
MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS OF THE MEETING OF THE GENERAL COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL (GC) OF THE CITY OF WESTMOUNT HELD AT CITY HALL ON JULY 4, 2017 AT 4:10 P.M. AT WHICH WERE PRESENT:

Chair	Theodora Samiotis
Mayor	Christina Smith
Councillors	Rosalind Davis Victor M. Drury Nicole Forbes Cynthia Lulham Patrick Martin
Absent	Philip A. Cutler
Administration	Sean Michael Deegan, Director General (DG) Benoit Hurtubise, Assistant Director General-Infrastructure Martin St-Jean, Director of Legal Services and City Clerk
Recording Secretary	Andrew Brownstein

NOTE TO THE READER:

The comments, opinions and any consensus views reflected herein are those of the participants in their individual capacity. As such, they are not binding upon the City or the administration.

The City and its administration are only bound by decisions that are authorized by the Municipal Council in the course of a public meeting by way of a resolution or a by-law.

GC AGENDA

Adoption of the GC Agenda of July 4, 2017

It was agreed that the Agenda of the July 4, 2017 meeting of the GC be adopted, with the addition of the following items under New Business:

- Public Library Room Usage Policy (DG Deegan); and
- Southeast Traffic Study (Councillor Samiotis).

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION / DECISION

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Pierre Boudreault of Artères and Mr. Sebastian Samuel, Division Head – Communications, joined the meeting at 4:16 p.m.

Mr. Boudreault introduced the structure of his report and his methodology for carrying out the study. Councillor Lulham stated that the study analyzes the commercial sectors on Greene Avenue, Victoria Avenue, and Sherbrooke Street.

Mr. Boudreault presented the recommendations outlined in his report.

Mr. Boudreault recommended that the City appoint a Commissioner of Economic Development in order to ensure effective and consistent communication between the City and the merchants. He recommended creating a merchants' section on the City's website in order for merchants to obtain information on the services that the City offers as well as the coordinates of the Commissioner. He emphasized the importance of proceeding with a comprehensive vision that focuses on the sustainable development of the commercial sectors.

Mr. Boudreault recommended that the City encourage the merchants to formally organize themselves. He explained that with the creation of a non-profit organization, government grants can be obtained. Furthermore, he explained that a registered merchants' association can spearhead many initiatives. Such an association would have a broader mandate than the Victoria Village Merchants' Association, which is not a registered merchants' association and only manages the annual street festival. Mr. Boudreault presented the many actions that can be taken by a merchants' association, as outlined in *Annexe E* of his report.

Mr. Boudreault explained that despite the increase in online shopping, there will always be certain advantages for purchasing certain products in-store. He recommended that the City encourage the merchants to use the internet age to their benefit, referring to certain programs available to them to facilitate the process. He recommended that each merchant should have his own website and a website should be created for each commercial sector by the prospective merchants' associations. He explained the latter as part of a broader marketing campaign to develop the branding of each sector, creating a logo, for example, for each sector.

Mr. Boudreault presented several measures that the City can take in relation to its zoning.

Firstly, in order to ensure the commercial sectors' unique characters, he referred to the example set by San Francisco, where zoning restrictions are in place to prohibit chain stores, defined as stores with more than a certain number of other locations, in certain commercial sectors.

Secondly, Mr. Boudreault recommended restricting the type of activity that can be exercised on the ground floor of buildings in the commercial sectors and setting a maximum square footage for all ground floor merchants' spaces. He explained that consumers are attracted to commercial areas that have many shops and restaurants one after the other. He explained that Victoria Village accomplishes this dynamic, which he recommended the City consciously maintain and pursue the same for Greene Avenue, which has several banks, a lawyers' office, and a real estate brokerage office occupying ground floor units. Councillor Samiotis agreed that this must be pursued, pointing out that the City already modified the zoning to prohibit non-retail/restaurant commercial activities on the ground floor on Greene Avenue. However, she explained that the current non-retail/restaurant businesses exist by vested right, to remain until their leases are not renewed. Councillor Lulham recommended that the City reduce the maximum square footage for banks on the ground floor, proposing that if necessary, a portion of their offices

can be placed on the second floor. Further to his recommendation to set a maximum square footage for all ground floor merchants' spaces, Mr. Boudreault explained that smaller units are easier to rent and with the rise of online shopping, inventories are smaller, requiring less space.

