MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS OF THE MEETING OF THE GENERAL COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL (GC) OF THE CITY OF WESTMOUNT HELD AT CITY HALL ON MARCH 5, 2018 AT 4:34 P.M. AT WHICH WERE PRESENT:

Chair                   David Laidley
Mayor                   Christina Smith
Councillors             Anitra Bostock
                        Marina Brzeski
                        Philip A. Cutler
                        Cynthia Lulham
                        Kathleen Kez
                        Conrad Peart
Absent                  Mary Gallery
                        Jeff J. Shamie
Administration          Benoit Hurtubise, Director General (DG)
                        Sandra Avakian, Assistant Director General (ADG)
                        Nicole Dobbie, Assistant Director of Legal Services and
                        Assistant 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 March 5, 2018

It was agreed that the Agenda of the March 5, 2018 meeting of the GC be adopted, with the addition of the following items under New Business:

- Preparation of GC Agenda (DG Hurtubise); and
- Food at GC Meetings (DG Hurtubise).

Confirmation of Minutes of the Meeting of the GC Held on February 19, 2018

The Minutes of the GC’s meeting held on February 19, 2018 were adopted with corrections.
Business Arising from Minutes of February 19, 2018

The administration is in the process of revising the presentation on the 20-year capital investments projections in order for it to be easily understood by residents when it is published on the City’s website. To put it into context, it will be paired with an explanatory cover letter and a map outlining the current state of the City’s roads and the state they are expected to be in at the end of the 20-year period.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION / DECISION

TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (TAC) TRAFFIC REQUEST PROCESS

The ADG presented the prospective procedure to be followed for processing traffic requests, subject to Council’s approval by resolution at a Regular Sitting.

Rather than residents sending emails to traffic@westmount.org, an electronic form will be posted on the City’s website. The form will have fields for a description of the issue, the reason for the request, the location of the issue, the time when it occurs, as well as for the resident’s name, address, and contact information. This will allow for requests to be processed much more efficiently. When a resident submits a completed form, he or she will automatically receive an email indicating that the City has received the request and will be processing it shortly. Once it is ultimately decided upon, in all cases, the resident will receive an answer briefly outlining the decision and the reason for said decision.

Moreover, this system will allow for a record of these requests to be kept efficiently, which will avoid the re-examination of issues that have already been analyzed. Additionally, it will allow for an analysis of the data regarding these requests. Specifically, with a ticket system, each type of issue can be classified differently, allowing the City to identify the types of issues that are of the greatest concern to residents. Decisions and policies can then be adopted in light of the analysis of this data.

A seven-page document detailing the policy will be made available to residents on the City’s website further to its prospective adoption. It informs residents that for the issues that require it, the City will conduct up to five days of data collection, traffic counts or otherwise, when this can be done internally. If necessary, the City will seek external services for such data collection and analysis. The document also contains a flow chart outlining the decisional process, which demonstrates that the TAC is an advisory body and Council is the decisional body.

➢ It was agreed in principle that at an upcoming Regular Sitting, Council will adopt a resolution to institute the traffic request process described above.

Mr. Tom Flies, Director of Urban Planning, joined the meeting at 4:58 p.m. The ADG left the meeting at 4:58 p.m.

Confidential items were discussed.
PROPOSAL TO CONDUCT A FIELD STUDY

GC members discussed the importance of ensuring policies are established based on data, referring in particular to several urban planning issues for which the current policies have been the subject of recent discussion.

A field study would be carried out for each of these issues, prioritizing data collection for on-property parking resources for all buildings and the restoration/replacement of windows on Category I houses and continuing with the others. The data collection would be performed by three to four teams of two urban planning or architecture students over the course of the upcoming summer. This data would be recorded electronically to be analyzed and tracked. In future summers, one to two groups of two students could be employed to update these inventories.

Prior to the initiation of these field studies, the City would launch a communication campaign to inform residents of the purpose of this project, namely to establish inventories based on which future, defensible, policies can be set, not to verify compliance or ticket residents for infractions.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:30 p.m., at which point Council held its Regular Sitting. The meeting was reconvened at 6:04 p.m.

Councillor Cutler joined the meeting at 6:11 p.m.

- **It was agreed** that Councillor Peart will work with Director Flies to initiate the field studies to be carried out.

PPCMOI 4898 DE MAISONNEUVE

Director Flies briefed the GC on the PAC’s recommendation to deny the PPCMOI application for 4898 De Maisonneuve Boulevard, referring to the timeline of the application’s consideration and the PAC’s detailed minutes.

GC members discussed the potential ways in which the PPCMOI by-law could be amended in order to avoid unrealistic applications by further qualifying what variances can be considered with the specification of normative criteria. Alternatively, the Planning Program could be amended to establish this framework.

Director Flies presented the fully revamped sections of the City’s website relating to Urban Planning, launched earlier that day, aimed at improving communication and simplifying the process for residents.

- **It was suggested** that on the City’s website, under the “Resident Zone” tab, the pages entitled “Construction and Renovation” and “Permits, Licenses, and Forms” will be changed to “Construction and Renovation Permits” and “Other Permits, Licenses, and Forms” respectively.
Director Flies left the meeting at 6:57 p.m.

