PUBLIC

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS OF THE MEETING OF THE GENERAL COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WESTMOUNT HELD AT CITY HALL ON JANUARY 11, 2016 AT 4:10 P.M. AT WHICH WERE PRESENT:

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

GENERAL COMMITTEE AGENDA

Adoption of the General Committee Agenda of January 11, 2016

It was agreed that the Agenda of the January 11, 2016 meeting of the General Committee of Council be adopted.

Mayor Trent informed Council that he will not be present at the General Committee’s March mid-month meeting.

Confirmation of Minutes of the Meeting of General Committee Held on December 7, 2015

The Minutes of the General Committee of Council’s meeting held on December 7, 2015 were adopted with corrections.
Business arising from the Minutes of the Meeting of General Committee Held on December 7, 2015

PPCMOI By-law

Councillor Samiotis informed Council that Mr. Tom Flies, Assistant Director of Urban Planning, inquired as to whether the City of Beaconsfield has any requirements for an additional direct consultation of residents to be carried out by the prospective developers prior to the Council’s ultimate decision on the project. Mr. Flies was informed that the City of Beaconsfield does not have this additional requirement integrated in its PPCMOI by-law, or otherwise in the form of a policy.

Councillor Samiotis informed Council that the fee structure will include a base rate for large projects applying under the PPCMOI by-law.

Councillor Martin inquired as to whether the City can include this additional direct consultation stage in the form of an informational meeting in its PPCMOI by-law. Mlle St-Jean responded in the negative, explaining that the City’s regulatory power is limited to what the provincial legislator has explicitly delegated to it. Accordingly, such a requirement would have to be adopted in the form of a policy.

Councillor Martin requested that Director General Deegan contact the director generals of the other municipalities with PPCMOI by-laws to inquire as to whether any have included a similar additional direct consultation requirement in their PPCMOI by-laws or have assessed this possibility. The Director General confirmed he will do so.

Items from Council Agenda to be discussed in General Committee

Regarding the organization of the Conseil local de patrimoine, Councillor Samiotis informed Council that in June 2014, when the City amended its by-law to permit a non-resident to be a member of the PAC, it also enabled the PAC to act as the Conseil local de patrimoine. Accordingly, any expert opinions required by the Cultural Heritage Act are included in the committee’s reports to Council.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION / DECISION

SPVM ACTION PLAN

Mr. Mathieu Bastien, Commandant at the SPVM – Station 12, and Mr. Greg McBain, Director of Public Safety, joined the meeting at 4:32 p.m.

Commandant Bastien outlined the SPVM’s current vision and action plan, as laid out by the new Director, Philippe Pichet.

Commandant Bastien outlined Station 12’s three priorities for 2016:
1. Improve the contact and interactions between police officers and citizens;
2. Ensure positive cohabitation and the sharing of public spaces; and
3. Ensure the safe sharing of road space between pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists.

Regarding the first goal, Commandant Bastien provided two examples. Firstly, when a significant change occurs, such as the recent closing of The Liquid Lounge on Sherbrooke Street, police officers are to contact neighbouring residents and merchants in order to discuss the change and their impressions of it. Secondly, Commandant Bastien informed Council that the itinerant-related issues that used to exist in Cabot Square have been significantly curbed, largely due to Station 12’s consistent dialogue with the neighbouring businesses.

Regarding the second goal, Commandant Bastien informed Council that he has requested that Station 12 be provided with two bicycles for two cyclist-patrollers to begin as of April/May. These patrollers can cover less accessible areas like alleyways and are more covert than police officers in vehicles. Additionally, Station 12 will organize meetings with residents and merchants two to three times per year to discuss the issues affecting them and will carry out surveys to this effect twice a year. At the same time, these two initiatives will improve the contact and interactions between police officers and citizens, the Station's first goal. Throughout 2016, Station 12 will also carry out a minimum of two drug interventions in Cabot Square, two in the Summit Circle lookout area, and one in a school.