Mr. Boudreault recommended the creation of a *Société de développement commercial* (SDC) for Victoria Village. He explained that an SDC differs from a merchants' association in that members, the merchants, must pay dues to the SDC, which are a function of the budget established by a vote of its members. Mr. Boudreault explained that the SDC provides a clear framework for a commercial sector's development, with over 40 existing in Quebec, 65 in Toronto, and thousands across North America.

Mr. Boudreault recommended tracking the impact of the prospective measures above by continuing to carry out the same types of studies on sales, pedestrian traffic, the use of parking spaces, etc.

He recommended beautifying the front window space of the vacant commercial units.

Mr. Boudreault recommended installing better signage to identify the City's borders and the location of its commercial sectors.

In order to facilitate parking, Mr. Boudreault recommended ensuring all existing parking spaces are visible, referring to several spaces on Greene Avenue situated behind the stores. He reported that according to his study, there is no significant shortage of parking spaces; parking in the Victoria Village is fairly quick, and while it can take more time to find a parking spot on Greene Avenue, it is unrealistic for consumers to expect to park in front of the store where they intend to shop.

Mr. Boudreault proposed a few other initiatives to bolster the commercial sectors. Rebate cards could be created for each sector, with which consumers could collect stamps with each purchase in order to obtain a rebate after collecting a certain number of stamps. Gift cards could be created to be used across a commercial sector. A magazine could be published to advertise the commercial sectors. A campaign could be initiated to explain the benefits of shopping locally, by which residents could be encouraged to do at least 10% of their purchases in the local commercial sectors.

Mr. Boudreault recommended facilitating the installation of terraces in front of restaurants.

Mr. Boudreault presented a few possible events that would help to draw attention to the commercial sectors and their merchants. He proposed the coordination of a gastronomical event similar to "Savor the Avenue" in Delray Beach, Florida for which the street is closed to allow for large tables to be set up and food to be served in the street.

Mr. Boudreault recommended advising the merchants to take advantage of Emploi Québec's training courses on marketing and branding.

In order to fill the vacant units with merchants who will promote the sustainable development of the commercial sectors, Mr. Boudreault recommended establishing a list of the types of businesses missing from the areas and building a relationship with the property

owners in order to for them to seek tenants who will fill these voids. These tenants will be more likely to remain for the long term, which will strengthen the commercial sector and make it possible to gradually charge higher rents, which the successful merchants will be capable of paying.

Citing Paris and San Francisco as examples, Mr. Boudreault explained that cities that actively intervene to promote their commercial sectors are successful in this regard. As an example of insufficient regulation and direction, Mr. Boudreault referred to Bleaker Street in New York City, where gentrification resulted in an influx of large companies' storefronts, which caused rents to increase, which drove out the local merchants. Upon the gentrification of another nearby area, the large companies moved to that location, with Bleaker Street now fairly empty.

Mr. Boudreault and Mr. Samuel left the meeting at 5:17 p.m.

Councillor Martin and M^e St-Jean joined the meeting at 5:17 p.m.

Confidential items were discussed.

GC AGENDA (Continued)

Confirmation of Minutes of the Meeting of the GC held on June 19, 2017

The Minutes of the GC's meeting held on June 19, 2017 were adopted with corrections.

Business arising from the Minutes of the Meeting of the GC Held on June 19, 2017

On the issue of access to documents regarding permits, Councillor Martin proposed that permit applications for exterior work should indicate that the application is public unless the applicant requests otherwise. M^e St-Jean explained that the City cannot do that given that the *Act respecting Access to documents held by public bodies and the Protection of personal information* applies.

The Mayor recommended emphasizing to applicants the importance of communicating with their neighbours throughout the process of the work.

Confidential items were discussed.

Items from the Council Agenda to be discussed in GC

M^e St-Jean referred to Item No. 8, "Approval of a 2017 Grant to a Local Non-Profit Community Organization – The Open Door." He pointed out that The Open Door does not exist as an independent organization and is in fact the Emmaus Anglican Church.

The Mayor stated that The Open Door has not yet been permitted to move into its prospective new location. She relayed The Open Door's request to remain in its current location beyond July 31st until it can move into its new location.

Council Question Period Follow-Up

The Mayor relayed a resident's inquiry as to why his question had not been recorded in the question period minutes. M^e St-Jean explained that the resident had expressed comments without posing a question.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION / DECISION (Continued)

REMOVAL OF MIDBLOCK STOP SIGNS

The ADG introduced the plan to remove midblock stop signs as they do not conform to MTQ norms. He explained that these stop signs are unsafe because they create a false sense of security for pedestrians, as motorists often disregard them altogether. The ADG stated that in the locations where Public Works has deemed necessary, speed humps will be installed before the stop signs are removed. This work will be carried out by Public Works.

