

The Suburban, West End News
Around the towns
Joel Goldenberg, 2007-11-21

CSL AND REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION: Côte St. Luc is expected to pass a resolution regarding the ongoing debate in Quebec about the reasonable accommodation of religious minorities. Councillor Mitchell Brownstein, who is working on the resolution, says it will proclaim that the city "believes strongly in the primacy of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Quebec Charter of Rights" and that "both charters were designed to protect the fundamental rights and freedoms of Canadians and Quebecers." The recent debate on reasonable accommodation has become a concern to the council and residents of Côte St. Luc as it has sparked a large number of intolerant comments and many individuals testifying before the commission have presented intolerant views. The misinformation that has been presented has caused further division in our society." The resolution will call on Quebec's three political parties to "promote tolerance and respect amongst all Quebecers" and that "since the judiciary has as its responsibility the interpretation of our laws, the legislature should refer to the judiciary in determining what is reasonably acceptable according to our existing laws."

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2008 CSL COUNCIL MEETINGS: Côte St. Luc council regulars take note: two 2008 council meetings will not be held as usual on the second Monday of the month. The June 2008 council meeting will take place 8 p.m. June 16 rather than June 9, because of the Jewish holiday of Shavuot. The October 2008 council meeting will take place 8 p.m. Monday Oct. 6, rather than the next Monday, because of Thanksgiving.

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HAMPSTEAD REMINDER: In response to many calls he has received from residents regarding traffic violations in the town, Hampstead councillor Abe Gonshor reminded the public that local public security officials do not have the power to ticket for moving violations, such as speeding. Only police have that power. Public security personnel can ticket for violation of municipal bylaws, such as dog leash and poop violations.

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EMPLOYEE HONOURS: Côte St. Luc council recently honoured Jean-Guy Renaud, for his 35 years with the city's public works department. Renaud was a 3C2 motorized equipment operator for the department.

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STILL DORMANT: The \$20 million lawsuit against Côte St. Luc by the owners of the Meadowbrook Golf Course is still dormant, Mayor Anthony Housefather told Avrom Shtern of Les Amis de Meadowbrook at the November council meeting. The lawsuit was launched when Côte St. Luc changed the zoning of half of the site to golf course from residential.

"The attorneys have been changed for the plaintiff, but that was the result simply of a change in ownership and the different owners having different attorneys," Housefather said.

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CRAFT SALE: NDG's New Hope Senior Citizen's Center is hosting its annual craft sale Saturday Dec. 1. The event supports seniors in and around the Montreal area. All profits go toward alleviating senior isolation, organizers say. The centre is at 6225 Godfrey Avenue. For more information, call 514-484-0425.

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DOCTOR HONOURED: Dr. Tom Zaphiratos of Côte St. Luc's Maimonides Geriatric Centre was presented with the centre's first merit award for exceptional professional services. Zaphiratos, a member of the Maimonides staff for 14 years, "was selected by his peers as the physician who has contributed exemplary high levels of professional excellence, dedication and commitment," says a Maimonides press statement.

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CSL SURPLUS: Côte St. Luc is anticipating a surplus of revenues over expenditures by the end of this year, Mayor Anthony Housefather said in his annual financial report at last week's city council meeting. "We are not able to estimate how much it will be," he told the meeting. "But we will continue to control all of our expenses to make sure we do have a surplus and it is as significant as we can make it." The report was read in advance of the city's 2008 budget, expected to be released next month.

Housefather said third quarter statistics indicate Côte St. Luc has followed its 2007 budget as formulated in 2006.

"The actual 2007 operating revenues are well within the revenue budgets established in the forecast to Dec. 31, 2006," he explained. "On the expenditure side, we have experienced some minor cost increases in various areas, such as energy costs. However, we are also well within expense budgets established in the forecast to Dec. 31. Due to better cash-flow management and delays in borrowing long-term debt, we have experienced some savings in capital and interest repayments." Housefather also pointed out that Côte St. Luc is still contesting Montreal's claim that the Côte St. Luc sector of the former CôteSt.HampWest borough had a \$1.8 million deficit by the end of the merger era.

As previously reported, the deficit came about because of salary adjustments for staff in the last two months of 2005, just before demerger took place.