strategy. In May and June, FECHIMM will contact the boards of 84 member cooperatives and consumers of natural gas who could take advantage of this benefit. An information kit including a model resolution to join the purchasing group will be sent to these cooperatives.

By joining this purchasing group, the cooperatives involved will know in advance the price to pay for the supply of natural gas for the chosen period, in addition to benefiting from market conditions, which are currently very favorable. The current price of natural gas is one of the lowest in eight years.

By joining the fixed price program, cooperatives continue to receive a single bill from Gaz Metro, but the price for gas consumed will be determined by Athena Energy. The more cooperatives to join this group, the better the rate. To this end, FECHIMM is currently working on extending the benefits of this partnership with cooperatives, members of other Quebec regional federations.

Community Resources

Collective kitchens of the Grand Plateau

Despite its reputation as being affluent, Plateau Mont-Royal is home not only to the wealthy. It is estimated that nearly 32% of the population of the district live below the poverty line. In 1991, in response to this situation, various community groups in the sector came together to form the Collective Kitchens of the Grand Plateau, now known as the "Community kitchens of the Grand Plateau.

Accessible to all residents of the Plateau Mont-Royal borough and its surroundings, the organization works in a food safety perspective. It contributes, among others, to develop cooking skills and awareness of the importance of a healthy diet. Those interested in cooking in small groups, in learning tips and new recipes and saving time and money are encouraged to contact the agency.

The concept of a community kitchen is not unique to the Plateau Mont-Royal, they also exist in most parts of the city. The website of the Maison des Grands-parents de Villeray also provides a list of community kitchens in Montreal.

For more information on Collective kitchens of the Grand Plateau

<http://www.ccgp-montreal.org/>

Tel. : 514 523-1752

For the list of collective kitchens in Montréal

http://www.mgpv.org/cuisines_collectives_montreal.htm

Education

Workshops on the calendar

Secretarial 3 – Filing and archiving

Tuesday, April 20, from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m.

Secretarial 4 – Organizing the secretarial committee and preparing the meetings

Tuesday, April 27, from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m.

Suspension and exclusion

Friday, April 30, from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m.

May

Efficient General Assembly

Monday, May 3, from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m.

Managing the participation

Tuesday, May 11, from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m.

NEW DATES ON THE CALENDAR

Exceptionally, this year, to meet the needs of cooperatives that integrate new members, FECHIMM offers the workshop "My co-op, my choice! in June and July. This free workshop, based on the knowledge of the functioning of cooperative life, aims to provide all information to your members to enable them to participate fully in the collective vitality of your cooperative. Both workshops will be offered in a location accessible to wheelchairs.

June

My co-op, my choice! – Free workshop

Wednesday, June 16, from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m.

July

My co-op, my choice! - Free workshop

Wednesday, July 14, from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m.