Regarding the third goal, Commandant Bastien informed Council that Station 12 will carry out two cycling safety education initiatives per year, two pedestrian safety education initiatives per year, and two driving safety education initiatives per year for groups of cyclists, pedestrians, and motorists. Station 12 will also carry out several operations to target distractions while driving, such as cell phone use, speeding, and driving under the influence of alcohol.

Councillor Martin thanked Commandant Bastien for Station 12’s participation in the TAC meetings, noting the different and valued perspective that the participating officer brings to the committee.

Further to several questions he has received from residents, Councillor Cutler inquired as to how residents may contact the police by telephone without calling 911. Commandant Bastien responded that the Station has its own phone number for this purpose. He added that the SPVM also has a Twitter account that serves a similar purpose, but it is centrally-operated, and therefore the best way to contact Station 12 is by visiting the station or by calling the aforementioned phone number.

Commandant Bastien left the meeting at 4:59 p.m.

Councillor Lulham joined the meeting at 5:00 p.m.
PARKING METERS – UPDATE

Copies of the following documentation were distributed:

- Memorandum from Mr. Claude Vallières, Division Head – I.T., dated January 5, 2016.

Mr. Claude Vallières, Division Head – I.T., joined the meeting at 5:00 p.m.

Mr. Vallières updated Council on the status of the new parking meter system’s installation. The call for tenders for the concrete bases for the pay stations is on schedule. Next week, the City is scheduled to receive the demo pay stations that are to be installed in front of City Hall and the Westmount Recreation Centre in order for individuals visiting the two buildings to familiarize themselves with the new system, with their installation scheduled for January 20th. Mr. Vallières explained that the City will inform the public that these pay stations are for demonstrative purpose via its website and the Westmount Independent.

Mr. Vallières presented the pros and cons of using physical keys for the pay stations versus combinations. He explained that a combination can be more easily distributed than a physical key; however, the combination can be more easily changed than a lock that is to be opened by a physical key.

Mr. Vallières informed Council that he expects each concrete base to cost roughly $1000. However, he explained that this has yet to be established.

Councillor Drury inquired as to whether the two distinct parking rates will be maintained upon the new system’s installation. Mr. Vallières responded that he understands that to have been Council’s decision, adding that the final decision can be made as late as late March.

Councillor Samiotis noted that the receptionists at City Hall and the WRC should be given all the information regarding the timeline for the new system’s installation as well as how to use the pay stations. She recommended that the City inform the public that the new system will be installed in Spring 2016.

Councillor Martin inquired as to whether a motorist must enter the location of his vehicle when paying for parking. Mr. Vallières responded that only the parking zone in which the vehicle is located must be indicated. Director McBain specified that the City currently only has two parking zones and that the pay station will indicate the zone in which it is situated. Councillor Martin recommended having a map demonstrating the location of the two parking zones on each pay station.

Mayor Trent recommended establishing the percentage of non-residents that use the City’s parking meters of the system’s total users in order to guide the City’s communication plan.
Councillor Smith recommended that the City hold an information session, aimed at senior citizens in particular, the demographic that is most likely to have difficulty using the machines. Director McBain informed Council that PSOs will be present around the pay stations for the first few weeks following their installation in order to guide individuals who have difficulty using the machines.

Councillor Martin inquired as to whether there will be an added fee for paying for parking through the mobile application. Councillor Cutler responded that there will be a cost for the application’s use; it can either be accounted for with an added fee passed on to its users, or partially or completely offset by advertisements.

Mayor Trent inquired as to whether the information on the paying stations will be in both English and French, noting that they should qualify as informational signs, as opposed to traffic signs. Mr. Vallières and Director McBain responded affirmatively.

Director Vallières and Director McBain left the meeting at 5:20 p.m.

**GREENHOUSE – UPDATE**

Copies of the following documentation were distributed:

- Memorandum from Director Patrick Raggo dated January 5, 2016.

Mr. Patrick Raggo, Director of Public Works, joined the meeting at 6:01 p.m.

