

WESTMOUNT INDEPENDENT

Weekly. Vol. 17 No. 5c *We are Westmount* May 16, 2023

Durnford wins for ‘hot doc’



Westmounter Megan Durnford won the Betty Youson Award for Best Canadian Short Documentary at the Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Film Festival May 6. Her entry was *Last Respects*, a film about Montreal priest Abbé Claude Paradis’ annual ceremony to celebrate the lives of the unclaimed dead, including homeless people and neglected seniors. Her son Hugh Durnford-Dionne also worked on the movie. See p. 19 for story. PHOTO COURTESY OF CHARLOTTE DURNFORD-DIONNE.

City welcomes new residents



New Westmount residents Dimitrius Derix and Cierra Browne at the city’s spring flower show, which is also a welcome party for new residents. Derix is a McGill student studying education and Browne is an arts graduate student in history from Carleton University. They have moved here from St. Lazare. See p. 10 for more coverage. PHOTO: RALPH THOMPSON.

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City’s 46th Family Day set for May 27

New food truck to join ‘favourite’ pony rides, train, inflatables

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

It’s a sure sign that summer is on the way with the program for the city’s 46th Family Day announced for Saturday, May 27 in Westmount Park, centred on the Melville field.

Federal by-election set for Monday, June 19

Usually considered Westmount’s start to summer, the city’s event typically attracts hundreds of residents and passers-by from 10 am to 4 pm. It is typically the best-attended of all city events with this year’s new attraction: a food truck.

While a schedule of times for various attractions is expected to be delivered to all Westmount addresses closer to the date, Sports and Rec- continued on p. 4

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Councillors, Public Security work to improve school safety



The first of this month's school safety campaigns by city council and Public Security took place May 10 at Westmount Park School. Pamphlets on security in school zones were handed out to parents and those dropping off children at the school, according to department director Greg McBain. From left, front row: councillors Matt Aronson, Anitra Bostock and Mary Gallery; back row: councillors Jeff Shamie and Conrad Peart, as well as public safety officers William Lamontagne and Anthony Randrianasolonirina.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE WESTMOUNT PUBLIC SECURITY UNIT.

Keep eye out for temporary parking signs

A car was towed May 5 from in front of 382 Victoria when it was parked in front of temporary no-parking signs required by Public Works to plant a tree.

"This is a reminder for residents as well as visitors to watch for such temporary signs for special operations," warned Public Security director Greg McBain. In the current instance, the car belonged to someone from Pennsylvania.

It is also important to monitor signage for weekly street maintenance signs. These allow for the city's street sweeper to clean up the street, he said.

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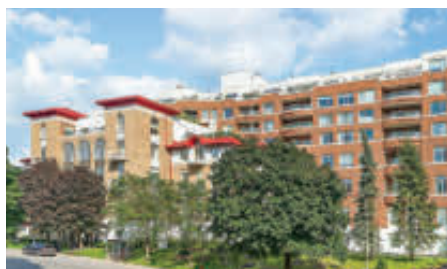


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May 28
- June 18
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Council to send 4 members
to annual FCM meet in Toronto

By LAUREEN SWEENEY

City council May 1 approved sending four of its members to this year's annual conference and trade show of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities taking place in Toronto May 25 to 28. They are Matt Aronson, Mary Gallery, Kathleen Kez and Elisabeth Roux. The resolution called for their expenses to be reimbursed up to a total of \$11,000 before taxes upon presentation of invoices and proof of payment. These expenses cannot be charged to the municipality except with the "prior authorization of the council," according to the resolution

moved by Councillor Anitra Bostock. Bostock, who attended last year's conference said "it was a great way to connect with people across the country who are doing what you are and to learn how other municipalities may be dealing with issues similar to those in Westmount."

This year's event for elected officials is expected to attract some 1,000 delegates from across Canada. Billed to delegates "to help you foster connections with your peers, partners and federal representatives while providing you with the tools and insights you need to scale up growth in your communities."

Family Day, cont'd from p. 1

recreation director Dave Lapointe said last week that features will once again include two Eurobungee attractions, a petting zoo and pony rides for children age 10 and under.

Also returning is the make-up booth at the gazebo, as well as a Public Security dunk tank, and exhibits by police, Public Security, fire department and the Royal Montreal Regiment along Melville. Races, games and carnival booths take place in the afternoon while Public Security will also provide child seat inspections.

Along with the usual food for purchase

such as hot dogs organized by Guides and Venturer Scouts, the new food truck from Winnebago will also provide grilled cheese sandwiches, shrimp rolls and Caesar salads. Water will be available on the field to refill personal water bottles.

Most of the main attractions will continue all day though some are expected to close briefly over the lunch hour.

The "train" will go along walkways starting at Melville and de Maisonneuve and various exhibits from community organizations are to be set up on walkways.

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Upon expiration, new leases only offered month to month

Ex-Château Maisonneuve business tenants say they were forced out

BY MARTIN C. BARRY

Despite claims by the Château Maisonneuve's owner that an unavoidable decline in office tenants is forcing the company to try to convert several commercial floors to residential occupancy, three former business tenants tell the *Westmount Independent* they felt compelled by the owner to move out.

Using commercial space located in the second to the fifth storeys, owner Creccal Investments wants to add 102 new residential units to 243 existing ones in the building located at 4998 de Maisonneuve at the corner of Claremont.

Rica Crecco, vice-president of operations at the Westmount-based company, said during an information meeting on their application held on March 22 by the city of Westmount that a main reason they need the zoning conversion is a drastic drop in demand for office and commercial space in recent years, especially during the COVID pandemic, while demand for residential space has been steadily rising at the same time.

However, Richard Dermer, a lawyer who leased offices at Château Maisonneuve until recently, maintained during an interview with the *Independent* that he and other commercial tenants had no choice but to get out.

"What actually happened is they forced all the [non-first-floor commercial] tenants to leave the building," he said. According to Dermer's telling, Creccal told all these business tenants that their fixed-term leases would not be renewed.

"They told the commercial tenants that they were going to convert the building," he said, while adding that tenants were also told that once their leases expired they could only stay on a month-by-month basis, with termination allowed by either party with 30 days' notice.

Dermer said that he and other tenants were willing to stay on. He maintained that before the COVID pandemic broke out in early 2020, the commercial floors of the building were close to one-hundred-percent occupied. He said that at some time during the first year of COVID, the tenants were informed they would not be allowed to renew.

"They told us we could stay on a month-to-month lease until all the permits were approved by Westmount," Dermer said, referring to the hurdles he suggested Creccal expected to get past.

"And they told us specifically there would be no public consultation. We asked them repeatedly if there would be any kind of public consultation or any need for a by-law change. And they told us no, that it was all being done by the urban planning committee.

"They told us that all they had to do was get the urban planning committee to approve it, and then they would give us a few months' notice, and then we would have to leave." Dermer said that after receiving the notice, many chose to remain month to month.

(Westmount has an Urban Planning department and a Planning Advisory Committee. Up until the March 22 information meeting at city hall, Creccal had been in contact with the department. See April 4, p. 8, column 2 and minute 33:51 of the city's video of the meeting.)

"Some people left because they didn't like the uncertainty. But some of us stayed on month to month," continued Dermer. The commercial lease holders only received final word last December, telling them they had to leave by March 31.

Tenant: Month-to-month not sustainable

Another former commercial tenant, who spoke to the *Independent* on condition of not being identified, confirmed that Creccal offered only month-by-month leasing once his lease expired – which ended up being unsustainable.

"I mean, no business or corporation can operate that way," he said, suggesting the arrangement made it nearly impossible to stay on. "We said 'that's absurd and we have to pull out.' We can't be operating here, never knowing if we're going to have any kind of length of time.