Councillor Davis expressed her concern regarding the removal of the stop sign on Grosvenor Avenue, across of Roslyn School. She proposed the installation of flashing lights to slow traffic. Councillors Martin and Lulham noted that few people cross the street at that location. The ADG stated that a speed hump will be installed there with bollards if possible.

The Mayor recommended that the City distribute a letter to the residences located near the stop signs that are to be removed to advise them of their removal and the reasons for doing so. The ADG will see that it be done properly.

Councillor Drury expressed his favourability for the installation of bollards as a traffic-calming measure. The ADG agreed that they can be effective; however, they must either be removed for the winter, or snow removal around the bollards must be done by hand.

- **It was agreed** that the City will proceed with the removal of midblock stop signs as proposed by Public Works. Residences located near the stop signs will be informed in writing of the reasons for doing so.

WESTMOUNT TRAIN STATION

The ADG reported that Parks Canada has approved the City's application for a grant of up to \$25,000 for its feasibility study on the possible ways to repurpose the former train station. He reported that further to MDA Architectes' report, approximately \$1.5 million would be required to carry out the necessary renovations to render the building structurally sound. This would not include any decontamination or interior design work.

Councillor Lulham expressed her interest in the former train station being repurposed as a business incubator. She suggested establishing a sort of emphyteutic lease by which the

prospective business incubator would pay for the renovations when they are carried out in lieu of paying rent for a period of 20 years for example.

Councillor Martin expressed his interest in Councillor Lulham's proposal, but questioned whether this market is already saturated, referring to several churches on the Island that have been repurposed as business incubators.

The Mayor expressed her aversion to spending \$1.5 million in renovations on a building that the City does not intend to use for municipal purposes. Councillor Lulham agreed, pointing out that the roof was recently repaired at an approximate cost of \$250,000.

Councillor Drury referred to a resident who operates a business incubator. He recommended that the City contact this individual and others in order to determine the possibility of creating a partnership for this prospective project.

- **It was agreed** that the City will contact organizations with which a partnership could potentially be created for the repurposing of the former train station.

PARKS POLICY

Councillor Lulham presented the draft parks policy. She recommended including a definition of "community event" and a clarification that activities involving 20 people or less do not require a permit.

Councillor Lulham remarked that two weeks prior, a film company had closed off most of Westmount Park to film part of a movie further to a permit it had obtained. She explained that while these companies pay for their permits, this revenue is not enough to justify the use of the park to the exclusion of residents. Accordingly, she recommended including a prohibition against filming in parks.

- **It was agreed** that a definition of "community event" and a clarification that activities involving 20 people or less do not require a permit will be added to the draft parks policy. A statement indicating that any permit applications for filming movies will be presented to the DG's office in accordance with the film policy will also be included. Said film policy will be drafted and presented to GC on August 7th.

WESTMOUNT RECREATION CENTRE (WRC) POLICY

Councillor Davis presented the draft WRC policy, pointing out the indication that "in the event that the rinks have open space, exceptions can be made to rent out the available space to non-residents." Councillor Lulham explained that as the WRC is a facility that is funded by taxpayers, the City should first actively seek to fill this quiet time with activities for its internal groups. The DG mentioned that the girls' hockey team was created further to this type of initiative. Councillors Samiotis and Martin agreed with Councillor Lulham's suggestion. Councillor Martin pointed out that there is less general skating time than before.

- **It was agreed** that the draft policy will be amended with the addition of the following: “Sports and Recreation will aim to fill open time slots for rink use with activities for residents and existing internal groups. In the event that the rinks still have open space, exceptions can be made to rent out the available space to non-residents.” At the August 21st GC meeting, members will be presented with the final draft policy.

VICTORIA HALL POLICY

Councillor Davis presented the draft Victoria Hall policy. She recommended that rather than indicating that a charge per hour per staff person will be charged when events take place outside of the normal operating hours of Victoria Hall, it should simply refer to the rate found in the Tariffs By-law.

- **It was agreed** that the draft policy will be amended in the following manner: “When events take place outside of the normal operating hours of Victoria Hall, ~~a charge of \$30 per hour~~ the per hour rate, per staff person, as established under the Tariffs By-law will be charged to the organizing group.” At the August 21st GC meeting, members will be presented with the final draft policy.

