

Somerville speaks on the world stage as FCM 1st Vice-President

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now.... and give businesses policies and time-frames to work towards."

One of those actions is the smart grid LED street lighting system. It is an innovative system that he learned about from an European business attending one of the Paris conferences. Similar to traffic lights, a Public Works employee could monitor street lights in town, dimming them in areas and at times not needed, but brightening then when needed—such as when the police are doing an investigation.

"If you look at it, basically from midnight to 4 a.m., we have a lot of lights on for the raccoons and the other animals," he said. "If they are dimmed by 20 per cent, it will reduce costs, and get rid of light pollution as well."

Somerville said the business he was talking to promised a 50-85 per cent savings for municipalities—a major savings considering streetlighting is #4 on the list of expenses for the Town. While he says the program would be too cost-prohibitive to retrofit existing neighbourhoods, it would be ideal for the new Vision Georgetown neighbourhood. This development, for 20,000 people on 1,000 acres between Main St. and Trafalgar Rd. and 10 and 15 Sideroads, is now in the planning stages.

Somerville spoke on the same stage as actors and environmental activists Robert Redford and



Councillor Clark Somerville speaking in Paris.

Submitted photo

Leonardo DiCaprio, who appeared 24 hours earlier.

"They were my opening act," he laughed.

Somerville said he kept getting pulled in side conversations with many people from around the world, all saying, "We're glad Canada is back" and asking the Canadians to

press on the needs of local governments.

"I called it organized chaos," he described. "There was optimism and people were thrilled that Canada was there to take on a leadership role."

He had one delegate from Kenya ask him for help on developing its municipal governments—much like FCM is doing for the South American countries.

He listened to an Oxfam leader, whose talk was both fascinating and worrisome at the same time. The leader explained about the impact that

climate change and rising waters will have coastal countries around the world. It will create a whole new set of refugees called "climate refugees".

"We have had a hard enough time dealing with refugees from war-torn countries. What are we going to do when the countries begin disappearing under water?" Somerville asked.

Somerville's experiences in Paris and Peru resulted in some lessons learned such as, "don't get bogged down by the small things and look at the big picture for the common good."

He noted it could be simple things like geo-

thermal service in every new neighbourhood or instead of electrification of all rail lines, perhaps just those that are dedicated GO lines. All-day service GO train service on the Georgetown line from Kitchener to Toronto, he said, would be a good step towards getting cars off the road.

"I think we need to start picking a timeframe for actions, such as five years or 10 years," he added. "Our thinking is too cautious right now."

Somerville will incorporate these lessons learned as he prepares for his new job as FCM president in June.

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