"From what I can see, they were maneuvering to get commercial tenants out," he added. "Obviously, it was to get all the commercial businesses out so they could turn everything into residential as they are trying to do now."

While insisting his business hasn't been seriously impacted by Creccal's efforts, he continued, "Honestly, I think when they say they couldn't keep the commercial tenants because they were all leaving, quite frankly, I think that's bullshit: They maneuvered the commercial tenants out."

A third former commercial tenant said that he too felt pushed into an untenable position by the monthly lease arrangement. "I'm, like: 'how the hell?'" he exclaimed, noting his reaction on first learn-

ing of Creccal's intentions.

"I can't go from month to month, and then within one month they can say you have to be out. So, I'm saying 'screw this: I can't deal with this uncertainty, so I'm not signing, I'm moving.' And now I've moved."

The *Independent* has a copy of an email from Creccal to a commercial tenant that confirms this change to monthly leases.

The *Westmount Independent* reached out by email on May 5 and by voicemail on May 12 to Creccal Investments for a response to the former tenants' claims. We did not receive a response by press time May 15.

The Independent's editor lives in an urban planning zone contiguous to the Château Maisonneuve and is against the proposed zoning change (see April 4, p. 8, April 18, p. 8, May 2, p. 8).

As previously stated, the Independent is open to Creccal's point of view in future issues, by letter/column (subject to edit) or interview.

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Les bureaux administratifs de la Ville de Westmount seront fermés **le lundi 22 mai 2023** en raison de la Journée nationale des patriotes.

La Bibliothèque publique de Westmount sera fermée le dimanche et le lundi.

Les collectes de résidus alimentaires et d'ordures auront lieu selon l'horaire normal.

OFFICES CLOSED MONDAY, MAY 22 **National Patriots' Day**

The administrative offices of the City of Westmount will be closed **Monday, May 22, 2023** for the National Patriots' Day holiday.

The Westmount Public Library will be closed Sunday and Monday.

The kitchen waste and garbage collections will take place according to the regular schedule.

westmount.org

EDITORIAL

Coexisting with cars – Welcoming new Westmounters

Château Maisonneuve resident Francis Twyman wrote a very interesting letter in our April 25 paper (p. 8). I think it makes explicit many of the assumptions behind the city’s warm reception of the Château’s proposed zoning change after the representatives of Creccal publicly espoused certain fad-ish sentiments and actions (e.g. Communauto, Bixi, EV chargers, bus passes).

Two by-law changes are being proposed to facilitate the conversion of floors 2 to 5 from commercial to residential. One would reduce the number of required parking spaces from one per unit to 0.66 per unit. The other would allow larger units (700+ sq. ft.) to be only 40 percent of the total as opposed to the 60 percent required at present.

The main target of Twyman’s ire was “car culture.” If cars are bad, it follows that parking is bad too and proposals that do away with parking requirements are good.

Unfortunately for the anti-car crowd, cars do not disappear just because certain residents and certain bureaucrats and certain politicians are against cars, or because they pass laws that irritate drivers and parkers.

Remember King Canute of Denmark and England (d. 1035) and the waves. He ordered the tide to stop, and it didn’t. *Dirigiste* governments often learn the same lesson – or teach it.

(By the way, not owning a car does not divorce people from car culture or, more

broadly, carbon culture. How do our food, clothing and other personal items get to us? Cars and trucks. And how many people in Westmount – with or without cars – travel by plane? Fiddle around with a website offering a carbon calculator. One flight to ... anywhere ... quickly busts most desired carbon budgets.)

The reasons for the persistence of the car are legion. Firstly, cars are legal and municipalities can’t change that.

And many people sure seem to like them. They like the freedom that they afford, even if they aren’t free to run and have many downsides. This popularity is also true in (what Twyman correctly describes) as liberal/Liberal/Liberal Westmount. Look around! There are cars. Lots and lots of cars – even after years of anti-car rhetoric.

One city councillor from the first years of this newspaper, once told me that the new Westmount recreation centre was necessary because gasoline would soon get so expensive that areas like the Laurentians and the Eastern Townships would cease to be weekend destinations and people would spend all their time in the city.

Take a look at a traffic report on the weekends. This has not happened. To adapt Ronald Reagan’s joke about LBJ’s War on Poverty: We declared war on cars, and cars won.

But don’t trust my impressions. In Westmount from 2011 to 2021, the number of vehicles did decline by one percent

(from 10,771 to 10,668), but less fast than the population, which fell by 1.4 percent (19,931 to 19,658) – so per capita use went up! On the island of Montreal, population grew by 6.2 percent (1,886,476 to 2,004,415), but vehicles by a whopping 12 percent (899,221 to 1,007,274).*

The island of Montreal (and beyond) is all one road network – and people are putting more cars on it.

Westmount can make parking difficult, expensive and hard to find. Westmount can lobby Bixi for more stands. Westmount can wish for a car-less or car-light future. But GM, Volkswagen, Toyota and even newbies like Tesla wield stronger magics than Westmount’s Urban Planning department. Cars will be sold. Cars will be driven. Cars will be parked, including illegally.

It is also important to remember that there are many large constituencies that have a different relationship with cars than mere preference. As people acquire children, and years on the planet, and infirmities, their reliance on cars increases. In Westmount, let’s not forget the hill (The Hill?), which almost requires that residents living there have a car, which they sometimes use to shop, and park, in Vic village (and which we want them to do).

Also, some jobs require a car to do, or to get to. Public transit in Montreal is good, but it can’t get you to all sorts of areas, including industrial parks and parts of airport campuses, and many remote suburban and off-island locations. (In some cases, it would be impossible; in others, not practical given time constraints.)

Next, no one has addressed the electric-car argument from my first mega-editorial (April 4, p. 8). What if cars go green? What if they become more like electric golf carts than 1950s gas guzzlers? They could be cheap, guilt free, ecological and maybe even small. We might have way more in a decade than we do now.

In my view, the number of cars in Westmount is beyond the city’s control and, indeed, way beyond its mandate. The choice for Westmount planners is between a good co-habitation with cars (for example with adequate parking) and a bad one, with very little parking, lots of complaining, lots of friction and maybe a few fistfights.

Vic village residents have sent up the flare that we are at an inflection point. There are not enough parking spaces. There is too much traffic.

Why increase the number of residents and decrease the number of required parking spots (the Château zoning proposal)? Why allow more of the most visited type

of business – medical clinics – in an already very dense area (the Vic village medical clinic proposal)?

Welcoming new Westmounters

Twyman also confuses/conflates a warm reception for people new to Westmount (including newcomers to Canada) with adding 102 new apartments at one specific site.

One is possible without the other.

On a factual level, there is a slight disconnect in his assessment of our higher levels of government. Yes, the Trudeau government is keen to add immigrants. But isn’t the Legault government trying to limit the number that come to Quebec? There might not be such a high demand for housing in this province after all.

Letter writer Denis Biro pointed out (April 11, p. 6) that there are many “for rent” signs on Claremont, just over the border in NDG. I checked before publishing his letter. He was right.

There are also many units for rent throughout Westmount, as a quick search of the internet will show you.

If we already have vacancies, why are we adding more units?

None of this means that we can’t be welcoming to newcomers *within our existing housing stock*. Westmount is not a club of immortals. Its residents die and move away all the time. And who fills their residences, without any entry visas required? Non-Westmount people, from wherever, who instantly become Westmounters.

Being welcoming does not mean that we should make the city less liveable by endlessly densifying it. Making the city liveable, after assessing the facts on the ground and preferences of residents, is a good thing for current residents and future ones.

David Price is the editor of the Independent. He lives in a zone contiguous to 4998 de Maisonneuve Blvd. and across from the building’s exterior York St. parking lot.

