

NEWS & ANALYSIS

CSL council has lengthy debate over security vehicles

By Joel Goldenberg
The Suburban

Members of Côte St. Luc council entered into an involved debate recently whether to buy two public security vehicles or one this year.

The proposal, introduced by councillor Glenn Nashen, was to buy two, but councillor Ruth Kovac proposed an amendment that the city buys one instead. Councillor Steven Erdelyi agreed with Kovac.

"That way, we have a continuous supply of new vehicles, and

we don't have to double up and buy two," Erdelyi said. "We're buying two vehicles this year because, in 2008 and 2010, they bought two vehicles. Then we'll have to repeat this in 2013 or at whatever point the vehicles need to be replaced."

Nashen, in charge of the public security portfolio, disagreed with Erdelyi, saying the purchase of the two vehicles is within the city's budget. "And the plan, as stated by the public security director, is to continue to purchase one vehicle per year, not two. The older two public

security vehicles would be replaced with the purchase of these two, which are emergency vehicles driven 24 hours a day for the most part under extreme circumstances."

Nashen said the older vehicles would be given to the volunteer Citizens on Patrol (vCOP), whose own vehicles need to be replaced. Should council buy only one vehicle, "we would be stuck with one more older vehicle, which tends to break down more often. I don't think it makes financial sense to skimp on buying the second vehicle."

Councillor Dida Berku said the original intention was to buy one vehicle, but it became two after the city received money from insurance following an ambulance accident earlier this year. "We have a tradition of going with one vehicle per year," she said. "I don't see any reason, just because we have a little extra money which we could use to cover other

expenses, to go to two vehicles now. One of the vehicles being replaced is being driven by the director, and it's not in any poor condition - it's a 2008." Berku added that a current vCOP vehicle does not have to be passed down to the public works department.

Kovac agreed with Berku, also saying one of the public security vehicles was not being driven 24 hours a day.

"A year and a half ago, we restriped the director's vehicle, and to take it off and do it again is not money well spent," she said.

Councillor Mitchell Brownstein said vCOPS should get the two older public security vehicles, as their own are not in good shape. Councillor Allan Levine opted for "erring on the side of caution" by buying one vehicle per year.

Kovac then said she would withdraw her amendment if one of the

new vehicles was given directly to the vCOPS.

"They're on the road all the time," she said.

Mayor Anthony Housefather supported Kovac's proposal that one vehicle go to public security, one to vCOP and the director keep his current vehicle. But then Levine said vCOPS do not need a new vehicle, as they do not drive fast and answer emergencies. Kovac then suggested passing on a 2010 vehicle to vCOPS.

Housefather said that the allocation of the vehicles can be decided later.

Kovac's amendment resolution to buy one vehicle was still voted on, with only Berku and Erdelyi supporting it. The original resolution to buy two vehicles was passed, with Berku and Erdelyi opposed, with the proviso that the allocation of vehicles would be decided by the city administration. ■

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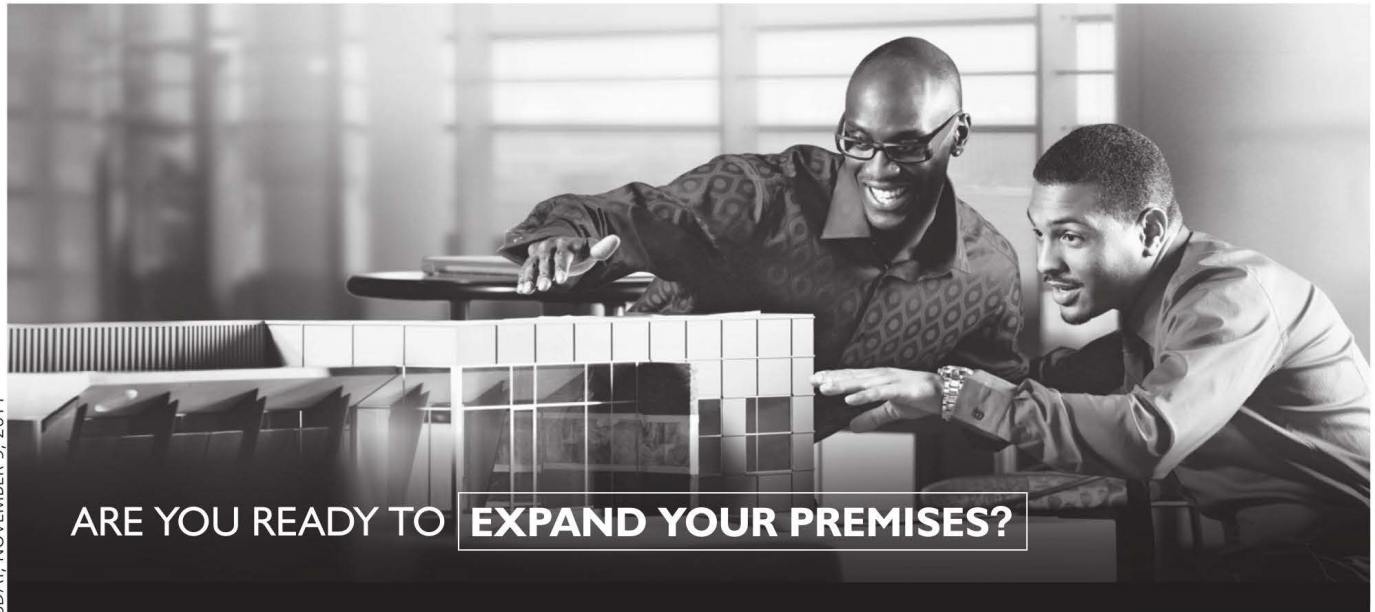
COHEN

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Zellers at Plaza Côte des Neiges will eventually be replaced by another Walmart store seems strange given the fact the big box operation is already established in the former Blue

Bonnets area on Decarie... It was surprising to see the once popular Hot & Spicy Chinese restaurant close its doors at Decarie and Jean Talon. Word has it that Mr. Steer was interested in possibly opening there, but that Buffet Fu Lam appears to now be the front runner. Dunn's Famous and

Amir are already based there.
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