

NEWS & ANALYSIS

May 29 flood compensation - very limited?

By Joel Goldenberg
The Suburban

The sudden torrential rainstorm that hit the island of Montreal May 29 caused a great deal of flooding in many places, particularly downtown.

But some residents from the demerged suburbs were also affected, especially- within the west end- Montreal West and Westmount.

At the late June council meeting in Montreal West in particular, Mayor Beny Masella informed town residents that because of the "exceptional circumstances and the number of cases" of flooded homes, the Quebec government mandated the City of Montreal's civil security department to collect the names of residents throughout the island who had property and belongings damaged, and were not covered by insurance. Several residents indeed informed town council that their homes were flooded.

The mayor added that a program "was put together to help defray the costs." Masella said the town sent a list of affected local residents to Montreal, and said residents could expect a call from Montreal to find out more. He urged other residents affected, who had not done so yet, to inform the town they were also victims.

But further information came in later to the town indicating that the number of island residents who might receive compensation may not be as many as expected.

The initial information was that all affected demerged municipalities were asked to provide coordinates to the City of Montreal for potential claimants, for flooding as a result of uninsured circumstances.

But the Quebec public security ministry then told the town that compensation would be given to those who were flooded as a result of a problem that was not insurable by any company, and not to those who did not happen to take out an insurance claim. Flooding caused by sewer backup, for instance, would not be compensated by the Quebec government.

There was also some indication, according to a Quebec government press release, that only City of Montreal residents - as opposed to those of the demerged towns - are covered by the program.

Contacted by The Suburban, Valérie Savard of the Quebec public security ministry sent a list of designated municipalities that will receive financial aid as a result of the May 29 rainstorm - and indeed, it includes the municipality of Montreal and numerous off-island municipalities.

Asked about Montreal West and Westmount, which are not part of the

municipality of Montreal, Savard replied that the municipalities in which damage was incurred and want to receive financial aid have to make a request of the public security minister.

Earlier, *The Suburban* was told by Montreal West officials that the town and other demerged municipalities sent data,

and that if enough claimants have eligible cases for applications, the town and others might end up being designated for compensation as well. A Montreal official confirmed that both Montreal West and Westmount sent Montreal several names of homeowners to be passed on to Quebec.

CSL allows for drive-through restaurant

Three councillors vote against - would rather have trees!

By Joel Goldenberg
The Suburban

Côte St. Luc council passed a first draft bylaw last week to enable the creation of a drive-through restaurant in that city, and specifically one planned for the parking lot of the Côte St. Luc Shopping Centre.

Mayor Anthony Housefather said it is not known which restaurant will be setting up in the area near Côte St. Luc Road or whether it will have inside seating, but jokingly let it be known he would prefer a Krispy Kreme outlet. Councillor Ruth Kovac introduced the bylaw and Councillor Sam Goldbloom seconded. There will be a public consultation on the matter in the near future.

"We think this is a positive addition to the area and the city, to have another restaurant in Côte St. Luc," Housefather said.

Councillor Mike Cohen said it has been many years since the McDonald's drive-through was on Côte St. Luc Road, albeit on the Montreal side of the street.

"There are a lot of people who work in the area, and if they want to get a quick lunch, they now have to go into NDG [Snowdon]," Cohen added. "I'm rooting for Wendy's to come into Côte St. Luc."

However, councillors Dida Berku, Glenn Nashen and Steven Erdelyi voted against - not because they oppose the project per se, but because they want parking lots to be greened as they are heat islands. Berku said that while the city does not "necessarily need a greening bylaw for parking lots, we can certainly take this opportunity to green our two major parking lots (Côte St. Luc Shopping Centre and Quartier Cavendish) which are

major hot spots on the Côte St. Luc heat map," areas that are hotter than others in that city.

Berku said that while the Côte St. Luc Shopping Centre will be installing grass in three vacant spots in the parking lot, she and the other councillors believe "this will not green the parking lot or provide much needed shade." She called for 10 trees to be planted within the lot's 400 spots, and cited St. Laurent's sustainable parking lot regulations, which calls for tree planting in parking lots with 20 or more spaces, for which the borough won a prize.

"I want to send a message," with the opposing vote, Berku said.

Erdelyi agreed with Berku, and added that the CP railyard is another hot spot.

"We're not asking a great deal to plant a few trees, it's a relatively small request," Erdelyi said.

Nashen, who also voted against, pointed to what he has heard of the relationship between the health of the general community and trees, in terms of lowering temperature.

"I think we're not doing enough and that message has to get out to developers across the island," the councillor said.

Councillor Mitchell Brownstein agreed there should be trees, but voted in favour of the project.

Housefather agreed that property owners with large parking lots should be strongly advised to have green islands within them, and said the Côte St. Luc Shopping Centre's owners will be contacted to try and secure an agreement on planting trees.

"The council wants trees," the mayor told *The Suburban*.

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