*The vehicle statistics come from the Quebec government site listed below. (I used the total number of vehicles, which has some statistical noise (e.g. snowmobiles), but they are there in all years and I doubt have any effect on major trends.

bdso.gouv.qc.ca/pls/ken/ken213_afich_tabl.page_tabl?p_iden_tran=REPERG200Y602-56896298329rzLn&p_lang=1&p_m_o=SAAQ&p_id_ss_domn=718&p_id_rapr t=3628#tri_tertr=00&tri_mun=aaaaa

Population statistics are from the federal census.

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PRESSTIME: Monday at 10:30 am
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LETTERS: We welcome your letters but reserve the right to choose and edit them. Please limit them to 300 words and submit before Friday 10 am to be considered for publication the following week. Please check your letter carefully as we may be unable to make subsequently submitted changes. Letter writers should not expect to be published in every issue, or in back-to-back issues, or repeatedly in the same season or on the same topic. Please include your name and street for publication (or borough or municipality if you do not live in Westmount), but not your address (unless you want it published).

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

CORRECTION: LETTER FROM COLLÈGE'S DG NOT ADDRESSED TO VILLA STE-MARCELLINE PARENTS

I just wanted to point out an error in the article entitled “Villa Sainte-Marcelline parents protest outside Collège Ste-Marcelline” from your May 9 issue (p. 17). The article quotes a letter from Sister Teresa, the director general of the Collège Ste-Marcelline, and states that the letter was “sent to the parents ... asking them not to do it,” implying that the letter was sent to the parents of the Villa Ste-Marcelline. In fact, the letter was sent to the parents of the Collège Ste-Marcelline, to warn them of the peaceful demonstration.

I'm a parent of two students at the Villa Ste-Marcelline, and I can assure you that I did not receive any communication from Sister Teresa. In fact, I have received absolutely no communication from the Congrégation since October 21, 2022. Parents at the Villa only learned of the letter from Sister Teresa because it was posted in a Facebook group organized by parents at Villa Ste-Marcelline.

Thanks for your continued coverage of this issue.

ROBERT VINCENT, NDG

HARASSMENT OF MAYOR'S FAMILY UNACCEPTABLE

While from time to time disagreeing with Mayor Smith on certain topics, our mutual discourse has always been most professional, civil and respectful.

This said, I totally agree with and fully support the mayor in her great concern at having her children pushed into the political pool and disagree with whoever approached Mayor Smith's children or picketed at her home, no matter the cause. Bringing a politician's family into the fray has no place in our society. None.

As much as some quarters have vilified Donald Trump, or Justin Trudeau, or Barack Obama, I do not know of a single instance where their young, school-age children were harassed, intimidated or even mentioned by those who opposed the policies and ideologies espoused by them. It is a line that NEVER gets crossed.

The exact same standards and respect should be shown to Mayor Smith, and indeed to all municipal councillors. It is not acceptable that those who, in pursuing their own agendas, would intimidate and harass the mayor's family.

ALLEN RUBIN, LEXINGTON AVE.

THANK YOU, PUBLIC WORKS

I'd like to give a special shout-out to the Public Works street cleaner whom I jogged

past on Wednesday morning [May 10] at Sherbrooke and Claremont. Thanks for aiming your hose away from me. It's much more comfortable to go to work dry!

MARTY GREEN, DOWNTOWN

THANKS FOR THE CORONATION TEA

Well done, Westmount! Thank you for the Coronation Tea. What a wonderful way to spend a few sunny hours outside the library, by the newly renovated greenhouse.

British flags everywhere (even on the cupcakes), fascinators and pearls on the guests! We were given our choice of teas, scones with clotted cream, several jams, marmalade, of course, and biscuits! Tables were arranged under the trees.

A lot of planning went into this event, even the weather cooperated!

Thank you, Westmount, especially librarian Donna Lach. Long live King Charles!

BEVERLEY HUTCHISON, KITCHENER AVE.

KEEP THE WAG GREEN, UNFENCED

“Soccer club returns to council to seek lighted turf field” by Laureen Sweeney (April 25, p. 10) poses serious questions for residents living around the Westmount Athletic Grounds (the WAG), and raises issues for everyone really. The report in the *Independent* describes the “case” made at Westmount city council “for a lighted field of artificial turf possibly at Westmount Athletic Grounds (WAG).”

We are right in the midst of unprecedented climate change and there are at least three major reasons not to replace the fine, multi-use grass field at the WAG with a synthetic surface.

First, such a grass field absorbs CO₂ and emits oxygen, creating a far cooler ambient temperature than any artificial surface. A grass field counters climate change.

Second, an open grass field – and the WAG is a very good one – is multi-use. If you visit the oval behind Westmount High, you will find no fence, and you will see people playing frisbee, pick-up soccer, improvised badminton, catch – you name it. And organized sports, such as soccer and football, co-exist beautifully with this citizen activity.

Third, a lighted and fenced field is essentially an industrial facility. Citizens are kept off by a fence. Full-time lighting ruins the park atmosphere. And the communal value of the grass area is lost.

We should keep the WAG a natural green and preserve this park for all.

PATRICK BARNARD,
MELVILLE AVE.

LEAVE THE WAG ALONE

RE: “Soccer club returns to council to seek lighted turf field” (April 25, p. 10)

I live across from Westmount Athletic Grounds (please visit *Westmount Independent* issues when people wanted to place the new arena here, e.g. July 14-15, 2009, p. 1).

I have kids who grew up in Westmount who liked soccer and we realized that there was not the requisite field to compete.

I also know what it is like to live across from beautiful green, open, space. It would be very difficult to live across from a fenced-out green space. If you lived in the neighbourhood, you would know how great this green space is. Dogs, little kids, elderly, baseball, crickets, kite flying – so many spontaneous liberties. This is already a precious space for health and well-being.

Ask anyone living in the vicinity, or those who come from outside the neighbourhood, young, old, disabled, feline, dog, bird. It would be wrong to appropriate all that well-used and precious space for the sole, fenced-off use of soccer players.

This is precious green space, well used and well loved.

NANCY DRUMMOND, HALLOWELL ST.

CITY'S UNILATERAL APPROACH HELP BUILD 'SoDo'

Further to Councillor Conrad Peart's comment about the *Independent's* editor – “I must admit, it's curious to see the considerable attention that the editor of this paper has given to an issue in his immediate back yard” April 25, p. 7 – I would like to thank the *Independent* for the coverage given to 4030 Dorchester, which is about as far from his backyard as possible, given that it is on the eastern edge of the city.

Coverage began with the November 1, 2016 issue (p. 6) when the initial section of wall at 4030 tumbled to the ground. The *Independent* has provided a half dozen updates since then. So while not as many words have been printed regarding 4030 Dorchester as compared with Château Maisonneuve, 4030 has probably appeared in more issues of the *Independent*. While I expect that there will be more discussion regarding Château Maisonneuve in the *Independent*, I suspect the same will be true of 4030 Dorchester.

I could not help but smile when I read the editor's comment in last week's issue (May 2, p. 9) regarding the Château Maisonneuve controversy – “This episode may end up being an exercise in community building, although not in the way intended by most municipal actors.”

That is precisely what happened with the city's rather unilateral plans for the development on the north side of Dor-

chester more than seven years ago. Many residents south of Dorchester (SoDo) felt that the city was not taking their input seriously during public hearings. During these conversations, I met many neighbours for the first time and came away with new friends. The city could not justify its plans and did not seem willing to modify them so the issue has gone away, at least for now.

It is worth noting that the city's (mis)handling of the issue with residents resulted in the defeat of the two-term incumbent district councillor in the next municipal election, essentially because of the neighbourhood coming together on the issue.

JIM RICHARDS, DORCHESTER BLVD.

