

CSL passes B'nai Brith House project second draft bylaw 4-2

By Joel Goldenberg
The Suburban

Côte St. Luc council passed a second draft bylaw 4-2 last week to enable the building of a second B'nai Brith House residence near the Côte St. Luc Shopping Centre.

A public consultation was held before the Aug. 10 council meeting, and the rezoning bylaw will now be subject to a potential petition by area residents who could ask for a register. Should a register have a sufficient amount of signatures, a referendum could be held or the bylaw could be withdrawn. (Check the Côte St. Luc public notice in this week's Suburban for the exact details and conditions involved with the process.)

The second draft bylaw was supported by Councillors Sam Goldbloom, Mitchell Brownstein, Ruth Kovac and Mike Cohen, as well as Mayor Anthony Housefather, who did not vote. Councillors Dida Berku and Steven Erdelyi voted against. Councillors Glenn Nashen and Allan Levine were not at the August council meeting.

Although both sides of the issue laid out the reasons for their votes at the July council meeting, an 18-minute and 11-second debate nevertheless took place.

Berku and Erdelyi were opposed because of the project's proximity to the

railway tracks in the area, with a distance less than that suggested by Federation of Canadian Municipalities and Railway Association of Canada guidelines — a safe distance setback from building to property line of 30 metres.

Berku expressed some frustration. "We, as a city council, make commitments and adopt declarations, we go to the [island-wide] agglomeration and promote FCM guidelines," she said. "Then when it comes down to Côte St. Luc, we have to squeeze in a project because we haven't got land and a place to build it. There's always a reason not to apply the principle completely because 'that's the reality,' that we live in Côte St. Luc and are surrounded by tracks and we'll do the best we can with what we have."

Brownstein said the new residence is a great project for Côte St. Luc, "helping those in need, as the other B'nai Brith House does."

He pointed out that other residents live on the same railway line, on Holland, Wavell and Baily.

"So I don't understand why, all of a sudden, this becomes the issue, this one building that will be the safest of all buildings ever built on that line," Brownstein said.

Erdelyi said that he supports B'nai Brith House and realizes more such facilities are needed, but he maintained his

concern with the location. The councillor added that when he was very young, he sat in the back of the family car without a seatbelt on, and now rules for children in cars are much stricter.

"We're a lot smarter now than we were, a lot more conscious, and for that reason, I must vote against this motion."

Kovac reiterated her support, pointing out that B'nai Brith is one of the most recognized international institutions, and that they would not put elderly residents at risk.

"You want to give a certain segment of the population a safe environment in a

city where they feel they belong, or do you want them to leave where they lived all their lives?"

"I've been living a block and a half away from the railroad tracks for the last 34 years. The Quebec government is behind the project and financing it, you've got experts at all levels agreeing this is an okay project. To give our residents a safe, good and convenient place to live far outweighs that very minute possibility that something untoward could happen."

Mayor Anthony Housefather agreed with Kovac, and he also agreed that safety rules have changed over the years. ■

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By Joel Ceausu
The Suburban

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