MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS OF THE MEETING OF THE GENERAL COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WESTMOUNT HELD AT CITY HALL ON AUGUST 1, 2016 AT 5:41 P.M. AT WHICH WERE PRESENT:

Chair                  Rosalind Davis
Mayor                  Peter F. Trent
Councillors           Philip A. Cutler
                       Victor M. Drury
                       Nicole Forbes
                       Cynthia Lulham
                       Patrick Martin
                       Theodora Samiotis
                       Christina Smith

NOT 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
                       Martin St-Jean, Director of Legal Services and City Clerk
Recording Secretary  Andrew Brownstein

GENERAL COMMITTEE AGENDA

Adoption of the General Committee Agenda of August 1, 2016

It was agreed that the Agenda of the August 1, 2016 meeting of the General Committee of Council be adopted, with the addition of the following item under New Business:

- St. Stephen’s Church – Weredale Park (Councillor Samiotis).

Confirmation of Minutes of the Meeting of General Committee Held on July 4, 2016

The Minutes of the General Committee of Council’s meeting held on July 4, 2016 were adopted with corrections.

Business arising from the Minutes of the Meeting of General Committee Held on July 4, 2016

The Director General reported that the issue regarding the prospective terrace in front of the restaurant located at 4909 Sherbrooke Street, which would have had the effect of limiting access to National Food Shop’s handicap ramp in its current configuration, has
been resolved. Councillor Lulham explained that the restauranteur has agreed to delay the construction of a terrace and simply place tables outside of the restaurant until National Food Shop reconfigures its ramp.

Confidential items were discussed.

Councillor Lulham recommended that the City improve its approach for discouraging property owners from leaving their lots vacant. She noted the possibility of requiring a certain degree of landscaping and maintenance, but requested that the administration provide Council with a recommendation of how to best proceed in this regard. The Director General suggested increasing the taxes imposed on vacant lots. The Mayor agreed that the City should improve its approach to discouraging the existence of vacant lots. He pointed out that higher taxes are already imposed on vacant lots, noting that they should be increased – something that would require enabling legislation from Quebec.

Further to Councillor Drury’s inquiry, the Mayor requested that at its upcoming General Committee meeting, Council discuss the administration’s recommendation for the amended policy regarding the issues discussed in General Committee that are to be kept confidential for the purpose of the minutes’ publication.

Councillor Cutler reported that over 100,000 pieces of data have been recorded on Côte-Saint-Antoine Road, as well as significant data on Westmount Avenue, in the context of the bicycle path pilot project. He explained that each piece of data refers to a passing vehicle, which includes bicycles, tracking its speed and directionality and distinguishing the type of vehicle by its length. The City will then deduce various statistics from this data.

**Items from the Council Agenda to be discussed in General Committee**

Councillor Lulham informed Council that she will update the public on the state of the greenhouses under “Mayor’s and Councillors’ Reports” at that night’s Regular Sitting.

Regarding Item No. 27, “Autorité des marchés financiers Certification for Infrastructure Work subject to a Public Tender Process,” Councillor Martin noted that the provincial government gradually reduced the threshold value of a contract above which AMF approval is required in order to bid on said contract. He explained that it did so in order to avoid overwhelming the AMF with applications for certification. Councillor Martin questioned whether the AMF will be overwhelmed by the applications for certification that stem from the City’s decision to adopt the resolution under Item No. 27. The Mayor agreed that the AMF will likely receive more applications for certification further to the City’s decision to proceed in this regard, which may increase their processing times; however, he expressed his doubt that the City, given its size, will cause a significant impact. MÈ St-Jean pointed out that the AMF’s current estimated processing time for these applications is eight weeks.

Confidential items were discussed.

The Mayor affirmed that the City should be endowed with the same tools to protect itself against corrupt contractors as is the City of Montreal, and such protection should not be compromised by simple clerical considerations.
The Mayor explained that the policy to be adopted by the resolution under discussion requires AMF approval for contractors bidding on contracts of more than $100,000 for the construction, reconstruction, demolition, repair or renovation of roads (including sidewalks), waterworks or sewers, for the supply of bituminous compounds, and for service contracts exceeding $100,000 in relation to any of the above, as well as any subcontract related to the above valued at more than $25,000.

