



Bureau du président du conseil de l'AÉUM

Située sur les territoires traditionnels des collectivités Haudenosaunee et Anishinaabe.

SSMU Office of the Speaker

Located on Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe, traditional territories.

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Motion Regarding Plebiscite Question for Bar Milton-Parc Solidarity Co-operative 2023-02-09

Submitted for: 2023-02-09

Submitted to:	SSMU Legislative Council	Document no.:	LEG-PUB-MOT-2023-03-09-003
Moved by:	Marco Pizarro <i>VP Finance</i>	Current Status:	<input type="checkbox"/> FOR APPROVAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> APPROVED <input type="checkbox"/> POSTPONED <input type="checkbox"/> COMMITTED <input type="checkbox"/> NOT APPROVED
Seconded by:	Mahia Reed <i>Engineering Representative</i>		

Issue

This motion is brought forward to add a plebiscite question to the Winter 2023 election and referendum ballot. The question asks the SSMU student body's interest in a one-time investment of the SSMU Capital Expenditure Reserve Fund (CERF) into a Solidarity Cooperative business in the Milton-Parc area. This is relevant to the student body because of the cooperative's proximity to campus, their mandate to serve the immediate community including McGill students, their participation in the solidarity economy, and the benefit of the services they would render for individual students and student groups alike.

Background and Rationale

This motion does not in any way implicate SSMU into action; it is neither referendum nor resolution, a plebiscite question by nature is non-binding. By asking this question, the SSMU is able to better understand its membership's perspective on investment in the local solidarity economy. Over its history, the community engagement committee has built ties with the Milton-Parc community; the enterprise in question is a direct manifestation of the efforts of the Milton-Parc community to build a space for students and residents of the area alike. This question aims to crystallize the opinion of SSMU's constituent voters on what is the onus of the student union to involve itself in the local economy via democratic means.

The nature of this suggested investment of the CERF is in line with SSMU's existing *Internal Regulations of Finances-03 § Part 3*, which indicates the



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purpose and prioritization of socially responsible investment. The ethos and mission of the cooperative as outlined in its bylaws reflects a lot of SSMU's positions' handbook, see below

Alignment with Mission

As stated in our Positions 4.11 and 6.5, investing and supporting spaces for students that foster community, create safer environments, and promote sustainable food systems is a necessity. The social aspect of our Sustainability Policy (3.2) also mandates we encourage and provide additional support for projects and initiatives that address multiple aspects of sustainability, such as environmental and social.

Consultations Completed

There have been ongoing conversations with members of the Finance Committee and Community Engagement Committee. The VP Finance has directly expressed support for this question being posed, and is hence one of the movers.

Risk Factors and Resource Implications

As a plebiscite question, this motion proves no immediate threat to SSMU or its constituents; the following comment is in regards to the plebiscite question's implications if carried further to fruition.

The Capital Expenditure Reserve Fund (CERF), as designed, is a culmination of the surplus/deficit year-in and year-out of the SSMU. By nature it is a cash reserve called upon in times of unforeseen financial difficulty, as well as new investment in new projects. By taking from the CERF, the cushion is depleted to some degree, which could be argued as a risk to the union's longevity in the event of catastrophe.

Investment in local businesses also begs the question who else could be eligible. The suggested investment of this project specifically is a result of many intersecting shared values and goals, nevertheless may be seen as an opportunity for other enterprises.

Sustainability Considerations

Cooperatives have proven to be more resilient in times of sudden economic crisis, such as those brought on by the pandemic, than corporations. One of the core missions of the coop is to represent the array of locally produced goods, such as food and beverages offered by Montreal and Quebec alike; engaging in locally produced goods often contributes to



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a lower environmental footprint and a stronger local economy. As a majority worker-member board of directors, the enterprise will better be able to foster worker member's needs and retain a resilient staff therein.

Impact of Decision and Next Steps

If the motion is approved by the Legislative Council, the plebiscite question will be added to the Winter 2023 Referendum ballot. If approved by a majority of students, members of the coop will consult more deeply with the finance committee and the community engagement committee to see how precisely it aligns with our missions, and how financially sustainable it can be.

The SSPN committee will also be consulted on the benefits students could get from the bar. After consultation, councilors of said committees are encouraged by the project, will bring a motion to legislative council requesting the Board of Directors review the potential investment.

A business plan will be presented to the Legislative Council and to the Board of Directors. The board will ultimately be the deciding body on the investment.

Motion or Resolution for Approval

Be it resolved that the SSMU Legislative Council be put forward a plebiscite question as follows:

This question does not in any way implicate SSMU into action; it is neither referendum nor resolution, a plebiscite question by nature is non-binding. By asking this question, the SSMU is able to better understand its membership's perspective on investment in the local solidarity economy.

Do you support the investment of 5% of the SSMU Capital Investment Fund (est. \$150,000) towards the development of a solidarity cooperative bar out of the Milton-Parc Community, through the creation of a memorandum of understanding with the following conditions:

1. That SSMU be eligible for support-member status with the bar;
2. That the coop privileges McGill student groups for events and bookings in future operations of the bar;
3. That the coop include in its business plan a solidarity meal program to service the local community, which includes McGill students.

Results of the Vote

In favour	(15)
Opposed	(2)
Abstain	(5)



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APPROVED