



Computerizing common rooms Dozens of computers delivered

On May 10, the first step was taken in equipping tenant associations with computers. Several community organizers and three members of the Groupe locataires-ressources (GLR, i.e. Tenant Resource Group) supplied 68 common rooms in low-rent housing buildings on the island of Montreal with a computer. By mid-June, the second phase of setting up Internet and a Wi-Fi connection in all these rooms is well under way.

"The computers were delivered without a hitch," said Tina-Lili Gagné, a GLR member who is also part of the Comité consultatif des résidents (CCR, i.e. Advisory Committee of Tenants). She teamed up with Raymond Saulnier, also from the GLR and a tenant representative on the Board of Directors of the Office municipal d'habitation de Montréal (OMHM). The pair delivered eight computers and everything went well. "People greeted us with a smile, but they asked a lot of questions," she said.

Trusted resources

Thankfully, this came as no surprise to the GLR, who created a step-by-step guide for connecting the equipment. Tenant resources will be there to assist the associations, who will have to learn to create an email address, navigate the Internet and connect to the Wi-Fi.

"Equipping common rooms with computers should facilitate and increase communication between the CCR and tenant committees," said Suzanne Payant, a member of both the CCR and the GLR. She also believes it will make it easier for associations to find and access resources in their neighbourhoods.

This whole operation results from a CCR request that prompted the OMHM to invest no less than \$200,000 to offer computer equipment to tenant associations, as well as 24 months of Internet access and Wi-Fi. This project was carried out in collaboration with the Fédération des locataires de HLM du Québec, which took charge of the deliveries as well as Internet and Wi-Fi connections, coordinated expertly by Catherine Pilon and Louise Dion.



Michel Guénette at Habitations Richmond was positively delighted.

The guide created by the Groupe locataires-ressources (GLR, i.e. Tenant Resource Group) helps when hooking up computers in common rooms.



Your impressive vitality



The second round of vaccinations is well under way and with it, we will hopefully see an end to this pandemic, which has been draining for tenant associations. Many of them, in fact, are struggling, working daily to help their community.

Your tenant representatives are also helping to transform your living environments. Without them, common rooms would not have computers, sector committees would not be reformed, and there would be no integrated action plan for Petite-Bourgogne! Your dedication and collaborative spirit are what make these projects a success.

This summer, let's stop COVID-19 in every way we can while Montreal returns to the yellow zone. As the lockdown eases, common rooms may reopen during heatwaves to offer some comfort to tenants suffering from the heat. Enjoy it—but be cautious, so we can all return to normal by the start of the school year. There will be new challenges ahead.

Nathalie Fortin, directrice
Service de la gestion
des milieux de vie
Director of Community
Relations Management

A new formula for sector committees

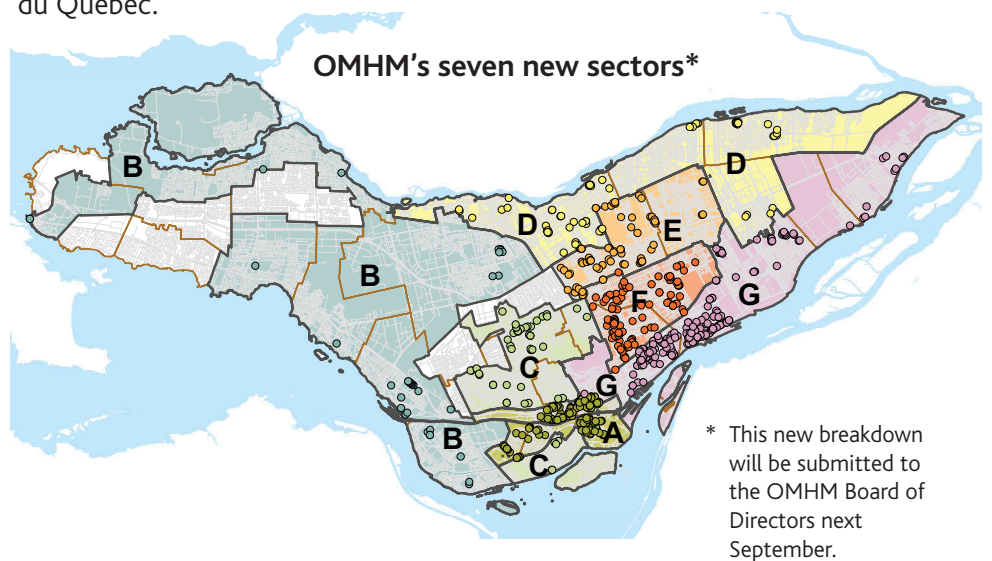
For the past year and a half, the joint committee on participation forums has been working to optimize discussions between tenant representatives and those of the Office municipal d'habitation de Montréal (OMHM). On May 20, it presented a new format for sector committees to wrap up its consultation with tenant associations.

This new model, which was adopted unanimously, allows tenant representatives to become true drivers of change. It provides them with more opportunities to interact with building managers. Together, they will be able to find concrete solutions to improve direct services in their sector.

Smaller sectors, closer-knit

To better target needs, the OMHM territory will be divided into smaller sectors. Two basic factors determined the choices: "the number of active associations and the common characteristics of the various neighbourhoods," said Richard Gagné, Chair of the Comité consultatif des résidents (CCR, i.e. Advisory Committee of Tenants) and member of the joint committee.

"This committee offered a rare opportunity to freely exchange ideas in order to meet the actual needs of the associations," said Gagné. Two other CCR members, René Cordero and Raymond Saulnier, were also on the committee, along with Nathalie Morin, directrice de l'organisation communautaire (Director of Community Organization); Judith Lemaire, organisatrice communautaire (Community Organizer); and Robert Pilon, Coordinator of the Fédération des locataires de HLM du Québec.