Confidential items were discussed.

For the abovementioned contracts, bidders will be required to provide proof of a similar experience on at least three similar projects in the two years prior to the opening of public tenders within the Communauté métropolitaine de Montréal. At least one of those three similar projects will have to have been awarded by the City of Montreal or one of its boroughs.

The Mayor pointed out that the City’s power to adopt the first aspect of the policy should be upheld by the courts if it is ever challenged as the Integrity in Public Contracts Act obliges municipalities to require AMF certification for contracts above a certain value, rather than prohibiting the imposition of this requirement for contracts below that threshold.

Councillor Martin noted that the City may be required to pay more for its contracts if this prospective policy has the effect of reducing competition. The Mayor responded that to continue with contractors of doubtful integrity simply in order to save money would be something he personally could not agree to. Having to pay more is a possible outcome, he said; however, it will be outweighed by the benefits of doing business with AMF certified contractors. Specifically, the City will be able to better ensure the quality of the work done and the materials used with contractors whose integrity has been ratified by the AMF. Besides, the Mayor said, requiring AMF certification could attract new contractors who have so far avoided bidding against the kind of contractors who lack the AMF certification. Councillor Martin agreed, expressing his support for the resolution.

Mme St-Jean distributed copies of the press release to be sent, pending Council’s adoption of the resolution. He noted that, if the resolution is adopted, a large notice will be published in Constructo informing contractors of the City’s adoption of this policy. This will provide contractors with sufficient time to apply for the AMF’s certification prior to the policy’s taking effect on January 1, 2017.

The Mayor informed Council that he discussed the prospective policy with the other suburban mayors, providing them with the City’s legal opinion on the matter. He relayed their interest.

Councillor Samiotis referred to an application for a building permit for a new single family home on Westmount Avenue under Item No. 19, “Building Permit Applications – Approval.” She emphasized the need to adopt certain measures to protect the large lots in the City. She explained that the City has no grounds to refuse the above building permit application. The Mayor agreed on both aspects, noting that the proposed building is architecturally in keeping with its surroundings. Councillor Martin inquired as to whether the property was
once one large lot that was then subdivided. The Mayor responded affirmatively; the property was recadastered in 1965.

Councillor Samiotis noted the increasing trend of foreign investment in property speculation on the Island. Councillor Lulham suggested that as Toronto's and Vancouver's real estate markets have become very expensive, these foreign investors have shifted their focus to Montreal. She emphasized the need for a solution on the national level.

Méd St-Jean referred to Item No. 13, “Call for Public Tenders – Public Works.” He explained that the contract is being awarded to the second lowest bidder, as Canbec, the lowest bidder, did not have a valid attestation from Revenue Quebec when the tender opened.

**Council Question Period Follow-up**

Regarding the question posed as to whether the City will reconfigure the turnaround at Westmount Park Church, Councillor Lulham noted that the City's trucks can navigate the turnaround without difficulty. Accordingly, it will not be altered. The surrounding area will be landscaped this year and the next.

Councillor Lulham noted that Westmount Park has been kept consistently clean of garbage. She noted, however, that the grass is in need of maintenance. In order to effectively fill in the bare spots, the City is considering purchasing a tool that sprays grass seed covered in foam making it adhere to inclined surfaces.

**ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION / DECISION**

**CAPITAL WORKS TRACKING**

Mr. Claude Vallières, Division Head – I.T., joined the meeting at 6:39 p.m.

Mr. Vallières presented the application that will be used to track capital works projects’ progress and expenditures. He explained that the program provides a calendar for calls for tenders, the overview of the year’s projects that is updated monthly for Council’s review, a planning aid for expenditures, and a uniform approach to monitoring all projects. The application classifies a project as on schedule, late, cancelled, or completed.

Mr. Vallières informed Council that the program is currently available internally. It will be tested over the upcoming months, gradually being implemented in the fall and fully in place by January 2017.

**BICYCLE RACKS**

Mr. Vallières informed Council that the bicycle racks' installation began on July 26th and, if not already completed, will be completed shortly.
Mr. Vallières informed Council of the Toughpads gradually being implemented in Public Works, Public Security, and Urban Planning, and the needs they will be addressing. He noted that in the event a Toughpad is misplaced, it can easily be retrieved as the device’s location is recorded each minute. Its location history is therefore available for consultation as well.

