

Côte St. Luc readies for another year of snow clearing

BY ISAAC OLSON

While some areas of the city's budget may melt away this month, Côte St. Luc's snow handling will most likely stay as is because municipal methodologies have thus far proven successful and no one wants to tamper with a job well done, explained the councillor in charge of public works and engineering.

"Residents can expect the status quo as far as snow removal is concerned," began Councillor Steven Erdelyi, who represents CSL's District 4. "We're going to continue to offer the excellent service that we have in the past. I can tell you that the city is looking at ways to cut the budget to try to save tax dollars and minimize the tax increase. However, at the same time, the council recognizes that snow removal is one of the city's top priorities and that is one of the areas of the budget that we



There shouldn't be much change in snow-removal this year.

are not touching."

The roughly \$2-million budget is set based on average snow falls and costs over the past five to 10 years, he explained. While some winters are worse than others, there is a "snowy day fund" for emergencies, he said. No matter the

winter, he said he receives very few criticisms from residents and, overall, the city is well known for its snow clearance operations that involve a combination of private and public workers who either blow snow onto lawns or remove it from the streets altogether.

At times, he noted, there is even a little friendly competition between the private contractors and the public workers. Both, he added, are, at the same time, trying to outstrip neighbouring Montreal. The councillor commended the efforts of the work crews, while noting that he and fellow councillors will often head out after storms to review the work and make sure it is up to par. Also, he said the city welcomes calls from residents with snow-

removal concerns.

There aren't any major changes to procedures this year, though the city is slowly replacing its ageing supply of snow blowers with more efficient equipment that attaches to multi-functional, all-season tractors. The new machines allow more accurate blowing either into the trailers that haul away the snow or onto lawns so as not, he said, to get snow on the residents' walkways.

"During the recent snow fall, for example, it started to come down around midnight and we had our crews out on the road by three in the morning," he said. "By six o'clock, we had a full team out there and we managed to do an excellent job again."

Wagar asbestos issue fear-mongering, says local commissioner

BY ISAAC OLSON

During the recent English Montreal School Board (EMSB) meeting, NDG's commissioner Albert Perez cited cost-related concerns over asbestos in Côte St. Luc's Giovanni Palatucci facility (the former Wagar high school) — the proposed destination of Royal Vale High School were the board to vote in favour of moving it to the city.

From there, parents from RVS and the John Grant school, which uses the site, expressed concern that cancer-causing, lung-scarring material is present in an educational institution.

In follow-up interviews, CSL's commissioner Syd Wise described Perez's tactics as nothing more than "fear-mongering" and an EMSB official confirmed there is currently no threat to the safety of students in the facility. Just as many older buildings have asbestos, but officials are saying it is contained and not at risk of being disturbed.

When contacted by the *Free Press*, Canada Health spokesperson Gary Holub emailed information from the agency's

website that states: "Asbestos poses health risks only when fibres are present in the air that people breathe." Construction and maintenance workers should avoid creating asbestos dust, the website continues and "Health Canada has encouraged provincial occupational health authorities to adopt stringent workplace exposure limits for asbestos."

Wise described the asbestos as a

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MNA Bergman lends a helping hand



MNA Lawrence Bergman (left) told a local senior community about his efforts to protect senior citizens' rights and enhance services throughout the province while giving \$250 to the St. Patrick's Seniors Recreation Association on November 27. The association's president, Bernard McManus, right, accepted the cheque during an on-site craft fair and sale. The 70-year-old politician represents the riding of D'Arcy McGee, which covers CSL's St. Patrick Square apartment community found at 6767 Cote St. Luc Rd. near King Edward.

Photo: Isaac Olson

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