



PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

CHELSEA JOINS IN PROVINCE-WIDE “RESPECT IN DEMOCRACY IS RESPECTING DEMOCRACY” CAMPAIGN

Chelsea, February 3, 2021 – Municipal Council has expressed their unanimous support for the Union of Quebec Municipalities (UMQ) “Respect in Democracy Is Respecting Democracy” campaign launched on January 18, 2021.

As a runup to November’s municipal elections, the UMQ campaign is designed to encourage people to enter politics and get involved in the public sphere by promoting enhanced municipal democracy and a more trusting relationship between citizens and their democratic institutions.

Municipal Council adopted a "Declaration of Commitment" in support of the UMQ campaign at its February 2nd Council meeting. The declaration states in particular that intimidation, threats, and verbal abuse have no place in a democracy and in no way encourages people’s trust in, and appreciation of, our democratic institutions. Debate and a spirited exchange of ideas are the lifeblood of democracy, but in recent years, especially since the rise of social media, vigorous but respectful debate has too often been replaced with insults, threats, and intimidation.

Intimidation of elected municipal officials has become an issue in Chelsea and in neighbouring municipalities. A few years ago, the MRC police had to intervene when one or more individuals created false accounts in the name of the Mayor Caryl Green due to the violent content in the false accounts.

"It was unsettling to see the violent pictures that were posted on the fake Twitter account, and the photos of my family used on the fake Facebook account. Those experiences are the reason why I'm rarely on social media platforms these days. It's unthinkable that people feel the need to attack elected officials in such a disrespectful way simply because they disagree with a specific decision or position. We need to stand together to remind people that this kind of behaviour is unacceptable, and that our elected and municipal officials are committed to the well-being of the people they represent. We must encourage political engagement, not discourage it," said Mayor Caryl Green.

Over the next few days, the Municipality will publish the campaign on the different municipal platforms in order to raise public awareness.

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