Mr. Vallières reported that the dog permit system is to be ordered the following day. Due to the delay in obtaining the identification tags with integrated chips, registration under the new system will begin in September. He explained that the system should be functioning bug-free by December.

Mr. Vallières outlined the revenue from parking meters since the new system’s installation. He explained the recent decrease in revenue as a product of the summer vacation period.

Mr. Vallières left the meeting at 6:54 p.m.

Ms. Joanne Poirier, Director of Urban Planning, joined the meeting at 6:54 p.m.

Confidential items were discussed.

Director Poirier and Mᵉ Andrew Brownstein, Recording Secretary, left the meeting at 7:30 p.m.

An item was discussed in caucus.

Mᵉ Brownstein returned to the meeting at 7:54 p.m.

**COUNCIL OBJECTIVES FOLLOW-UP**

**TRAFFIC**

Councillor Cutler reported that speed bumps have been installed on Arlington Lane as well as in the lane that runs perpendicular to Hallowell Avenue. The speed bumps have been painted yellow for added visibility.

**INFRASTRUCTURE AND PARKS**

The Director General distributed copies of the updated version of the “Public Works – Projects Summary – 2016.” He informed Council that all projects are either completed, beginning soon, or at the least, have had their tender process initiated. Accordingly, he estimated that the City will meet its capital works expenditures budget. The Director General noted that the work being carried out on Westmount Avenue is scheduled to be completed on time, perhaps early.
Further to Councillor Davis' inquiry, the Mayor responded that the work to be carried out on Sherbrooke Street will not require a full street closure, but rather only a reduction of the commutable lanes.

Councillor Lulham informed Council that the tenders for the work to be carried out on the dog runs, the splash pads, and on Wood Avenue, all received many bids, the lowest of which were roughly 20% below the originally-estimated cost.

COMMUNICATIONS

The Mayor informed Council that the results of the survey regarding the City's services that was distributed via E-Westmount will be presented to Council at the September General Committee meeting.

URBAN PLANNING

Councillor Samiotis informed Council that the City is obtaining a translation of the report on the architectural aspect of the houses of worship study. She reported that representatives from the Shaar Hashomayim Synagogue and Temple Emanu-El-Beth Sholom have requested to meet with the City again to further discuss the synagogues' uses.

ONGOING ITEM: MTQ/AMT

Councillor Samiotis reported that the Mayor sent a letter to the Minister of Transport, Sustainable Mobility, and Transport Electrification, Mr. Jacques Daoust. She informed Council that Mr. Jacques Chagnon, MNA for Westmount – Saint-Louis, will be coordinating a meeting to discuss the possible construction of a sound barrier integrated into the new Autoroute 720, the planning of which has been seriously delayed due to the MTQ's lack of communication with the City.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m., at which point Council held its Regular Sitting. The meeting was reconvened at 9:44 p.m.

Confidential items were discussed.

NEW BUSINESS: ST. STEPHEN'S CHURCH – WEREDALE PARK

Councillor Samiotis explained that further to the closure of a nearby downtown soup kitchen and the construction on the Autoroute 720, under which many homeless people used to take shelter, The Open Door at St. Stephen’s Church has seen a large influx of individuals seeking its services. This has led to many people congregating on the church’s property afterhours. Neighbours have complained about the noise and the security issues caused by this situation.
The Director General reported that Commander Bastien of the SPVM and Mr. Greg McBain, Director of Public Security and their respective teams have visited the location multiple times. He relayed Director McBain’s remarks that the situation has since been kept under control. However, he pointed out that the church should be required to follow the example set by the YMCA/Batshaw, which has hired a security guard to ensure a safe environment around the Module du Nord, their tenant. The Mayor agreed that the police and public security officers cannot devote a disproportionate amount of time to managing this situation. The Director General informed Council that the City will be meeting with the church on August 3rd to discuss the situation.

**ABSENCES**

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

The meeting was adjourned at 9:56 p.m.

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Rosalind Davis                 M' Martin St-Jean
Acting Mayor                   City Clerk