

## **NEWS & ANALYSIS**

## **CSL** approves plans for Cavendish Mall road infrastructure

By Joel Goldenberg
The Suburban

Most Côte St. Luc councillors passed a resolution last week approving 10 plans for the infrastructure and roadwork of the Cavendish Mall site housing project.

The resolution was passed so that the plans can be sent to the Quebec environment minister to enable the city to move forward with the work. Côte St. Luc is funding a third of the costs of major streets and improvements for the project.

"We will have a beautiful town centre, an elegant avenue that will lead from city hall to Ruth Kovac Park," said councillor Dida Berku. "It will be very beneficial to all residents of Côte St. Luc to have this new development."

Berku, who moved the infrastructure resolution, added that the total amount of money being spent is \$7 million on roads and infrastructure, and that "\$1.4 million is the amount the city is borrowing so that we can finance the avenue that's coming off of city hall, and the extension of Kellert, which are feeder roads. These are not small side roads just for a small development, it's not Ilan Ramon. These are major arteries in our new town centre.

"And \$1.6 million, which we're borrowing, is going to be totally repaid by the mall over a period of 15 years, and can be repaid faster if the mall comes up with the money," she added, pointing out the remaining \$4 million will be paid by the developer. "So out of a total of \$7 million, \$1.4 million is being financed by the city and, in the grand scheme of things, we negotiated in the best interest of Côte St. Luc."

Mayor Anthony Housefather reiterated that \$1.4 million is the city's overall cost for the development's infrastructure, and in terms of the \$1.6 million that will be repaid with interest, "we're being repaid more than we're actually borrowing."

But councillors Allan Levine and Steven Erdelyi dissented. Erdelyi, who likes the plans as a whole, has been regularly dissenting because of what he feels are a lack of green concessions for environmentally-friendly buildings.

Levine's language was much stronger.

"This is absolutely the most ridiculous deal I've ever seen in my life," he said. "Just creating this municipal works agreement costs a fortune in legal fees," the councillor said. "We're going to be borrowing money to finance a project for a private developer. We're paying for one third of two of the roads, one of which doesn't even enter the mall - it's a totally private road. And we have to pay for one-third of the retention basins for the water runoff - we have to dig up Ruth Kovac Park.

"The amount of money we put forth in all of this, and we're borrowing money to help out the developer, the entire scheme is the most embarrassing thing I've ever seen in this city."

Berku disagreed. "I don't think we have anything to regret," she said.

Housefather responded that in terms of the city's \$1.4 million expense, "that's one-third of two streets. Everything that I've learned, asking all of the experts who have done development in different cities, this is not only customary, it's a good deal for the city. Councillor Levine can have his opinion, I don't agree with it'"

## COHEN

Ministry officials believe it is a good investment, with economic spinoffs from the concert estimated to top \$3.3 million.

Knuckles Nilan Úpdate: There was a strong response via e-mail and Facebook to last week's column about former Canadiens enforcer Chris "Knuckles" Nilan. I was in touch with Kirkland resident James Davidson, who is Nilan's Montreal business manager. He has created Knuckles Nilan and

the Knuckles Group on Twitter and notes that a book on Nilan, written by **Chrys Goyens**, is due out in 2012.

Place Versailles Boxing: There was quite a lot of excitement for shoppers last week at Place Versailles in Anjou as a boxing ring was set up and IBF world super middleweight champion Lucian Bute stepped in to train in preparation for last Saturday night's match against Ireland's Brian Magee. Bute worked up such a sweat he drenched two of his T-shirts to the point they could be wrung out with water.

