

NEWS & VIEWS

Montreal consult report okays St. Laurent compost plant

By Joel Goldenberg
The Suburban

The Office of Public Consultation of Montreal (OCPM) released a more than 50-page report this week approving the building of a composting plant on Henri Bourassa West in St. Laurent.

The city has placed a reserve on the land, which is owned by Crest Realities.

The OCPM held public consultations on the planned plant late last year. Some who provided input, including the supported the building of the plant, which is to take the place of an already existing building that will have to be demolished.

But some residents living not far from the plant expressed opposition, fearing the possibility of more traffic in the area, and odours and chemicals being released into the air. The report takes note of the concerns, and calls for a way for residents to follow the project in all of its stages. The report also mentions a response on this issue late last year by the island-wide Montreal agglomeration that chemical products are not used in the composting process itself, but that some chemicals may be emitted, and that if any bioaerosols were emitted - with the conditions that would exist with a closed operation and filtration of the air before it is emitted - "the concentration of bioaerosols would be very weak and their dispersion in the air would not be a risk for neighbouring residents." In its recommendation, the OCPM recommends it have access to a list of any chemicals involved.

The *Suburban* also brought up concerns about the location - the choice of a lot with an existing building that would have to be demolished. After the last

public consultation, Roger Lachance, director of the City of Montreal's environment department, was asked about vacant land in the entire western sector, which includes the West Island.

Lachance told *The Suburban* at the time that Montreal looked very hard at many possibilities, and that the St. Laurent site was the one that fit all of the needed criteria.

"One would think there is a lot of space in the West Island, but when we looked at the different possibilities, they were always close to residences or businesses, and we didn't find another one," he said at the time. A site near Trudeau airport was rejected because there were fears it would attract birds.

According to the report, there were numerous criteria by the Quebec environment ministry and the agglomeration on which the search for a site was based, including a minimum of 500 metres between the plant and any residences and businesses; ideally a municipal property (the property is private); land that is vacant, degraded or of little value; and the absence of an existing building. Some of these criteria were not met, but the report says more than 10 sites were studied with the aid of the provincial and municipal criteria before reaching a conclusion.

The borough of St. Laurent was pleased with the OCPM's report, saying its own recommendations to ensure residents' quality of life were taken into account by the consultation body, including traffic flow solutions. But the borough is also calling for the plant to obtain LEED gold certification, to ensure the facility is environmentally friendly; and to make sure the building is

pleasing aesthetically.

"The construction will undoubtedly have a positive impact for St. Laurent," said Mayor Alan DeSousa. "Not only will dozens of jobs be created, but we will gain expertise in the treatment of organic materials. Since St. Laurent is recognized as a leader in the environmental field, we are very excited to work with all involved to make this project a success."

The City of Côte St. Luc also welcomed the OCPM approval, saying it will enable that city and neighbouring municipalities and boroughs to "send their mixed food and garden organic waste to be treated and converted to quality earth compost that could then be reused on the island."

"Since Côte St. Luc is the first city on the island of Montreal to have introduced door-to-door collection of organic waste, we are very anxious to increase our output and to ensure that our organic waste is treated responsibly on the island," said Councillor Dida Berku, who has the environment portfolio on council.

A city statement also pointed out that "even though Côte St. Luc has a curbside collection service for 5,000 homes, it is still far from reaching the Quebec government target of 60 percent diversion of organic waste and most cities on the island do not even have organic waste

collection."

"The new compost-treatment centre will reduce travel costs for the waste trucks, and will allow more cities and boroughs to divert, collect and send their organic waste to a centre where it will be properly treated," said Councillor Steven Erdelyi, who has the public works portfolio. ■

ST. PATRICK SQUARE



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CSL passes new tree bylaw 5-3

By Joel Goldenberg
The Suburban

After years of debate behind closed doors and sometimes out in public, Côte St. Luc recently passed a new bylaw regarding the cutting down of trees on private property and how they are replaced at property owners' expense.

Councillors Ruth Kovac, Sam Goldbloom, Mike Cohen, Mitchell Brownstein and Allan Levine voted in favour, while Dida Berku, Steven Erdelyi and Glenn Nashen voted against.

The new bylaw amends that city's tree protection bylaw, which sought to have homeowners replace one tree they were cutting down on their own property with several. However, each case prompted divisions among councillors as to how many trees should replace one or more felled private trees.

The new law says one tree felled in front or secondary front yards would have to be replaced with one new tree, unless five or more trees are felled on one property within one year. One tree would be replaced with two, and a fine would be given, if it was

felled before a permit was sought. A certificate is given to cut down a tree if one of several conditions is met, such as the tree being dead, infested, dangerous or that it blocks visibility and pruning will not help.

"There's two conflicting visions we always have," Côte St. Luc mayor Anthony Housefather told the December council meeting, "between those who believe that someone has a right to do absolutely everything to do with their property versus those who believe the city has a responsibility to intervene when something they believe is a public welfare on the property could be harmed."

"In the end, the question is how much burden you place on a resident who wants to cut down a tree. Do you set unreasonably high fees or high standards, or do you try and say, even though we believe trees are really important, we're trying to place a reasonable standard on the residents seeking to petition to cut down a tree. In the end, it's not a perfect compromise, nothing is."

Kovac said the bylaw is fairer and less expensive to residents who need to fell a tree for a variety of reasons, there will be no net

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The Kiddush Cup II

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For more information, please visit <http://TheKiddushCup.org>.