Director Raggo updated Council on the status of the greenhouses’ maintenance and restoration. As of the end of the previous week, regular watering in Greenhouses #1 - #8 has resumed. The greenhouses are being accessed according to the plan provided by the City’s engineer consultant. Some glass has continued to slip, namely in the Frog Pond area, and in Greenhouses #3 #5, and #7, but it is caught by the protective netting that has been installed. In mid-December, an initial meeting was held with an architectural firm. The City will be using a drone to take photographs that will help in the development of a maintenance and restoration plan. Director Raggo informed Council that contact with Kew Gardens, the Montreal Botanical Gardens, and Tanglewood Conservatories was somewhat on hold during the holiday season.

Mayor Trent emphasized that the greenhouses’ operations and the City’s needs must be assessed in order to determine which greenhouses will be restored. He explained that while the Conservatory and the Frog Pond area should be treated as heritage buildings, Greenhouses #1 - #8 are likely not all necessary, adding that the City no longer grows its own flowers. Accordingly, he recommended keeping the Jungle Room and a few of the other greenhouses for educational and recreational purposes, but determining which others will be eliminated. Councillor Lulham responded that she will discuss the matter with Director Raggo, the employees who work in the greenhouses, as well as Ms. Jayme Gerbrandt, the City’s horticulturist.
It was agreed that while the Conservatory and the Frog Pond area will be restored, the City will assess the operations of Greenhouses #1 - #8 in relation to its needs in order to determine which should be restored.

Councillor Samiotis recommended publishing the City’s plan in relation to the greenhouses’ restoration on its website once it is established. Councillor Lulham noted that she can speak to Ms. Laureen Sweeney of the Westmount Independent to present its plans to use drones to assist in the restoration process.

The Director General informed Council that Director Raggo will return to the General Committee at its mid-month February meeting to present further updates.

Director Raggo outlined the personnel changes in Public Works. Two civil engineer positions, one water meter technician and the other dealing with quality control, have been filled by internal candidates.

Director Raggo left the meeting at 6:28 p.m.

MAISON HURTUBISE – TAX EXEMPTION

Copies of the following documentation were distributed:

- Memorandum from Me Nicole Dobbie dated January 6, 2016;
- Letter from the Commission municipale Québec dated December 17, 2015;
- City of Westmount Resolution – Property Tax Exemption 2006-09-18; and
- Documents submitted by The Canadian Heritage of Québec.

Mme St-Jean informed Council that The Canadian Heritage of Quebec recently requested that the Commission municipale du Québec renew the Hurtubise House’s tax exemption. He explained that as the circumstances of the house have not changed since 2006 when the tax exemption was originally granted, he believes it will be renewed. Mme St-Jean specified that the Hurtubise House has two tax accounts, with only one receiving the exemption. The annex, which is rented, is subject to taxation. Therefore, the City issues two tax bills every year, and only one is paid.

Mayor Trent inquired as to whether the Hurtubise House tax exemption applies to school taxes as well. Mme St-Jean responded that while the 2006 decision was regarding municipal taxes, he believes that the exemption also applies to school taxes.

The Mayor emphasized the importance of this exemption being regarded as an exception, as it is the only building besides those occupied by houses of worship for which the City receives no revenue. He explained that while schools, for example, do not pay municipal taxes, the City receives revenue in lieu of such taxes. Mayor Trent specified, however, that he is favour of the exemption for the Hurtubise House, noting its particular historical value.
Councillor Lulham agreed, noting that there is no other building in the City with the same type of heritage value.

Councillor Davis inquired as to whether it would be possible to ask the provincial government for revenue in lieu of taxes. Councillor Lulham responded that as the Hurtubise house is not open all the time, but rather is only visited by invitation, this is not possible.

- It was agreed that this tax exemption will be put on the agenda for Council’s February 1st Regular Sitting.

VÉLO QUÉBEC – FUNDING FOR CYCLING EDUCATION COURSE

Copies of the following documentation were distributed:

- Memorandum from Director General Deegan dated January 6, 2016;
- Email from Daniel Lambert dated November 24, 2015;
- Email from Vélo Québec dated December 9, 2015; and
- Minute of the Transportation Advisory Committee of December 3, 2015.