**LEAF BLOWER UPDATE**

Further to City’s discussion with representatives of several landscaping companies doing business within the City, said representatives suggested that in order to address the noise concerns associated with gas-powered leaf blowers, the permitted hours for their use can be reduced from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday to Saturday, to 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday to Friday. The City confirmed that it will take this into consideration and emphasized that while it intends to modify its timeline for the banning of gas-powered leaf blowers, it will still adopt the ban in the future. In the interim, the City will lead by example, as it will exclusively be using electric-powered leaf blowers in its parks, which are far larger than any residential lots, as of this April. As one of the World Health Organization’s (WHO) Healthy Cities since 1991, the City must proceed in this manner; the WHO recommends against noise pollution exceeding 55dBA while gas-powered leaf blowers are on average 100 times louder than this threshold.

- **It was agreed** that Mr. Sebastian Samuel, Division Head – Communications, will prepare a document outlining the benefits of using electric-powered leaf blowers. Specifically, they provide a significant reduction in noise pollution and air pollution, with roughly a third of the gasoline in gas-powered leaf blowers being ejected, unburned, as vapor mixed with oil in the exhaust. Accordingly, individuals operating gas-powered leaf blowers are instructed to wear earmuffs and a gas mask; nearby pedestrians and residents are not equally equipped. Additionally, electric-powered leaf blowers promote better lawn and garden health, as the more powerful gas-powered leaf blowers erode the top soil. The document will be published on the City’s website and distributed to targeted audiences, such as those who attend the plant exchange.

- **It was agreed** in principle that the City will amend the “By-law to modify the by-law concerning noise,” by removing the ban on gas-powered leaf blowers and lawnmowers and modifying the permitted hours for the use of leaf blowers to 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday to Saturday, including Saturdays among the permitted days as some schools perform this work on Saturdays in order to avoid interrupting classes, and extending the fall season for their use until December 1st. A notice of motion for the adoption of this amending by-law will prospectively be adopted at an upcoming Regular Sitting, subject to a vote of Council. The City will adopt the ban on gas-powered leaf blowers in the future, subject to Council’s prospective adoption of a by-law to that effect. Moreover, once an appropriate model of a commercial electric-powered lawnmower is developed, the City will prospectively ban gas-powered lawnmowers, subject to Council’s adoption of a by-law to that effect.

**2018 FCM SUSTAINABILITY CONFERENCE OVERVIEW**

Councillor Brzeski briefed the GC on the some of the issues discussed at the 2018 FCM Sustainability Conference. The role of municipalities in the context of climate change was
discussed, with an emphasis on the preparation of infrastructure for handling the already inevitable weather-related issues. Separately, the repurposing of unused buildings, such as houses of worship, was discussed and the concept of makerspaces, open, collaborative workspaces, put forward. Cement was also discussed in terms of the lifespan of various mixtures, including cement with recycled materials.

- **It was agreed** that the City will look into the quality of the various cement mixtures presented at the 2018 FCM Sustainability Conference.

The list of grants available for sustainability-focused projects was presented to the conference’s participants. Most of these grants are for funding feasibility studies, but some can be awarded for funding actual projects with a formal sustainability plan in place.

**FOLLOW-UP TO THE PUBLIC MEETING ON THE STM PROJET VENDÔME**

While the STM’s Vendôme Project will serve an excellent purpose once completed, namely ensuring universal access to the hospital directly from Vendôme metro station, the work is currently creating noise levels that far exceed what the City permits, particularly at night. Accordingly, nearby residents have expressed their concerns.

- **It was agreed** that the DG will call Ms. Cybèle Trân, STM Corporate Counselor, Partner Relations, and the Mayor will call Mr. Philippe Schnobb, President of the STM’s Board of Directors, to relay residents’ concerns over the project and to request that the STM mitigate the noise, particularly at night, and ensure active and ongoing communication with the nearby residents.

- **It was agreed** that when work is being performed at night, Public Security will test the noise levels along York Street. If necessary and if feasible, a sound measuring device will be installed in the area.

**ONGOING ITEM: MTQ/TURCOT**

Further to the City’s recommendation to the MTQ that Greene Avenue be closed to vehicular through-traffic until the Turcot project is completed in 2019, at the MTQ’s request, the City will install planters to designate the street as closed to said traffic and manage communications for the closure.

The upcoming *bon voisinage* meeting is scheduled to be held in Victoria Hall on March 28th at 7:00 p.m.

**NEW BUSINESS: PREPARATION OF GC AGENDA**

The DG requested that GC members aim to send in all items to be put on the GC agenda by the Tuesday morning preceding each GC meeting.
NEW BUSINESS: FOOD AT GC MEETINGS

Further to quotations received by several local restauranteurs, GC members discussed the options for food at their meetings.

Confidential items were discussed.

ABSENCES

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

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

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Christina Smith                        Mês Nicole Dobbie
Mayor                                    Assistant Director of Legal Services and
                                          Assistant City Clerk