

## **Frequently Asked Questions Municipal by-law – exterior commercial signage**

### **Q. What exactly did the municipal council decide to do on November 9, 2009?**

A. The council decided to go ahead with a municipal by-law by proceeding with the first reading. The council also fixed the date of January 18, 2010, at 7:00 p.m. to hear comments related to this undertaking and requested written notice from the Greater Moncton Planning District Commission.

### **Q. What are the provisions of this by-law?**

A. This by-law covers all new requests for exterior commercial signage as required by the City of Dieppe's zoning and construction by-laws. If this new by-law is adopted, all signs will have to be either bilingual or in French. In the case of bilingual signs, the French and English lettering must be identical in terms of scale, size, and style.

However, it should be noted that this undertaking does not apply to existing signs, which will not be required to comply with this by-law until they are erected, installed, displayed, modified, or moved. In addition, this by-law does not apply to temporary or interior signs (including signs in windows) or the name of the business (commercial brand).

### **Q. Why has it taken ten months to examine this issue?**

A. It is not easy to make a decision that has such far-reaching consequences. The municipal council considered every point of view and all possible options. City officials gathered a large amount of information, went on a mission to Ontario, and talked to numerous experts, entrepreneurs, and municipal residents to determine the best option for the City of Dieppe.

### **Q. Why is this by-law limited to exterior signs?**

A. The municipality has no judicial power to determine what goes on inside a business. That is still the responsibility of the owner.

**Q. Why did you choose to pass a by-law rather than adopt a policy?**

A. For almost 10 years, the Comité de la promotion du français et du patrimoine de Dieppe (CPFDP) has been campaigning to make Dieppe merchants more aware of the language issue. This committee even has a program under which they will give up to \$3,000 to any business that is willing to change its exterior signage to reflect both linguistic communities.

Although this consciousness-raising has had some impact, the time has come for the municipality to reflect its status of a French-speaking city that provides services in both official languages. Therefore, the council opted for a more direct route to equality via the use of signs in both official languages.

A by-law also supports the municipality's strategic plan, as part of the overall strategic goals of the francophonie, by having as its objective that 'the City of Dieppe be recognized as a Francophone and Acadian leader in New Brunswick and beyond.'

**Q. On what laws or documents did the council base its decision?**

- A. The New Brunswick Municipal Act
- The Community Planning Act
- The City of Dieppe's Municipal Development Plan
- The Official Languages Act
- The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms

**Q. How will this by-law affect existing businesses in Dieppe?**

A. Existing businesses will not have to change anything until they want to modify or change their present exterior signage.

**Q. What will happen to the name (commercial brand) of the business?**

A. The name of the business is exempt from the proposed by-law, so the commercial brand will not change.

**Q. Does the city intend to offer a subsidy to businesses that want to comply with the by-law?**

A. Through the CPFDP, the City of Dieppe will continue to offer up to \$3,000 toward the purchase of a new sign. The municipality will also have access to the grant program of the Association francophone des municipalités du Nouveau-Brunswick (AFMNB).

**Q. The by-law stipulates that new signs must be either bilingual or in French. Isn't that discriminatory?**

A. The City of Dieppe is a francophone city that provides services in both official languages. The municipal council is of the opinion that, as a community that wants to promote its culture and better reflect its linguistic reality, it is completely legitimate to allow unilingual French signs.

**Q. Does this by-law stipulate any particular format for the bilingual option? Will the French lettering have a more predominant place on the sign?**

A. When the bilingual option is chosen, the lettering in French and English must be identical in terms of scale, size, and style. The French part of the sign should be equal, not more prominent.

**Q. How did the city react to the efforts of the Association francophone des municipalités du Nouveau-Brunswick (AFMNB) to establish a policy for all of New Brunswick's francophone municipalities?**

A. The AFMNB has acknowledged that Dieppe's situation is unique and has proposed a project related to the linguistic landscape in our municipalities. Even though some municipalities are interested in this document, the City of Dieppe has chosen to take a clearer and more targeted position. However, we will still take part in the program launched by the AFMNB so that our businesses can take advantage of the additional grant program.

**Q. Does this by-law apply to the businesses in Champlain Place?**

A. This by-law applies only to those businesses in Champlain Place that have signs on the front of their store.

**Q. Does this by-law create any expectations in terms of the service that customers will or should receive inside the business premises?**

A. It is a question of available workforce. It is up to business owners and store managers to understand the importance of bilingual services in their respective establishments and judge on its importance.

**Q. What would you like people to remember about this decision?**

A. That the City of Dieppe decided that its linguistic landscape should reflect the reality of a city that is mainly francophone. That the municipality has taken a leadership role in the matter of commercial signage.