The Director General explained that Mr. Dan Lambert, President of the Westmount Walking and Cycling Association, requested that the City provide the remainder of the funding required for Vélo Québec’s cycling education course to be given at St.-Léon School. He explained that the SAAQ is providing $1,100 of the required $3,600.

- It was agreed that the City will grant the funding request for Vélo Québec’s cycling education course.

TRIAL OF NEW LED AMBER LIGHTS

Copies of the following documentation were distributed:

- Memorandum from Director Benoit Hurtubise dated December 23, 2015.

Mr. Benoit Hurtubise, Director of Hydro Westmount, joined the meeting at 6:40 p.m.

Director Hurtubise expressed his dissatisfaction with the new LED amber lights, which were installed on a trial basis and supplied to the City free of charge. Councillor Lulham and Councillor Davis agreed. Director Hurtubise explained that the light is not an amber LED light, but is rather a white LED with an amber lens over it.

Councillor Smith inquired as to whether any residents had expressed their opinions of the lights. Director Hurtubise responded that a few did, namely some members of the Dark Skies organization, who did not like the new LED lights.
Mayor Trent noted that LED lights can cause triple the light pollution and affect people’s sleep cycles. Director Hurtubise agreed, adding that once a true amber LED is developed, its light will likely be less abrasive.

Councillor Lulham and Councillor Davis pointed out that some of the bollard lights on Greene Avenue are brighter than the others.

- **It was agreed** that the brightness of the bollard lights on Greene Avenue will be adjusted to be uniform with those that are currently less bright than the rest.

**POWER OUTAGES**

Director Hurtubise briefed Council on the series of power outages experienced in the western portion of the City from December 29th to January 6th.

Director Hurtubise explained that the circuits’ failures did not come as a particular surprise and that a reengineering of the area’s network had already been planned. He explained that new conduits were already installed last year and new cables are scheduled to be installed this summer with the reconnecting and reengineering work following suit. Director Hurtubise informed Council that the new conduits, including their installation, cost between $250,000 and $300,000. The new cables will cost $330,000. He recommended beginning this work as early as possible, preferably in early May. Director Hurtubise explained that while it is best not to interrupt residents’ power while the weather is still cold, this work will cause very few of such interruptions.

Councillor Drury inquired as to the cause of the circuits’ failures. Director Hurtubise responded that the repeated freezing and thawing, which rarely persist this long into the winter, cause significant strain on an underground system, particularly at its joints, as the water that surrounding it expands and contracts as it freezes and melts. He explained that the joints are roughly 40 to 50 years old.

Director Hurtubise informed Council that the first circuit failure occurred on December 29th. As is the usual procedure, the City called in its linesmen, who transferred the circuits to the reserve, which takes roughly two to three hours.

On January 2nd, the adjacent circuit failed. The City proceeded in the same manner as it did on December 29th. The issue began around 9:00 p.m. and the transfer was complete by roughly 12:00 a.m.

At 6:00 p.m. on January 3rd, with residents returning from the holidays, the circuits overloaded, making the extent of this issue clear. Residents were gradually reconnected.

Again at 6:15 p.m. on January 4th, the circuits overloaded. With a cold front coming in, the City decided to begin “load shedding,” essentially rotating the blackout across different areas. All residents were reconnected by 12:00 a.m.
Mayor Trent noted that, since giving residents a load shedding schedule is impossible, the actual timing of the power cut-offs during the operation comes as a surprise to homeowners. He suggested that for short periods, it could be better to have fewer people with no power throughout the entire period rather than disturbing significantly more residents with impending power cuts that arrive without warning. Director Hurtubise added that load shedding also adds an unusual strain on the transformers, which are not meant to be turned on and off frequently. He informed Council that Hydro Westmount will discuss the matter and determine its recommendations for the best approach to managing these situations.

Councillor Martin added that a communication policy should be developed for these situations.