ALLOW MEDICAL CLINICS, LOSE THE SARCASM

I cannot comment on the proposed changes to [zoning for] Château Maisonneuve as I am not fully aware of the issues involved. I do feel that preventing Victoria village from having any new medical clinics and severely limiting the type of occupancy was a serious mistake on the part of the previous administration and I compliment the current one for having the courage and vision to attempt to roll back that poor decision.

The same holds true for Greene Ave. and St. Catherine.* The city should roll back the zoning restrictions preventing medical clinics from opening there as well. The office market has permanently changed since the onset of COVID. The vacancy rate of the downtown office market is a serious problem without any foreseeable solutions. Medical clinics should be welcomed and encouraged, especially in Westmount, which has the Glen hospital site adjacent to it.

The last comment I wish to share is that I felt that your editorial (May 2, p. 8) was not the unbiased reporting that I am accustomed to, but was more of an attack on Councillor Conrad Peart. I feel you could have expressed your thoughts and point of view without sarcasm and the personal attack.

RONY CUKIER, ROSEMOUNT AVE.

***Editor's note:** The rules are already much less strict on Greene and St. Catherine.

Editor's reply: A small but important point: one rarely finds much “reporting” in editorials and, while I would not usually describe editorials as “biased,” they are the domain of *opinion*, which may seem like bias. The goal of an editorial is to advance a point of view, not inform generally or neutrally like reporting. Editorials in the *Independent*, including the one in question, are clearly marked. – DP.

► **More letters on p. 8.**

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

RESIDENTS VEXED BY CITY HALL AFTER YEARS OF DISRUPTION

Regardless of where individual sentiment lies, the proposed re-zoning of 4998 de Maisonneuve has tapped a deep vein of vexation and frustration with city hall's longstanding treatment of the surrounding neighbourhood.

Numerous residents have voiced their misgivings with the proposed project to add another 102 apartments to this high-rise, after converting what is now largely unoccupied office space on several lower floors. The building itself has a large neighbourhood presence facing York, St. Catherine, de Maisonneuve and Prince Albert; its large, busy parking lot is directly across from homes on York and Prince Albert.

The laundry list of residents' concerns all circle back to the same thing: the potential impact a re-zoning would have on quality of life. Perhaps under other circumstances, residents would take a re-zoning in stride. But look at where we're coming from.

For almost 15 years, this neighbourhood has been under the relentless grip of years-long major new construction projects that have shaken us and our homes, literally and/or figuratively, to the core: the MUHC had barely opened its doors across the street from my home when *Projet Vendôme* [the Metro tunnel] rolled in for three years in 2017, immediately followed by Groupe Maurice's retirement complex that broke ground in August 2020 and is still ongoing.

Westmount will claim that none of these were in its territory, so just put up with it until construction is over.

And therein lies the root of the problem: elected officials persist in an outdated mentality on what transpires just outside its borders but which nonetheless affects Westmounters living in the vicinity.

Respectfully, I ask members of council:

how would you like to live inside a piece of machinery? That's the sound of earth movers, idling flatbeds and drilling. How many of you could have coped with high-frequency noise – requiring windows to stay closed in sweltering heat – from the MUHC's ventilation system parked on the roof of the research building overlooking Westmount homes? How many of you could tolerate your sleep repeatedly disrupted by activity in the Glen Yards when heavy vehicles parked there during *Projet Vendôme's* overnight work? Or when orange cone crews do their thing in the middle of the night on St. Catherine St.?

And after residents were forced to take legal action, alone, to get the MUHC noise resolved, would you not have felt abandoned by city hall?

In whom should I place my trust to protect my interests as a homeowner when, after all we went through with the MUHC noise debacle, council initially announced that locals were on their own to deal with Groupe Maurice construction issues? Imagine a nice early fall day [in Westmount] when construction trailers and a large dumpster bin suddenly show up across the street from your house (where was city hall to tell us they were coming?), followed by a noisy generator [for the Liz construction project]; I can't recall when the generator left but it took Westmount almost three months to issue a Hydro permit.

In what other district in Westmount have residents had to live like this?

DOROTHY LIPOVENKO, YORK ST.

IS HYDRO WESTMOUNT 'INSURANCE POLICY' WORTH THE PRICE?

Can any utility, small or large, guarantee that it will never incur a power failure? Hardly, but that is what [member of the *ad hoc* Hydro Westmount Advisory Committee] Mr. Leopold seems to imply (letter,

'WESTMOUNT EXEMPLIFIED,' AS SEEN MAY 4



PHOTO & HEADLINE: NATASHA ARORA, WOOD AVE.

April 11, p. 8). He states that supporting Westmount Hydro at considerable cost will somehow guarantee Westmount will never be without power.

So unless Mr. Leopold can assure us that the \$15-million insurance policy of the last five years, with millions more to come, truly guarantees Westmount will never be without power, his defence of money-losing Westmount Hydro is misleading and falls flat.

And should an unelected volunteer(s) be determining how Westmount tax dollars are spent?

Given the weather patterns due to climate change, we can all expect continued disruptions to certain services from time to time, which no one can fully protect against, but should we be spending millions for events that occur every 25 years? The last ice storm was in 1998 and Westmount was without power for five days. Westmount was lucky this time, but luck is not a strategy.

JANIS KRAUT, THE BOULEVARD

A NOTE OF APPRECIATION TO HYDRO WESTMOUNT

The main power line to my house was damaged but not disconnected during the mini ice storm – like many of us I reported this to Hydro Westmount who sent an inspector the very next day to advise me on next steps.

It took some time for my electrician to make the repairs needed before Hydro Westmount to do its part, and in the meantime Hydro Westmount came back for a second inspection, deemed the line to now be unsafe and cut the power immediately.

I had a night without power – and though I know I am lucky compared to those who lost power for several days a few weeks back – why would I be writing a note of appreciation for those who left me without power?

The Hydro Westmount team were courteous and explained the situation clearly to me – I couldn't argue with the safety priorities. They also passed by several times that afternoon to see if my electrician had been by yet to make the repairs that would allow them to reconnect me. My electrician was finally able to come and make the required repairs the next morning and Hydro Westmount team was back within the hour to reconnect me.

Throughout it all Hydro Westmount was kind and attentive and easy to reach – an experience much in contrast with our Montreal neighbours' recent experiences with Hydro Quebec.

Furthermore this was all at the tail end of what had been a very busy few weeks for Hydro Westmount repairing all the ice storm damage.

So despite Hydro Westmount cutting my power and a night with the flashlights, I feel very fortunate, so thanks Hydro Westmount for such great local service.

LAURA BUTLER, GROSVENOR AVE.

We welcome your letters

We welcome your letters but reserve the right to choose and edit them. Please limit to 300 words and submit before Friday 10 am to be considered for publication the following week. Email us at: editor@westmountindependent.com

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Q: Where was this house?



A: "The other Edgehill" – the one that was downtown near Fort and Dorchester/René Lévesque. This photo is from 1971 just before the destruction of the street and the house. See p. SL-22 for more of what we have discovered about this street.

PHOTO COURTESY OF © BRIAN MERRETT, AUTOROUTE VILLE MARIE SERIES 1969-1972.

We welcome your letters

We welcome your letters but reserve the right to choose and edit them. Please limit to 300 words and submit before Friday 10 am to be considered for publication the following week. email us at: editor@westmountindependent.com

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Mayor Christina Smith (left) and former city councillor Cynthia Lulham, now a community business consultant and the general manager for Westmount's two merchant associations.



Horrified mum Diana Anderson looks on as her cheeky baby Clara expresses her opinion of the cameraman, but then grandmother Bissera Anderson joins for a second, more dignified photo. Diana is a former resident of Westmount who has recently returned after time in the US and Australia.



Spring flower show welcomes new residents, thanks volunteers

BY RALPH THOMPSON

Victoria Hall was decked out with spring flowers by the Westmount Horti-

cultural Society and the city's Community Events office on May 10 for the semi-annual flower show – the first one since the pandemic. The event is convened to

welcome new Westmount residents and thank all the many volunteers who make so many activities and happenings occur smoothly, safely and economically.

