MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS OF THE MEETING OF THE GENERAL COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL (GC) OF THE CITY OF WESTMOUNT HELD AT CITY HALL ON AUGUST 7, 2017 AT 5:00 P.M. AT WHICH WERE PRESENT:

Chair
Cynthia Lulham

Mayor
Christina Smith

Councillors
Philip A. Cutler
Rosalind Davis
Victor M. Drury
Nicole Forbes
Patrick Martin
Theodora Samiotis

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.

Administration
Sean Michael Deegan, Director General (DG)
Benoit Hurtubise, Assistant Director General (ADG) - Infrastructure
Nicole Dobbie, Assistant Director of Legal Services and Assistant City Clerk

Recording Secretary
Andrew Brownstein

GC AGENDA

Adoption of the GC Agenda of August 7, 2017

It was agreed that the Agenda of the August 7, 2017 meeting of the GC be adopted, with the addition of the following item under New Business:

- Poet Laureate (Councillor Forbes).

Confirmation of Minutes of the Meeting of the GC held on July 4, 2017

The Minutes of the GC’s meeting held on July 4, 2017 were adopted with corrections.

Business arising from the Minutes of the Meeting of the GC Held on July 4, 2017

The DG reported that the Southeast sector traffic study was initiated. He informed the GC that it will be provided with an update at its upcoming meeting.
Councillor Drury referred to the GC’s decision at its previous meeting for the City to contact organizations with which a partnership could potentially be created for the repurposing of the former train station. The DG confirmed that the administration will contact said organizations.

Confidential items were discussed.

Councillor Cutler joined the meeting at 5:10 p.m.

**Items from the Council Agenda to be discussed in GC**

Councillor Drury drew the GC’s attention to Item no. 18, “Purchasing – Group Purchase Contract of Biodiesel Fuel.” Referring to the explanatory document from Mr. John Camia, Purchasing Manager, regarding the lowest bidder’s tender, Councillor Drury pointed out that the indicated price per liter is $1.0454 while the City used to pay $1.527 per liter. However, the document then states that the “price is based on the weekly world market fluctuations and is adjusted weekly according to the Oil Buyers Guide (OBG) for the Montreal Region.” Further to Councillor Drury’s inquiry, the ADG confirmed that he will contact the purchasing group to provide more details on how the price is set.

Confidential items were discussed.

Councillor Drury directed the GC’s attention to Item no. 23, “Sale for Non-Payment of the 2016 Municipal Taxes.” He inquired as to the City’s timetable for proceeding on the matter. The DG informed the GC that the City will send letters to the concerned property owners on August 8th reminding them of their obligation to pay their taxes and the penalty for failing to do so. On August 19th, the list of addresses of the properties for which 2016 taxes have still not been paid, as well as the names of their respective owners, will be published in *Le Devoir* and *The Gazette*. The amount owing will not be indicated in the publication. The DG reported that many owners of properties that were previously on this list have paid their 2016 taxes in recent weeks.

Councillor Samiotis joined the meeting at 5:20 p.m.

The Mayor drew the GC’s attention to the five properties on Côte-des-Neiges Road on the list for which very small amounts are owed, ranging between $10 and $30. Mme Dobbie explained that these properties must remain on the list. She added that these properties were on last year’s list, further to which their respective owners paid the amounts owing. Mme Dobbie explained that she believes that only a small portion of each of these properties is located within the City, and accordingly, these taxes represent payment for certain services.

Mme Dobbie explained that when residents come to pay their taxes, Finance requests payment for the full amount owed, including taxes due for 2017. However, she pointed out that the potential sale of these properties only concerns those for which taxes owed in 2016 have not been paid. She explained that the reminder letter that is to be sent to these property owners does not indicate any details as to the amount due, as interest and
penalties continue to accumulate until it is paid. Accordingly, the letter instructs residents to contact Finance to be informed of the specific amount.

Confidential items were discussed.

Councillor Samiotis drew the GC’s attention to Item no. 20, “Urban Planning – Approval of Building Permits.” She reported that the owner of the property located at 1100 Atwater Avenue, a commercial building, is seeking a permit to modify the building, primarily by changing the design of the entrance on Dorchester Boulevard. She explained that the requested permit respects the zoning and that the building height is to remain the same. Councillor Samiotis informed the GC that the permit application for the Category I* property located at 80 Sunnyside Avenue constitutes landscaping and the installation of a pool. She explained that the owner also wants to replace a window with a door, and accordingly, the owner has applied for the required demolition permit. On the other hand, the permit application for the addition of a storey to the property located at 589 Côte-St-Antoine Road, which conforms to the zoning, does not require a demolition permit, as the roof that is to be removed does not constitute a sufficient percentage of the property. Councillor Lulham reiterated her recommendation for the by-law to be amended to include the removal of a roof as a case in which a demolition permit must be obtained.

**ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION / DECISION**

Mr. Tom Flies, Director of Urban Planning, Ms. Julia Gersovitz, Chair of the PAC, and Ms. Nathalie Jodoin, Assistant Director, Urban Planning Department, joined the meeting at 5:39 p.m.

Confidential items were discussed.

Ms. Gersovitz left the meeting at 6:27 p.m.

**BELL BOXES**

Director Flies updated the GC on Bell’s request for the installation of its 16 Central Splitting Point (CSP) boxes for its fibre optics network. Director Flies reported that the boxes do not generate any noise or radiation. He informed the GC that the PAC and Bell have agreed on the 16 proposed locations as well as the boxes’ design. He reported that the PAC has requested that Bell use a green anti-graffiti decal, a surface to which graffiti does not adhere. Further to the PAC’s request, Bell will provide the City with a complete landscaping plan for each location.

**109 COLUMBIA – PROGRESS REPORT**

Councillor Samiotis commended the administration on its management of this situation, which constituted a public health hazard.
Director Flies informed the GC that the house has been cleaned up. Eleven garbage containers were filled as well as three storage containers, which are being kept in the Public Works yard until the property owner moves back in. The vermin are currently being exterminated, after which mould testing will be carried out. Director Flies explained that the City is doing its utmost to minimize costs.

Confidential items were discussed.

Director Flies and Ms. Jodoin left the meeting at 6:49 p.m.

**RESIDENT SURVEY FOR INDOOR SWIMMING POOL**

The DG reported that the resident survey for a potential indoor swimming pool has received over 1000 responses with an approval rate of roughly 80%. He informed the GC that Mr. Mark Wilkins of Mark Wilkins Consulting: Market Research + Strategy will present the results at the August 21st GC meeting.

The DG relayed Mr. Wilkins’ opinion that with the current sample size, the numbers would not change much if the survey was extended. Councillor Lulham recommended verifying the number of responses that had been received for the resident survey on the WRC, which had been considered to be a significant enough number on which the City could base its decision. The DG confirmed that the administration will do so.

The DG reported that the respondents would expect the City to charge a user fee and for the pool to be at least 25 metres in length. He added that the respondents were more favourable to the construction of a gymnasium as part of the facility than he had expected.

The DG informed the GC that further to the City’s meeting with the representatives of the local YMCA regarding the possibility of a partnership for the construction and operation of the potential facility, a meeting will be held in early September with the representatives of YMCA Quebec.

**USAGE OF LOCAL PARKS AND STREETS FOR EVENTS DRAFT POLICY**

Councillor Lulham recommended that as in the cases of the draft “Victoria Hall / Gallery Booking Policy” and the draft “Westmount Public Library Room Usage Policy,” a statement should be included indicating that “the City does not consider proposals for partisan political or religious events.”

Councillor Cutler pointed out that article 9 should refer to article 4 as opposed to article 3.

Further to Councillor Forbes’ inquiry, Councillor Lulham confirmed that an employee in Sports and Recreation has been put in charge of processing requests for the use parks for events.

- **It was agreed** that a statement will be included indicating that “the City does not consider proposals for partisan political or religious events.” Article 9 will be
amended to refer to article 4 as opposed to article 3. The final draft policy will be submitted to Council for its approval at the September 5th Regular Sitting.

**VICTORIA HALL / GALLERY BOOKING – DRAFT POLICY**

Councillor Davis recommended that as in the case of the draft “Westmount Public Library Room Usage Policy,” a statement should be included indicating that “events must take place within the operating hours of Victoria Hall, with minimum disruption to others using the facility. Approved events that take place outside normal operating hours will incur a charge based on the going rate, per hour, per staff person.”

- **It was agreed** that a statement will be included indicating that “events must take place within the operating hours of Victoria Hall, with minimum disruption to others using the facility. Approved events that take place outside normal operating hours will incur a charge based on the going rate, per hour, per staff person.” The final draft policy will be submitted to Council for its approval at the September 5th Regular Sitting.

**WESTMOUNT PUBLIC LIBRARY ROOM USAGE – DRAFT POLICY**

Councillor Drury recommended amending the phrasing of subsection 4 of the section entitled “Use of Study Rooms” in the following manner: “A study group is defined by as three or more people up to a maximum of ten.”

- **It was agreed** that subsection 4 of the section entitled “Use of Study Rooms” will be amended in the following manner: “A study group is defined by as three or more people up to a maximum of ten.” The final draft policy will be submitted to Council for its approval at the September 5th Regular Sitting.

