

Public smoking ban passes 'unfiltered' by nay votes

BY ISAAC OLSON

Côte St. Luc has taken another step towards what they hope will protect citizens from second-hand tobacco smoke. After a unanimous vote on February 13, councillors have banned smokers from lighting up in public parks or during city sponsored events like Canada Day celebrations.

"This is once again an opportunity to take a leadership role," said Councillor Steven Erdelyi, who initiated the amendment. "Côte St. Luc will be the first city on the island, if not the first in the province of Quebec, to disallow smoking anywhere within 20 metres of a playground equipment as well as baseball and soccer fields. We also will not allow smoking anywhere in the pool area and no smoking in public parks during special events like the recent Winter Carnival. This is something the residents have asked for."

Erdelyi said he hopes this regulation will set an example for other municipali-

ties to follow.

Citing the ongoing evolution of smoking laws across a province, Councillor Glenn Nashen said he thinks the measure is "very, very important as it is not only trendsetting, it's also health promoting." This sentiment is something Mayor Anthony Housefather highlighted as well when he said: "I think this is a by-law to protect all residents who do not want to be in the close proximity to smoke."

Councillor Allan Levine said he would like to see a by-law passed that bans people from smoking in their car when a child is present. Councillor Mike Cohen also cited concern for those exposed to second-hand smoke and those that are addicted to tobacco. Cohen he is proud to be the member of a council that is once again taking global leadership role.

"I would like to see other municipalities to follow our lead," said Cohen. "Hopefully this is another tool for us to convince people not to smoke."

Preliminary report indicate CSL's population is on the rise

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Early census Côte St. Luc's population is on the rise.

CSL went from 31,395 in 2006 to 32,321 in 2011, according to Statistics Canada, making for a 2.9 percent increase over Montreal's 1.7 percent. Montreal's population went from 1,854,442 in 2006 to 1,886,481 today. Either way, CSL's elected officials see the increase in population as a clear sign that the effort to offer citizens a gamut of services is paying off with more residential growth.

"Even in my district, where there are many seniors, developers are putting up the new townhouse complex on Marc Chagall and I am already hearing from a lot of young people who are excited to move in there," said District 2 councillor Mike Cohen, citing another development at Cavendish Mall. "I am hearing more and more from people that want to come live here. I think the Aquatics and Community Centre (ACC) is going to be a serious draw."

Citing a reduction in development-worthy space, Cohen said he hopes there will still be more opportunities for the city and its population to grow with time.

"I think we're moving in the right

continued on p. 15

CSL's EMS finishes another great year: Director



The volunteer force that makes up Côte St. Luc's EMS.

Photo: City of Côte St. Luc.

BY ISAAC OLSON

Be it delivering babies, resuscitating heart attack victims or signing the new agreement with Urgences Santé, officials are reporting another positive year for the city's Emergency Medical Service (EMS) department, which employs an entirely volunteer team of highly trained first responders.

It's a service unlike anything on the island of Montreal.

During the recent council meeting, Councillor Glenn Nashen said the EMS department responded to 2,808 emergency calls in 2011, which, he noted, is the annual average. However, what makes the service unique is the types of calls CSL's volunteer squad responds to, noted Nashen, who has been involved with the EMS since 1979 as both a volunteer and city councillor in charge of the initiative. EMS, he said, will go to both life threatening situations which are priority one calls, and potentially life-threatening situations, which are priority three.

"The Montreal fire department only responds to the most critical emergencies while we respond to twice that," said Nashen during the meeting. "So this still remains a critical service all done by volunteers."

In a later phone interview, the councillor went on to say, "It's an incredible story. It's an incredible organization. I

can tell you, without a doubt, that the emergency service that one receives in CSL is top level."

The fact that the EMS team is all volunteer, he said, shows the dedication the some 75 active members have for the cause. The volunteers go through rigorous training, are provided medically equipped vehicles, uniforms and the operation continues 24 hours a day.

According to the organization's website (Cslems.org), the EMS, has been in operation since 1964 and continues to "arrive in the first crucial moments" with all the necessary equipment.

In August 2011, the director of public safety, Jordy Reichson said an agreement was reached with Urgences Santé ensuring clear parameters for the day-to-day business, which include patient transport, administering medical treatment and more.

Volunteers helped deliver two babies this year, said Reichson, and played a key role in several resuscitations. "It was a very successful year," said Reichson, who has been a director for over two years and a volunteer for 13.

"We did a little bit of rebuilding based on the agreement with arrangements with Urgences Santé. They have become a very strong partner in improving the level of service that we offer to our residents. All in all, it was a very successful year."

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