Mayor Christina Smith welcomed new residents and thanked the volunteers. Smith presented each member of city council present and passed along regrets from Matt Aronson.

She encouraged new residents to join

the library, attend council meetings and take advantage of all the facilities Westmount has to offer. Drinks were served and delicious tidbits offered by Mouton Noir Traiteur & Cafe. Senior city staff attending included director general Julie Mandeville, Public Security director Gregory McBain, director of Public Works Robert Talarico, and Sports and Recreation director Dave Lapointe.

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Mayor Christina Smith welcomes the gathering and presents city councillors (at right) and the city's senior management (at left).

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Police Report

Upper Roslyn security camera images reveal suspicious activity

By MARTIN C. BARRY

Following a spate of household robberies on streets around Westmount's summit in recent weeks, an Upper Roslyn resident shared with police some security camera images taken during several apparent casing incidents.

Around 2:30 am on May 11, according to the resident – who asked that she not be identified, she received an alarm-company text message alerting her that a potential intruder was spotted by a surveillance camera lingering around her home's back door.

Although she was outside the Montreal area at the time, the security-company app sent video images of a man wearing a hoodie with his face showing quite clearly.

"He basically came into the backyard," she said, describing what she saw in the app. "He didn't come all the way in, because I have a gate. He came down the driveway, I guess, then came up through the backyard and looked around and then left."

She contacted a neighbour on her street, who called 9-1-1, although the neighbour told her she hadn't noticed any intruders.

The following day, a second neighbour checked her security system and it had recorded images of a second intruder.

"At the very same time, there was another guy, totally different looking, in her backyard. And then I looked at my doorbell camera in the front of the house, and I looked at the footage from that period of time, and I could literally see all down the street the lights coming on and off in the backyards as the motion detectors were triggered."

Although she wasn't aware of any household robberies or forced entries taking place in the area during that time, she said "definitely there were at least two people who were casing our street."

She filed an incident report, along with a USB memory key containing the security camera footage, with police at Station 12 on Stanton St.

Cst. Mike Yigit, the station's community relations officer, acknowledged that investigators are working on the dossier, which includes the previous break-and-enter incidents.

Police: Cross at crosswalks/on green lights

A warning this week from the police

about the potential hazards of crossing a busy street between intersections. According to Cst. Yigit, an elderly man and woman were on their way on May 4 around 10 am to a medical appointment in a building at the corner of Sherbrooke St. and Greene Ave.

As they were crossing unprotected by a crosswalk into the street, the man tripped on a possibly broken section of pavement, fell and broke his knee. To make things worse, he was left splayed out in the middle of the street, unable to get up until the arrival of an ambulance crew and the police.

Correction: Resident did not shove

Regarding a report on a shoving incident around Westmount/Belmont avenues published in the May 9 issue of the *Independent*, Cst. Yigit said he wanted to clarify that only the driver of the blocking vehicle, and not the resident, used physical force.

"The other one did not respond with any physical violence," he said regarding the resident, while extending an apology to the resident, who had contacted Cst. Yigit after the report was published.





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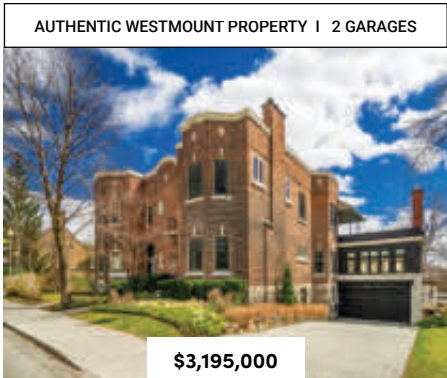
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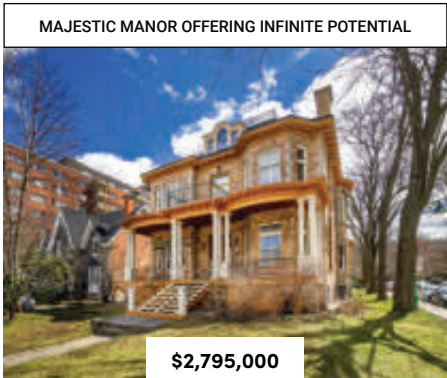
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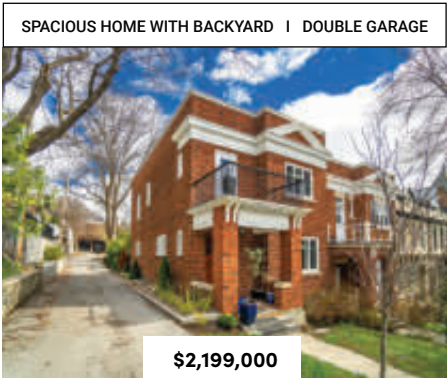
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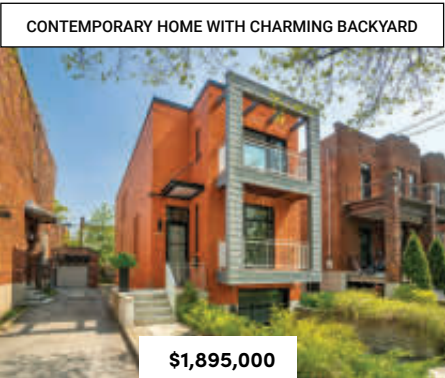
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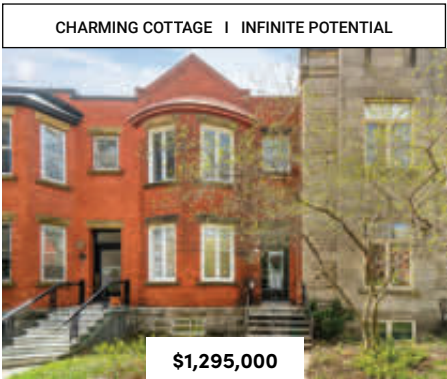
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Started last week with Contactivity speaker

Cycling course aims to prepare youth to respect seniors, react quickly

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

In recognition of the numbers of seniors getting outdoors these days, the safe cycling course at the Westmount recreation centre focused on special respect for seniors at its first session of this year May 9. The program targets youths aged 8 to 12. “Since about 30 percent of Westmount residents are seniors, many of whom walk next to the busy de Maisonneuve bike path, special attention was given to being able to adapt one’s riding so seniors feel comfortable and not threatened,” Daniel Lambert told the *Independent* last week.

Lambert is president of the Association of Pedestrians and Cyclists of Westmount, which presents the annual city program.

To drive home the point, Patricia Phillip, a member of the Contactivity seniors’ centre, participated in the first of this year’s four sessions.

She explained how certain faculties diminish with age, such as hearing, eyesight, reaction time, balance and bone density.

“This makes it especially important for

cyclists to adapt and respect seniors by slowing down,” Lambert said. This requires cyclists to allow a large passing distance, use warning bicycle bells and anticipate certain longer times for pedestrians

to move out of the way.

“One main theme of the program is respect for others,” he said. “This applies to pedestrians and drivers alike,” Lambert said. “Be visible, obey the rules, ride in a predictable manner and anticipate what others may do.”

Riding safely in the city

The course focuses on riding safely in the city and consists of four sessions. During the first one, a mechanic from Davelo Cycle checks and tunes all the bikes and installs free bike bells. The children are taught the rules of the road and other behaviours that will keep them safe, he said.

A final session includes a ride to Old Montreal for a free ice cream. Typically several parents participate in the last session.

Through these courses, Lambert said, “it is hoped that future cyclists will enjoy cycling and be safe in harmony with other pedestrians and drivers.”



