
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES SAINT-ISIDORE-DE-CLIFTON



ISSUE: Building on the environment

ITINERARY 3A

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PROMOTER

Gaétan Perron, Municipality of Saint-Isidore-de-Clifton | E-mail: bureau.stisidoredeclifton@hsfqc.ca

Presentation of the issue:

How to integrate sustainable development in a small rural municipality?

Project description:

Pioneering achievements by a community of 768 inhabitants spread over 178 km²: composting at the source, implementing water meters, tree planting, implication of the local grade school, changing the street lighting equipment, using alternative road abrasives during winter, establishing a green campsite, opening of a thrift shop, sharing of municipal spaces with citizen organizations, creating a volunteer recognition event and increasing the municipality's autonomy through the performance of odd jobs by the employees.

The key elements to remember according to the promoters:

Best practices can be adopted by residents and industries if they are deemed fair. These approaches aim to reverse the rural exodus and thus promote the Inode Estrie project.

RESEARCHER

Christiane Gagnon, UQAC | E-mail: christiane.gagnon@uqac.ca

Summary of the researcher's presentation:

Sustainability brings together five myths: nobody knows the meaning of sustainable development (this ever-changing concept is becoming clearer), SD is one that lasts over time (it must involve a revolution in our ways of doing things), SD equals environment (social and economic spheres are also important), SD is recycling and green technologies (the mode of consumption, and many other aspects are important), the public territorial action has little influence over the construction of SD (Agenda 21 is one of the key actions to be implemented by the territories in order to have a significant impact).

To be sustainable, a territory must implement an integrated approach involving all the stakeholders, aim for consistency of its activities and decisions, adopt a territorial and participatory governance, promote creativity and innovation, and have measurement tools in place.

The scale of the neighborhood is ideal for the implementation of a sustainable territory. According to a recent study, 23% of the communities of Quebec are taking steps toward SD.

The key elements to remember according to the researcher:

There is no sustainable territory, but it is possible to establish a conscious process improvement approach. It is basically an act of solidarity for mankind and the planet.

QUESTION PERIOD

Q.: Did the introduction of water meters bring an additional burden to the citizens? What are the resulting water savings? Was this measure well-received?

A. (Gaétan Perron): A one-time bill for installation was charged to the residents. It was then followed by an annual reading, with consequent billing. The reading is performed at the same time as the smoke detectors' verification. The average annual water usage is now 247 liters/person/year, which is very low and far exceeds the provincial requirements. Introducing the water meters as a fairness provision ensured acceptance by the population.

Q.: Was the water meter implemented in order to fund the water-treatment system?

A. (Gaétan Perron): Not really, it was first and foremost a measure of equity reflecting the user-pay principle.

Q.: Relative to the myths associated with SD, what are your views on the number of companies claiming more and more to be SD oriented?

A. (Christiane Gagnon): Industries must follow regulations and are under pressure from their shareholders to avoid greenwashing. They also have social responsibility criteria. However, we must remain critical of their statement.

Q.: Are we hiding the bigger problem by putting too much emphasis on small local actions? E.g., transport, packaging, etc.

A. (Christiane Gagnon): Absolutely! Nesting with the Government is very important since it is the entity generating the guideline. Eco-friendly practices and education are good, but they must be followed by a proactive actions from all major institutions and departments. There must be a percolation from local to global, and vice versa. And the large companies must also participate.

Q.: Is the public work contracting detrimental to local entrepreneurship?

A. (Gaétan Perron): No, since the major work projects are managed by tender calls.

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

NOTE: All linked documents (PowerPoint, Prezi, etc.) are only available in their original French version.

PowerPoint from Christiane Gagnon, UQAC

Portal for sustainable development territorial approaches: www.a21l.qc.ca