NEW BUSINESS: WESTMOUNT PUBLIC LIBRARY ROOM USAGE POLICY

Councillor Martin raised the issue of private tutors teaching in library rooms, profiting off of the City’s services at the expense of their use by residents. Councillor Davis explained that under the draft policy, these rooms can only be reserved by residents for one two-hour block of time during any twenty four hour period and must be used by groups of three to ten individuals.

- **It was agreed** that the draft policy will be amended in the following manner: “The Library is a very popular and ~~well frequented~~ frequently visited Westmount facility that encourages reading, learning, and discovery.” At the August 21st GC meeting, Council will be presented with the final draft policy, including its translation.

NEW BUSINESS: SOUTHEAST TRAFFIC STUDY

Councillor Samiotis relieved herself of the role of Chair for the discussion of the following item. Councillor Drury assumed the role of Chair.

Councillor Samiotis relayed the discussion of the Steering Committee meeting held the previous week regarding the next steps for the Southeast sector planning, which she, the Mayor, Councillor Davis, and Councillor Martin attended. Sainte-Catherine Street must be a part of the plan and should be the location for higher density residential buildings. As Council has reiterated on several occasions, the Tupper lots are to be converted to low density residential buildings, like townhouses that are respectful of those to the south of

Dorchester Boulevard. Greater connectivity between the north and south sides of Dorchester Boulevard is to be sought, and accordingly, the possibility of reconfiguring Dorchester Boulevard must be assessed as one of the objectives is to restore a more residential character to the street.

Councillor Lulham informed members that Stantec carried out a traffic study for the City in June 2016, but it was only presented to the TAC and never to Council. The ADG specified that the Stantec representatives presented the study to the TAC in November 2016.

Councillor Davis and Councillor Forbes confirmed that they have never seen this traffic study. Councillor Samiotis pointed out that this study has been posted on the City's website further to an expression of public interest in the prospective project.

Councillor Lulham explained that this traffic study only examined Dorchester Boulevard without considering Sainte-Catherine Street. She emphasized the need to commission a comprehensive traffic study on the entire area.

Councillor Martin remarked that he was present at the TAC meeting when the Stantec study was presented. He relayed the general consensus among those who were in attendance that the study had failed to analyze the full breadth of what had been requested. At this stage, Councillor Martin recommended having Public Works or an external consultant advise the City on the potential for Dorchester Boulevard's reconfiguration.

Councillor Lulham expressed her opposition to proceeding in this manner. She explained that further to her discussions with traffic technicians on the matter, it is more appropriate to assess the area as a whole rather than considering Dorchester Boulevard in isolation.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m., at which point Council held its Regular Sitting. The meeting was reconvened at 9:45 p.m. Councillor Martin did not return to the meeting.

Councillor Samiotis noted the dissatisfaction expressed by some residents at that night's Regular Sitting for not yet having been provided with the final vision for the Southeast.

Councillor Lulham reiterated her opposition to analyzing the potential for Dorchester Boulevard's reconfiguration separately from a broader traffic study of the area. She explained that the potential reconfiguration must be considered in light of the goal of achieving greater connectivity between the north and south sides of Dorchester Boulevard as well as the goal of revitalizing the broader area, and the prospective changes to be made to Sainte-Catherine Street to this end. Accordingly, she recommended proceeding with a comprehensive traffic study on the entire area. Councillor Samiotis agreed.

Councillor Drury pointed out the difficulty of proceeding with a comprehensive traffic study of the entire area in anticipation of changes to Sainte-Catherine Street on which the City has yet to decide. The ADG recommended that the City request that Société AGIL draft its proposal for the area as a whole, with the recommendations for Sainte-Catherine Street representing a central part of this proposal. Council can then assess this proposal and draft the terms of reference for a comprehensive traffic study, which will be relayed to an external consultant for the carrying out of said study.

- **It was agreed** that the City will request that Société AGIL draft its proposal for the Southeast sector planning as a whole, with the recommendations for Sainte-Catherine Street representing a central part of this proposal. GC members will then assess this proposal and draft the terms of reference for a comprehensive traffic study, which will be relayed to an external consultant for the carrying out of said study.

Councillor Samiotis resumed her role as Chair.

Confidential items were discussed.

ABSENCES

Council members were requested to submit their absence sheets to the Assistant City Clerk.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:27 p.m.

Theodora Samiotis
Acting Mayor

M^e Martin St-Jean
Director of Legal Services and City
Clerk