Patricia Phillip of the Contactivity seniors’ centre participates May 9 in the first of this year’s sessions on safe cycling for youth. PHOTO COURTESY OF THE ASSOCIATION OF PEDESTRIANS AND CYCLISTS OF WESTMOUNT.



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Festival de la Voix brings music to Unitarian Church



Social Notes
VERONICA REDGRAVE

The Festival de la Voix was held at the Unitarian Church, located on de Maison-neuve just west of the NDG-Westmount border.

Celebrating its 10th anniversary, the celebration starred the **Blue Dawn Quartet** and the **IMANI Gospel Singers**. The Quartet performed a unique and captivating song cycle in Yiddish. Under the direction of **Rona Nadler**, the group sang a beautiful 20-minute composition for four female voices, “*In Bloyen Baginen*” (“At Blue Dawn”) by Rona Nadler based on the poems of Kadya Molodowsky (1894-1976). The quartet is made up of **Rona Nadler**, **Alexandra Asher**, **Kimberley Lynch** and **Meagan Zantingh**.

The IMANI Gospel Singers wowed one and all. Led by choir director powerhouse **Marcia Bailey**, they rocked the house featuring outstanding soloists along with the entire ensemble.

Festival artistic director **Kerry-Anne Kutz** expressed her appreciation “to the artists for their exceptional performances over the past 10 years, to our community of music lovers and volunteers and to our vital financial support.”

Guests and VIPs in attendance included musicians **Gary Russell**; **Sandra Hunt**, music director at Unitarian Church, and **Sheila Laursen**, president of the Lakeshore Unitarian Universalist Congregation.

Also in attendance were **Peter Letko**, Letko Brosseau; **Irene Robson**, Festival volunteer committee; volunteers **Didier Giovanelli**, social media specialist, and **Gary Spiller**, environmental scientist; **Janis Kirschner**, publicist, and **Sonia Castiglione**, co-founder of the Festival de la Voix.

The festival was produced by Vox Aeterna, a non-profit organization dedicated to the support of music in the community. It is also committed to promoting the music of Québécois and Canadian composers with its Art Songs of Canada program, uniting composers from across the country to work with voice students and collaborators at universities and conservatories.

Event committee members at the concert included- continued on p. 16



Kimberley Lynch, Alexandra Asher, Rona Nadler and Meagan Zantingh.



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Book #10 for McGill management prof

Moore: Boomers, GenXers need to apologize often, explain always

Westmounter and McGill University business professor Karl Moore has just published his tenth book, *Generation Why: How Boomers Can Lead and Learn from Millennials and Gen Z*. His contention is that the Baby Boomers and GenXers running the world need to adjust their “modern” worldview to account for the post-modern Millennials and GenZs (pronounced “Zees”).

It is about the “nature of truth,” he told the *Independent* May 2, “There is less capital-T Truth.”

Younger people are taught “that their story is as good as mine, and emotions are truth. What I feel is true. Emotions can be equal to logic.”

Moore (born in 1955, mid-Baby Boom) contrasts this approach to what was normal when he started in business. If someone became emotional, the meeting would be adjourned.

In practice, this new way of working can mean many things, including being open to “reverse mentoring” (learning from young people) and to emergent (not top-down) strategy creation.

“It used to be: ‘Never explain. Never apologize.’ Now it should be: ‘Apologize easily. Explain everything.’”

His contention connects not just to organizational behaviour, but to the tech-heavy world that we live in, where “What was true is no longer true.”



Karl Moore on May 2 on Victoria Ave. with his new book, *Generation Why*. PHOTO: INDEPENDENT.

Festival de la Voix, cont'd from p. 15

ed Vox Aeterna's **Dennis McPeak**, board treasurer; incoming directors **Nadia di Lauro** and **Thierry Kelem**, and volunteer director **Ian Robson**. Other Vox Aerterna board members present were president **Michael Cartile**, professional lead trumpet player; vp **Dale MacDonald**, associate of

Gérontologis; secretary **Stefania Bertrand**, music theatre director and performer; and founder/artistic director **Kerry-Anne Kutz**, professional singer and voice teacher.

The Festival de la Voix welcomes all, from grade school to seniors, to celebrate music and the joy of spring.

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Hodges becomes new executive director at Centre Greene

BY MARTIN C. BARRY

The board of directors at Centre Greene has announced that Heather Hodges, who was interim executive director since last year, has been promoted to executive director.

According to some biographical notes issued by the board following the appointment, Hodges has a bachelor of education degree and has worked at Centre Greene since 2014.

Her first role at the Greene Ave. recreational centre was to co-ordinate the after-school program. Shortly after this, she was appointed director of Centre Greene's summer camp program. In 2018, she was promoted to director of programs.

'Creative, innovative'

"She is creative, focused and innovative," said board chairwoman Jane Wightman. "We feel that Heather's broad

range of experience is a huge advantage.

"She has built great relationships with all age groups that come through our doors at 1080 Greene Ave.," added Wightman. "We feel very fortunate to have her take on this important leadership role in the city of Westmount and beyond."

In an interview with the *Independent*, Hodges explained how she first became involved as a staff member at Centre Greene nearly a decade ago. She had been working primarily in the field of special education for children, while spending summers working in sports and recreation.

"I found working in recreation a lot easier to do," she said, noting that special education is an especially challenging profession.

After several years, "I didn't want to be somebody who wasn't doing the best they could for the people I was serving," said Hodges. "I felt that I was able to accom-

plish more and do more for people in recreation."

'Trusting, relaxed atmosphere'

She said that after starting work at Centre Greene, she was overwhelmed at first by the trusting and relaxed atmosphere.

"I didn't know what to make of it, because everyone was so nice and I was afraid it might be disingenuous. I had never been given such a warm welcome. I wasn't accustomed to that."

But within a few months, Hodges found she had fallen into step with the positive energy – "and I can't imagine my life without it now," she said.

Born in Valleyfield around 40 kilometres south-west of Montreal, she was raised in an English-speaking home in a predominantly French-speaking community.

"It was a really strange place to grow up

when your family speaks primarily English," said Hodges, who is thoroughly bilingual today as a result of her upbringing.

While lamenting that the isolation left her feeling somewhat deprived of a feeling of belonging, Hodges said joining Centre Greene provided the first real sense of community she had ever experienced.

Looking forward, she said she and the board of directors want to promote Centre Greene's growth along these lines, "making sure that the centre is a space where people feel they belong," said Hodges.

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Seen here on April 27 at the front entrance of Centre Greene are, from left, staff members Michael Derix, Sophie Cram, Heather Hodges, Mya Sheaves-Blair and Esther Wade.

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9 Lives

LYSANNE FOWLER

Exquisite mommy cat Kala found solace and care on the back porch of this neigh-



bourhood home where the caring and dedicated family fed her and cared for her outside.

She had two kittens, Joy and Love, who are now ready for their own homes. Kala is a loving mother and has not let anyone near her kittens, except to offer food. They are more active now and it is time for them to be adopted for their own health and safety.

Please contact me at my email address lysow@gmail.com to find out more about beautiful Kala mother and her adorable kittens. This is an urgent placement as this family is moving shortly, and Kala and kittens have to be adopted into the comfort of their own homes as soon as possible.

Your neighbour, Lysanne

We welcome your letters

We welcome your letters but reserve the right to choose and edit them. Please limit to 300 words and submit before Friday 10 am to be considered for publication the following week. Email us at: editor@westmountindependent.com

Anastasia & Chunky, a cute little couple



Westmount
A-dog-tions

LYSANNE FOWLER

Anastasia is bonded to Chunky and they would be so happy in a new family together. This adorable pair of tiny Chihuahua-types is ready for a home as soon as you can go by and make arrangements to bring them home from the Montreal SPCA kennel.

Affectionate and playful, they are a wonderful fun companions. Anastasia is a precious white five-year-old and Chunky is a two-tone caramel and black six-year-old.

