

Residents question city's cleanliness

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Isaac Olson, The Free Press

During the April 16 city council meeting, a young Côte St. Luc couple questioned the city's cleanliness and skunk population while another resident challenged garbage collectors to carefully replace cans and clean-up fallen debris rather than carelessly blazing through their routes. (Some NDGers have the same complaint. See letter, p. 7) Lianne Barksj, while her husband Miki Harrar tended their 6-month-old baby, said their dog has been sprayed three times in two years. She said "we think it is a result of people putting their garbage out in bags the night before garbage pickup." She asked if the city can insist people use bins the night before and bags out in the morning only. "That's exactly what our by-law says," replied Mayor Anthony Housefather, noting trash can only be left out the night before if it's after 10 pm and in a bin. "Obviously we need to do a better job of enforcement." The mayor said Public Works would look into the issue. Though, he admitted, it is difficult to cover the entire city every week with only two security officials on duty. When Barksj asked what the city is doing about skunks, Housefather said the city will continue its contract with the SPCA. There are, he said, provincial laws in place that do make it difficult to rid the city of pests such as skunks and raccoons. He recommended residents contact provincial authorities and complain about this issue. Later, Harrar told the council "I find Côte St. Luc to be very messy in general and I often see litter strewn all over the place." He went on to ask, "what is the city's plan to clean up Côte St. Luc? I'm tired of living on such a messy street." Citing the city's four-out-of-five flower rating with Les Fleurons du Québec program, which is intended to recognize municipalities that improve their environment, the mayor said CSL is, when compared to most cities, a tidy place to live. Eldridge Ave., where the couple lives, is prone to litter, the mayor added, because the parking situation makes it difficult to clean. While requiring residents switch parking spots from one side to the other on cleaning days is an option, he said there would also be many residents opposed to such a measure. The city, however, will look into the issue, the mayor concluded, to find ways to better clean the street. Councillor Steven Erdelyi encouraged residents to participate in organic waste collection because, he said, once he began doing it at his home five years ago, he stopped getting crows. The organic waste, he said, goes in the brown bins and the trash no longer attracts animals. Bernard Tonchin, a meeting regular, told the council part of the blame needs to be put on disrespectful garbage handlers who scatter trashcans, lids and even debris as they rush through their routes. Crews used to bring along a broom and shovel to sweep up spills but now, he argued, debris is just left on the street. Housefather, noting he agrees the workers should be replacing the cans and lids in their proper place, agreed it's an issue that the city will look into.