

# Second phase of the city hall/library reparations gets under way

BY ISAAC OLSON

Soon after Côte St. Luc's library/city hall complex opened in 1986, it became apparent that there was a problem with the brickwork.

The city launched lawsuits, companies went bankrupt and Côte St. Luc collected a small insurance settlement, but the crumbling brick façade remained.

In the last few years, the problem has gotten worse.

"It's to the point where we have to replace all the bricks," said Councillor Steven Erdelyi, who showed the *Free Press* an example of the deteriorated, poorly fabricated bricks that he has in a zip-lock bag to demonstrate just how bad the original ones were.

Brickwork often holds for a century or longer, but this brick is crumbling after three decades and, said Erdelyi, it became a safety concern.

"Originally, we were going to do the work in five phases, with the cooling tower being the first phase and then the four other phases were split over the rest of the building."

However, once the cooling tower was completed, Erdelyi said city officials saw a

need to speed up the process and do the work in three phases instead. Phase two, which got under way this month, is the library side of the building. The city hall side will be completed by 2018.

Phase two will be completed by September, explained Erdelyi, with the approximate cost being \$1.5 million before tax.

"What it will involve will be basically removing and replacing all the bricks on the library side," the councillor said. "At the same time, the goal will be to not inconvenience residents."

## Library to stay open

The library will remain open throughout the project, he said. The project will not impact the opening hours of the library, but the demonstration garden will be closed for the season, fencing will be put up and construction vehicles will be moving around the building. There will be a concerted effort to not disturb residents, he added.

"When we started doing phase one on the cooling tower, when we removed the bricks, we realized the problem was worse than we thought," said Erdelyi. "It pressed upon us the urgency of the work that needs to be done."



On April 19, Councillor Steven Erdelyi holds brick chips that once were part of the city hall/library's façade. The bricks were clearly fragile and crumbling. This, he said, is why the brickwork around the entire structure needs to be replaced.

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