They are both very healthy, up to date with their inoculations, sterilized and microchipped.

For more information on this cuddly duo, please refer to the Montreal SPCA website at www.sPCA.com, scroll to Anastasia's information page from her identification number, 52607585 and to Chunky's information page from his identification number, 52607598.

From the upper right-hand side of the page, check the daily schedule for the shelter to plan your visit, as it opens at 10 am every day. The Montreal SPCA is



located at 5215 Jean Talon St. West in Montreal H4P 1X4.

With smaller dogs, two together are such great company. Anastasia and Chunky are perfect in a family environment. Please enquire about adopting them.

Your neighbour, Lysanne

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IMPORTANT NOTICE

Minor Exemption Application

1. The City of Westmount has received an application for a minor exemption for the immovable located at **437 Argyle Avenue**.
2. The application will be reviewed at the regular sitting of the Municipal Council that will be held on **June 5, 2023, at 7:30 p.m.** in the Council Chamber of City Hall, located at 4333 Sherbrooke Street West, in Westmount and will be broadcast live on the City's website. The link for the sitting will be available at the following address: www.westmount.org/council-live.

The legal notice relating to the foregoing is available at: <https://westmount.org/en/resident-zone/legal-services-city-clerks-office/public-notice/>

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Hour-long consultation focuses on parking, solutions

Vic village rezoning hears from handful of attendees

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

At a public consultation meeting May 9 city council members heard the pros and cons of amending a zoning by-law to open up Victoria village to more medical clinics and doctors' offices on the second storey. The aim is to revitalize the commercial strips along Sherbooke and down Victoria

comprising six zones.

Of the handful of attendees who spoke at the hour-long session, the only two who live in the district – residents of Somerville – opposed the loosening of restrictions based on concerns for increased traffic and parking.

A resident of The Boulevard advised the need for impact studies while a resident of

Rosemount Ave. called the re-zoning a “golden opportunity to open up” to all medical professionals.

Suggested solutions to parking issues included the issuing of colour-coded parking stickers for Victoria village residents as is used around the Westmount recreation centre, and discussing possible re-development of the Metro parking lot.

The next step in the process is now for city council to adopt a second reading of the amending by-law. If enough residents petition for one, there would then be a referendum register as outlined at the start of the meeting. If there are enough registrants in given zones and the city does not withdraw the proposed change, there would be a referendum on the proposal.

How opening up to more doctors' offices was viewed in public consultation

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

The public consultation meeting May 9 to allow more doctors' offices and medical clinics in Victoria village opened with Mayor Christina Smith explaining that the city had adopted the current by-law nine years ago.

This was in response to concerns the building of the new MUHC super-hospital might cause its services to overflow into Westmount's nearby commercial district causing a potential impact on parking. When these were accommodated elsewhere, the need has now become finding a way to reduce commercial vacancies in Victoria village, she said.

As a result, explained Urban Planning director Frédéric Neault in presenting the draft by-law amendment 1601, two “rather simple modifications” are now required. These are to repeal the quota of 35 and the size area that had been imposed. “A maximum of 600 square feet is not very large

for a medical clinic,” he stated.

Denis Ferland, director of Legal Services, then said the next steps in the process are for the council to proceed with a second reading of the draft by-law, with or without changes, and for this to be subject to a potential referendum register.

Two residents oppose

The meeting was then opened to comments from the floor starting with the only two who spoke from the Victoria village district.

Michael Wertheimer, a longtime resident of Somerville, said his block already had significant traffic and parking issues and would experience more in the next two years. This, he predicted would come with the new Groupe Maurice LIZ retirement residence in NDG at Claremont and a decision “still in limbo” concerning Château Maisonneuve the highrise at 4998 de Maisonneuve. This is to convert four current office floors to residential.

Marielle Wertheimer suggested the city consider parking on both sides of some potentially one-way streets in Victoria village.

Former councillors duel

Former city councillor Patrick Martin, of The Boulevard, spoke next, suggesting impact studies be made first and the city proceed slowly because “when the genie's out of the bottle, you can't put it back in.”

Former, 26-year councillor Cynthia Lulham, who now represents the city's two merchant associations, followed up on the issue of parking. She explained how the city had introduced a special colour-coded parking sticker for residents near the Westmount recreation centre, “which has been very enforceable.”

Rony Cukier of Rosemount Ave. said that “In my opinion, it's a mistake to limit” space for medical professionals when “all over Montreal office space is suffering, and adding that “We have a golden opportunity

to open up to all medical professionals.” He suggested the city discuss re-development of the Metro store's parking lot for potential use.

From the council table, Councillor Matt Aronson, whose commissionership includes economic development, said the draft re-zoning provided “a wonderful opportunity to make a thriving community in our city.”

It also “addresses a range of services,” said Councillor Conrad Peart, whose commissionership includes Urban Planning. He began listing off those as including social workers, respiratory therapists, chiropractors...

The six commercial zones involved in the rezoning are C5-20-01, C5-20-02, C5-20-03, C5-20-04, C5-20-05 and C17-20-06.

The Independent's editor lives in a contiguous urban planning zone, opposes the re-zoning and intends to sign any petition or register offered to him.

Win for best Canadian short documentary

Durnfords' latest film examines 'Last Respects' for the forgotten

BY MARTIN C. BARRY

When most people die, they are usually fortunate enough to receive funeral rites.

But as Westmount-based documentary filmmakers Megan Durnford and her son Hugh Durnford-Dionne discovered, not everyone is so fortunate.

The reality is that thousands of Canadians, from homeless youth to neglected seniors, die in such dire circumstances that their bodies are never claimed – let alone honoured.

She and her son, a cinematographer, video editor and Concordia University student who usually makes music videos, decided to delve into the topic in *Last Respects*, a short documentary film that examines the power and impact of ritual in our lives.

In 2014, Montreal priest Father Claude



Megan Durnford and son Hugh Durnford-Dionne.
PHOTO COURTESY OF M. DURNFORD.

Paradis created an annual ceremony to celebrate the lives of people who died and whose remains went “unclaimed.”

Before the advent of this now annual event, Montreal's unclaimed bodies were unceremoniously cremated and buried in a mass grave. Through Father Paradis' efforts, these people now receive a final moment of dignity.

Last Respects recently was awarded the Betty Youson Award for Best Canadian Short Documentary at the Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Film Festival, widely regarded as the most important documentary film festival in North America.

“It's a topic that is never talked about,” she said in an interview with the *Independent* last week.

“Most people are familiar with funerals and memorials and different kinds of rit-

uals ceremonies. But imagine that someone doesn't have any of those and their body is not even claimed. I mean, I just was so kind of shocked to learn this. For me, this is the ultimate in loneliness.”

Megan Durnford's first foray into documentary filmmaking was *Just A Lawn* (2007), a short doc about the obsession some people have with “perfect” lawn-making.

In 2011, she directed *Une brigue à la fois*, a portrayal of four Quebec adult LEGO builders. The 45-minute documentary was nominated for a Golden Sheaf Award (Documentary Arts/Culture) at the Yorkton Film Festival.

And in 2018, she directed the documentary film *I Am Still Your Child*, about the impact of parental mental illness on children, which was broadcast by the CBC.

See also photo on p. 1.



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Gwen Nacos

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MSc, BA**

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**Justin J. Sanders,
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**Serious Illness Communication in
Cancer Care: With Whom, About
What, and To What End?**
Kappy and Eric M. Flanders Chair
Director, Palliative Care McGill
Associate Professor, Department of Family
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MUHC, Present & Future**
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Associate Professor, Department of Oncology
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Virginia Lee, N., Ph.D.

