

Council passes 2017 budget, spending stays flat with 1.9-percent increase

BY ISAAC OLSON

At the start of the December 12 city council meeting, Councillor Steven Erdelyi praised the 2017 budget, which was adopted earlier that evening during a special meeting.

He said the average tax increase for resident is 1.9 percent, which is keeping within the Conference Board of Canada's forecasted inflation rate for the greater Montreal region. With this, 52 percent of single-family homes and condos "actually end up with a slight reduction in taxes. So we're happy about that," he said.

"We do our very best to keep property taxes as low as possible and our level of service what residents have come to expect," states Mayor Mitchell Brownstein

in a press release. "It was a challenging exercise this year, given the higher-than-expected bill we received from the agglomeration of Montreal."

About 42 percent of all taxes collected by Côte St. Luc are transferred to the agglomeration of Montreal, which funds services such as police, fire and public transit.

Highlights of the \$68-million operating budget include:

- Average increase in taxes for single-family home valued at \$584,600: 1.9 percent (or \$121),
- 52 percent of single-family homes and condos will see a reduction in taxes,
- Increase in revenues from taxation: 3 percent,
- Revenues from property taxes: 87.7



Côte St. Luc mayor Mitchell Brownstein speaks during the December 12 council meeting.

percent,

- Revenues from compensation in lieu of taxes: 1.9 percent,
- Other revenues (e.g., program fees, memberships, etc.): 10.3 percent.

The three-year capital expenditure plan was also adopted on December 12 with approximately \$14 million in capital expenses anticipated in 2017 for projects such as water and sewer rehabilitation/repairs. The budget also covers outdoor municipal pool renovations and underpass repair.

According to the city's website, property tax bills will be sent to homes by the last week of January. The deadline to pay property taxes has been set at February 27 for the first installment and May 29 for the second installment.

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house on a large corner lot, was demolished and replaced in 2003 with a post-modern condominium.

Some contextual information should be transmitted to readers regarding the town's nascent planning by its developers and financial backers before the rush to transformation begins.

Hampstead's inauguratory corpus reflects the perception of Canada's social position as a nation-state in the British commonwealth. Its southern rim was developed by its first urbanist/landscape architect, Leonard E. Schlemm, as social housing accommodation for renters. One aim was to enclose its garden city of detached and semi-detached properties. Secondly, an aim was to distinguish the municipality from NDG. The territory came with the Massé house. The condominium [replacing the Massé house] plays an inauspicious role as a south-to-north portal, as the property with a Dufferin Rd. address crosses two east-west Hampstead arteries, Queen Mary Rd. and Fleet Rd., terminat-

ing unceremoniously at the town's north boundary with the municipality of Côte St. Luc.

Some sections on the perimeter strip, specifically multiple-family apartment dwellings, have achieved unofficial cultural heritage status as visual metaphors of British colonialism. In the interwar years, Late Edwardian, Art Deco and Art Moderne apartment constructions fortuitously remain in certain paired apartment houses from the 1930s: for example, the Clarendon, Stratford and Finchley apartments. Prestigious architects built these tenements, yet their identities are possibly unknown to the Montreal architectural community as well as to town residents.

Low-rise postwar apartments on Côte St. Luc Rd. west of Heath Rd. are likely targeted for municipal renewal, [but] Bland and Trudeau's low-rise Glenhaven Apartments (1949) is an excellent example of postwar International Modernism. The brick building (painted over) with a parking apron common to the period, includes excellent brick and concrete mosaic bas-relief murals called "The Family." They

were designed by esteemed Montreal sculptor Charles Daudelin (1820-1920). One is integrated into the Côte St. Luc facade, the other on the Heath Rd. side facade facing west. The murals represent the optimistic trend to art in architecture in the Modern Western Art movement and they were commissioned by architects to animate functionalist buildings.

Communal guidelines for developers transmitted by trained and qualified Hampstead urbanists are crucial to coherent reinforcement of the strip in order to transmit its unitary identity. Hampstead's cultural patrimony will be lost if its urban planners cannot single out prewar and postwar stock of dignity and relevance, gauge a building's contextual pertinence in historic and contemporary terms, publish criteria for buildings to be saved or renovated, and submit a profile of their original architects or architectural teams.

Adding storeys to buildings or modernizing facades in the popular taste is a facile and predictable commercial solution. Furthermore it is an approach that is not tailored to Hampstead's identity as an oasis

Shloime Perel writes to thank the city of Côte St. Luc for changes to the description of Isabella Ave. on the city's website. See letters, p. 10.

community situated among urban precincts, with visual form and physical distinction between neighbouring NDG, Snowdon and Côte St. Luc.

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