Director Hurtubise informed Council that the same process was repeated on January 5th, once even more residents had returned from vacation. Load shedding was carried out from 6:45 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. and then again from 4:00 p.m. to 12:30 a.m.

There were two periods of load shedding again on January 6th; however, the issue was resolved by 7:00 p.m.

Director Hurtubise confirmed that the new system will be capable of supplying substantially more electricity than what the area currently requires, in anticipation of the eventual increases in demand.

Council congratulated Director Hurtubise and Hydro Westmount for their effective management of the issue.

Mayor Trent inquired as to whether it would be feasible to have permanent generators placed throughout the City for situations such as these circuit failures and overloads. Director Hurtubise responded in the negative.

Councillor Davis pointed out a technical issue to be corrected with the Code Red alert system.

Director Hurtubise informed Council that the Info-panne system will be in service for the public in a few weeks’ time.

Director Hurtubise left the meeting at 7:43 p.m.

**HANDICAPPED PERSONS – 2016 ACTION PLAN**

Copies of the following documentation were distributed:

- Memorandum from Director General Deegan dated January 6, 2016;
- Plan d’Action 2016 à l’égard des personnes handicapées; and
- Annexe 1 – Guide Accès Westmount.
The Director General requested that Council members email him with their comments on the City’s 2016 Action Plan. Once it is finalized in light of said comments, the Action Plan will be presented to Council for its approval at an upcoming Council meeting, February 1st if it is finalized in time.

COUNCIL OBJECTIVES FOLLOW-UP

TRAFFIC

Councillor Martin informed Council that the TAC is scheduled to meet the following day. Councillor Smith requested that the TAC discuss three issues, which she emailed to Councillor Martin, Councillor Lulham, and Councillor Cutler.

Councillor Martin noted that the TAC is often inefficient in its resolution of many issues. Councillor Lulham recommended developing more policies to help guide the TAC in this regard. Councillor Martin suggested that Councillor Lulham, Councillor Cutler, and he meet with Director Raggo to discuss the potential policies that Council could adopt to address this issue.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND PARKS

The Director General reported that the WRC café has opened. He informed Council that the Winter Carnival will be held on February 4th – 6th. Councillor Lulham added that a sign is being installed outside of the café to ensure that people are aware of its presence. She noted that many Public Works employees frequent the café every morning.

Councillor Cutler informed Council that further to a meeting with Ms. Elisa Gaetano on the reconstruction of Westmount Avenue, he is unsure as to why the work is scheduled to be carried out over a two-year period, eight weeks in each year. Councillor Samiotis responded that the intention is to restrict the work to the period between June 24th and August 28th when schools are closed. Councillor Martin responded that the issue will be discussed the following day with Director Raggo at the TAC meeting.

Mayor Trent reminded Council that this matter had been already discussed both in General Committee and in the budget seminar, and the decision had been made to respect Director Raggo’s recommendation to do the work over two years, such decision being reflected in the 2016 Capital Works budget that was publicly adopted.

COMMUNICATIONS

The Mayor distributed copies of a draft of the tax letter that is to be sent to residents.

Director General Deegan informed Council that the job description for the Social Media Coordinator that the City intends to hire has been expanded upon.
URBAN PLANNING

Councillor Samiotis informed Council that a letter explaining the aspect of the City’s study of its houses of worship dealing with their uses has begun to be distributed to the religious institutions, with the rest being sent that week. She explained that the study will compare the changes in uses of these buildings over the past years.

Councillor Samiotis reported that the City will hold the first session of its three-part meeting for the South East project on January 19th.

ONGOING ITEM: MTQ / AMT

The Director General informed Council that the Glen is scheduled to be reopened on January 15th. He will keep Council apprised of any changes.

Councillor Samiotis informed Council that a Comité de bon voisinage meeting for the Turcot project will be held on January 25th.

MEETING SCHEDULES

Copies of the following documentation were distributed:

- Council schedule of events for the month of January 2016; and
- Council schedule of events for the month of February 2016.

ABSENCES

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

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.