**Learning to be Still and
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Testimonial of an Oncology Social Worker at
the MUHC Cedars Cancer Centre

Question and Answer Period

[bilingue / bilingual]

**Must be on waiting list for GP
Primary Care Access Point offers relief
for ‘orphan’ patients, says Dr. Roper**

By MARTIN C. BARRY

Dr. Mark Roper has been seeing a lot of “orphan” patients – especially since the beginning of the COVID pandemic more than three years ago.

Roper, who runs the Roper Clinic on Melville Ave. and who is also attached to the Queen Elizabeth Health Complex in NDG, estimates that only about 61 per cent of Westmounters currently have a family doctor.

As well, says Roper, 100,000 people are without a family doctor in this region alone, which includes western downtown and Montreal West.

“It’s the highest in Quebec,” he said, while adding that he hasn’t seen any real signs the numbers are going down, in spite of the provincial government’s efforts.

He suggests the blame can be placed at least partly on the fact new doctors aren’t being recruited to replace those who are retiring. “We’re basically not replacing our retirements in primary care,” he said.

On a more positive note, Roper said the provincial health ministry has set up a new program, the Primary Care Access Point, to help people without a family doctor obtain a medical consultation or a health service.

In order to benefit from the program, a person must be on the waiting list for a family doctor, or be currently under the care of a group of doctors.

Roper said the Primary Care Access Point makes it possible for those without a family doctor to have a single visit with a doctor just to regulate an immediate medical issue or to renew a prescription. He said doctors in the community were asked by the health ministry to pitch in and help with the program.

“It’s a stopgap measure until the system




Dr. Mark Roper, seen here on April 27 at the Queen Elizabeth Health Complex, says the Primary Care Access Point can help connect “orphan” patients to doctors.

changes and we’re able to freely recruit family doctors,” he said.

Regarding the provincial government’s latest reform of the public health care system, which proposes to place the existing network of regional CISSS and CIUSSS agencies under a single agency known as Santé Québec, he said he was not optimistic.

The Primary Care Access Point can be found on the web at the following address: www.quebec.ca/en/health/finding-a-resource/primary-care-access-point.

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Social Notes

VERONICA REDGRAVE

A fabulous gala was held at Windsor Station, beautifully transformed for the black-tie eve, which raised \$1.8 million for the MUHC Cedars Cancer Centre.

“Le Gala – At the Leading Edge” honoured the talented interdisciplinary teams of healthcare professionals who work at the centre. The event also showcased the centre’s exciting new developments.

Gala co-chairs were **Paola Aprikian** and **Daphne Tsadilas Shamie**. Honorary co-chairs were **Dr. Armen Aprikian**, **Diana Ferrara Scalia** and **Adam Turner**.

Event guests included cancer survivor **Marc Normandeau**, a medical communications specialist at L’Oréal, who said: “I’m sitting here tonight having survived acute lymphoblastic leukemia three times. I was diagnosed when I was only four, then again at 13. My goal is to ensure that other cancer patients don’t have to hear the dreaded words ‘it’s back.’”

To say that guests had a great time is an understatement: dancing was a must! The 550 supporters were brought to their feet with powerful performances by Grammy

Cedars gala raises \$1.8 million

winning R & B and disco queen **Thelma Houston** and Canada’s very own *American Idol* sensation **Nicolina**. Presenting sponsors, the Brien and Aghazarian families, were praised for their contributions.

Attendees included **Dr. Pierre Gfeller**, former executive director MUHC; **Jeff Shamie**, CEO Cedars Cancer Foundation

and Westmount city councillor, and his wife **Daphne Tsadilas-Shamie**, and their children **Sophia**, **Alexa**, **Francesca** and **Chloe Shamie**; **Peter Kruyt**, MUHC board chair and his wife **Claire Mullins**; **Tony Aksa**, immediate past chair Cedars’ board, and his wife, **Carine Bou Karam**; **Phyllis** and **John Rae**; **George** and **Simé Armoyan**;

Arden and **Christine Dervishian**; the ambassador of Lebanon to Canada; **Fadi Ziadeh**, and his wife, **Tania**; the honorary consul of Armenia in Quebec, **Levon Afeyan**, and his wife, **Ana**; **Marcia Gillman** and **Michael Flinker**; **Chantal Carrier** and **Louis Vachon**; **Myriam** **Dahan** and **Ronald** continued on p. 22



Diana Ferrara-Scalia, Daphne Tsadilas-Shamie, Jeff Shamie, Paola Aprikian, and Dr. Armen Aprikian.



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Social notes, cont'd from p. 21

Reuben; Sarah Lamarche and Christopher Nacos, Mary and Frank Rana, Evelyn and Demo Trifonopoulos, Brigitte Lalande and Sam Kersheh, Audrey Huot and Nadim Rizk, Gwen Nacos; Lisa Chamandy; Sarah, Catherine and Norman Cook, Peggy Tabet and Joseph El Khoury, Andrew Carter, Anthony Calvillo, Antonia Moquette Betts, Bram Gordon, Lorne Smart, Ariel Dayan and Dan Médalsy, and doctors Nader Sadeghi, Roger Tabah, Rafael Sanchez-Salas, Anita Brown-Johnson, Dexter Gregory Johnson, and Mark Roper.

Also seen were Lyne Picard, Susan Horan, Catherine Melling Turner, Connie Gagliardi and Eric Lacharité.



Peter Kruyt and Pierre Gfeller.



Bram Gordon, Lorne Smart, Mike Flinker, David Wiseman and Dan Médalsy.



Catherine Melling Turner, Adam Turner, Connie Gagliardi and Eric Lacharité.



Dr. Rafael Sanchez-Salas, Dr. Eleanor Hew, Dr. Anita Brown-Johnson, Dr. Dexter Gregory Johnson and Dr. Mark Roper



Catherine, Norman and Sarah Cook and Gwen Nacos.



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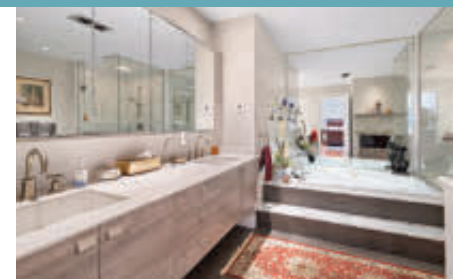
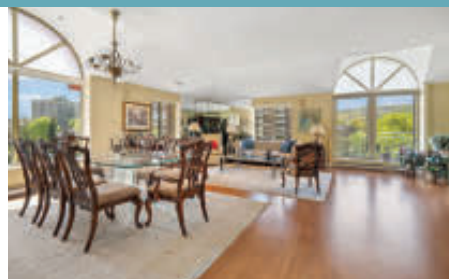
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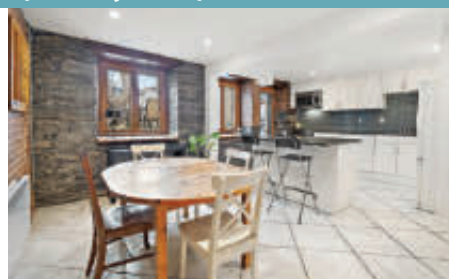
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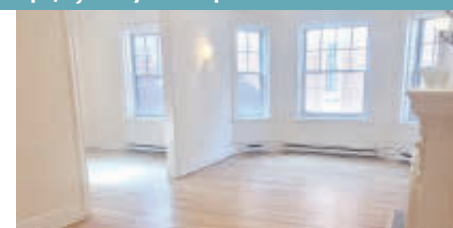
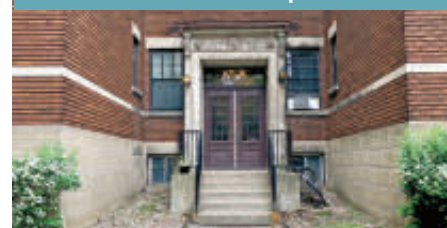
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