Sector committee territory

A	B	C	D	E	F	G
15	11	13	11	14	8	13

Number of active tenant associations

Borders of demerged municipalities and Montréal boroughs

Choosing safe activities

In May, with the end of lockdown in sight, tenant committees maintained food distribution and gardening activities.

Magalie Gaston, Chair of the tenant association at Habitations Saint-Michel Nord, and Saliha Abed, Treasurer of the tenant association at Habitations Robert-Papin, shared similar experiences in their neighbouring low-rent housing projects. Both received supplies from Mon Resto Saint-Michel to mark the end of Ramadan and distributed bags of food on May 11 and 12. Ms. Gaston operated out of the common room, while Ms. Abed delivered bags to residents' doorsteps "because going door-to-door is a chance to get to know your neighbours," she said.

A few days later, both women began gardening, thanks to ID²EM grants. Further south, similar activities were happening at Habitations Saint-Timothée according to Jocelyne Malouf, Chair of the tenant association. Since the building does not have a common room, her committee invested in beautifying the courtyard to create a pleasant space for tenants to relax. "We planted flowers and shrubs to breathe new life into our environment, while still respecting social distancing rules," she said.



Last year's harvest was abundant and varied in the vegetable garden at Habitations Robert-Papin.



Rabha El Darsa, from Habitations Laure-Conan, collects all kinds of everyday products to give to residents of her building whenever she can.

What's brewing in Petite-Bourgogne ?



Local police officers teamed up with the committee at Habitations de l'Érablière to distribute Christmas baskets. This trust between the various partners is what made the integrated action plan in Petite-Bourgogne possible.

An integrated action plan, that's what! Several tenant committees, community organizations and representatives from various institutions are working together to create a neighbourhood where health, social and food security are widespread.

To achieve this, they pooled certain grants received over the past year. The money will be put toward collective kitchens, including storage and delivery of prepared meals, and toward a mutual support network in the neighbourhood. They are also seeking funding to set up a social economy hub at the Yolande-Breton community centre, as well as an urban agriculture project.

"The key to this action plan is the union of tenant associations, community organizations and institutions which, collectively, empower themselves to act," said Richard Gagné, member of the OMHM's Comité consultatif des résidents (CCR, i.e. Advisory Committee of Tenants) and one of the project leaders. Each member of the coordinating group is heard and everyone contributes to the project, whether they are a tenant representative, a neighbourhood police officer or an OMHM community organizer.

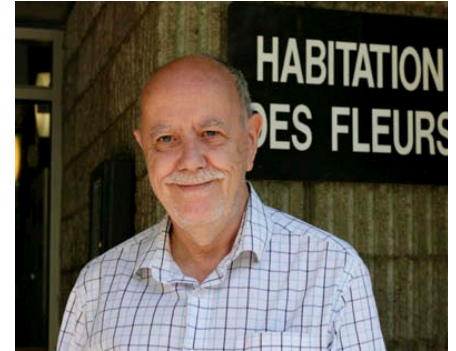
To learn more, read the article "La Bourgogne de demain" at lecomiteduquartier.com.

CCRs elect their new representative

An election was held on April 22 to select a representative to finish the term of André Giroux, who left the Board of Directors of the Office municipal d'habitation de Montréal (OMHM). The Comités consultatifs des résidents (CCRs, i.e. Advisory Committees of Tenants) for both low-rent housing projects and ENHARMONIE residences met on Zoom to choose among four candidates:

- **Réjean Bisailon**, Chair of the ENHARMONIE CCR, Résidence Le Mile-End
- **Johanes Demeester**, Résidence Rosalie-Cadron
- **Lise Holland**, Résidence Alfredo-Gagliardi
- **Raymond Saulnier**, member of the low-rent housing CCR, Habitations Des Fleurs

Two rounds of votes were cast to elect the new representative: Raymond Saulnier, long-time volunteer, Chair of his tenant association and member of the Groupe locataires-ressources (i.e. Tenant Resource Group). Keenly aware of the needs of tenants, he promises to faithfully advocate for them. The OMHM Board of Directors and management extend a warm welcome to him in his new role.



Members of the two CCRs chose Raymond Saulnier to represent tenants on the OMHM Board of Directors.

The CCR contributes to *Interaction*

The Comité consultatif des résidents (CCR, i.e. Advisory Committee of Tenants) recently met with the communications staff at the Office municipal d'habitation de Montréal (OMHM). Its objective: to make room for tenants' perspectives in OMHM publications. The message was well received and the change has already begun. As of the next issue of *Interaction*, two CCR members, Suzanne Payant and Tina-Lili Gagné, will be on the editorial committee. "This will better reflect the low-rent housing community and the hands-on work of associations," said Ms. Payant. She also mentioned that tenants in low-rent housing projects could contribute to the newsletter.

Coming soon to a screen near you: your activities!

Have you noticed that the digital screens are on again in the 150 or so high-rise buildings of the Office municipal d'habitation de Montréal? Just in time to spread information about the COVID-19 vaccination campaign in seniors' buildings! This campaign was a great test for customized messages in each high-rise.

The next step

As soon as gatherings are permitted again, you will be able to announce your community activities (meetings, outings, meals) on the screen in your building. Remember to take photos at your events. They could be broadcast to illustrate your successes, similarly to the "Rubbing Shoulders" section of *La Rose des vents*.

To announce an event or activity, here's what to do: request the form from your community organizer, fill it out and email it to the addresses indicated. Remember to keep a blank copy for future requests.



To keep up to date on what's going on in Montreal's low-rent housing projects, visit the OMHM's Facebook page.



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