**WESTMOUNT RECREATION CENTRE RINKS & ACTIVITY ROOMS RENTAL – DRAFT POLICY**

Councillor Cutler recommended permitting small scale fundraisers, namely “pass the hat” fundraising that often follows hockey games, particularly in the holiday season, and when the ice is rented for a standard period of time, as opposed to for a whole day. Councillor Lulham and Councillor Davis held that these small scale “pass the hat” fundraisers should not to be discouraged.

Councillor Samiotis recommended modifying the draft policy to indicate that “the City does not consider rentals of any of the recreation facilities for…fundrais[ing] events.” She explained that fundraising constitutes the main purpose of a fundraising event while “pass the hat” fundraising that follows a hockey game does not constitutes the main purpose of the rental. Councillor Lulham supported the recommendation, adding that limitations on the number of participants and the amount of time for which the ice can be rented could be considered as well.
Councillor Drury supported Councillor Samiotis’ recommendation, adding that all cases when funds are raised from individuals other than those using the ice are to be considered “fundraising events.” Councillor Lulham questioned how the City can monitor the source of the funds.

The DG proposed permitting fundraisers for which the ice time is rented within 10 days preceding the event. He explained that large scale fundraisers would not be able to be organized within this time frame.

➤ **It was agreed** that the draft policy will be amended to indicate that “the City does not consider rentals of any of the recreation facilities for…fundrais[ing] events.” Small scale fundraising that does not constitute the main purpose of the ice rental will be permitted. The amended draft policy will be presented to the GC at its August 21st meeting. The final draft policy will ideally be submitted to Council for its approval at the September 5th Regular Sitting.

**COUNCIL OBJECTIVES FOLLOW-UP: TRAFFIC**

Councillor Samiotis expressed her interest in the GC being presented with the TAC’s proposed plan for resident-only parking established further to the traffic counts carried out by Mr. Jonathan Auger, Public Works – Traffic Technician.

Councillor Lulham recommended that the “By-law Concerning Street Traffic” be amended to prohibit vehicles from circulating in the lanes, which are only to be used for local traffic.

**COUNCIL OBJECTIVES FOLLOW-UP: INFRASTRUCTURE AND PARKS**

Councillor Lulham reported that the new playground equipment, which includes a swing for handicapped individuals, is to be installed in Westmount Park by the end of the month. The ADG confirmed that he has not been advised of any delays at this point.

Further to the Mayor’s inquiry, the ADG informed the GC that the work on Westmount Avenue is scheduled to be completed on August 25th.

**NEW BUSINESS: POET LAUREATE**

Councillor Forbes relayed a resident’s proposal for the City to hire a poet laureate who would compose poetry to be inscribed throughout the City, usually to be added when work is being carried out, as well as for any other poetry needs. The resident estimated the potential poet laureate’s annual salary as ranging between $10,000 to $25,000.

Confidential items were discussed.

Further to Councillor Drury’s inquiry, Councillor Forbes informed the GC that she is not aware of any other Canadian municipality of a similar size having a poet laureate.
➢ **It was agreed** that the City will give no further consideration to the possibility of hiring a poet laureate.

Confidential items were discussed.

**COUNCIL OBJECTIVES FOLLOW-UP: HYDRO WESTMOUNT**

The Mayor reported that during the power outage the previous week, Hydro Westmount’s map did not reflect the full extent of the affected area. She informed the GC that the department is working on fixing this issue.

**COUNCIL OBJECTIVES FOLLOW-UP: INFRASTRUCTURE AND PARKS (Continued)**

The DG reported that the break of a water main on Sainte-Catherine Street, a pipe built in 1894, was well-managed by Public Security.

**COUNCIL OBJECTIVES FOLLOW-UP: COMMUNICATIONS**

Councillor Samiotis emphasized the importance of communicating that the primary motivation for narrowing Dorchester Boulevard is to facilitate pedestrian circulation in the area. This prospective reconfiguration will include more places for pedestrians to cross the street.

**COUNCIL OBJECTIVES FOLLOW-UP: URBAN PLANNING**

Councillor Samiotis reported that she will update the GC on the study on the houses of worship at its August 21st meeting.

**COUNCIL OBJECTIVES FOLLOW-UP: INFRASTRUCTURE AND PARKS (Continued)**

Councillor Lulham informed the GC that a focus group has been organized to discuss the restoration of the greenhouses. Further to Councillor Davis’ request to participate in the process, Councillor Lulham confirmed that she will establish the group’s meeting dates with her.

Confidential items were discussed.
ABSENCES

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

The meeting was adjourned at 7:54 p.m.

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Cynthia Lulham                    Mª Nicole Dobbie
Acting Mayor                       Assistant Director of Legal Services and
                                         Assistant City Clerk