

MINUTES
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

MARCH 27, 2023
8:00 p.m.

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Council of Montreal West held on March 27, 2023 at the Town Hall located at 50 Westminster Avenue South.

Present:	Mayor:	Mr. Beny Masella	
	Councillors:	Ms. Lauren Small-Pennefather	Seat 1
		Ms. Elizabeth Ulin	Seat 2
		Ms. Colleen Feeney	Seat 3
		Ms. Maria Torres	Seat 4

Also present: Ms. Valentina Maria Todoran, Interim Director General
Me Claude Gilbert, Town Clerk
Ms. Elisabeth Roy, Communications Officer

Mayor Beny Masella acted as chairperson of the meeting.
Mr. Claude Gilbert, Town Clerk, acted as secretary of the meeting.

Nineteen (19) residents and visitors were in attendance.

1. Opening of the Meeting

It was moved by Councillor Maria Torres, seconded by Councillor Colleen Feeney and resolved:

That the Meeting be declared open.

Carried unanimously
#20230327-001

The Mayor called the Meeting to order at 8:02 p.m.

2. Acknowledgement of Visitors

There was nothing under this item.

3. Adoption of the Agenda

It was moved by Councillor Colleen Feeney, seconded by Councillor Elizabeth Ulin and resolved:

To adopt the Agenda of the Regular Meeting of Monday, March 27, 2023 as presented.

Carried unanimously
#20230327-002

4. Approval of the Minutes

It was moved by Councillor Elizabeth Ulin, seconded by Councillor Lauren Small-Pennefather and resolved:

To approve the Minutes of the Regular Council Meeting held on February 27, 2023.

Carried unanimously
#20230327-003

5. Correspondence

There was nothing under this item.

6. Report of the Mayor

Mayor Masella noted that the residents are facing a crucial decision about the future of recreational services with the proposed Sports Centre. Council has been speaking about this need since 2015. Himself has been in constant contact with the other levels of government, administrators in the grant system, and elected officials from various parties, so that Montreal West would not lose any opportunity to secure a grant and move this project forward. In 2020 the stars aligned, so if people vote in favour of construction, the Town will have a brand-new centre that will act as the hub for the vast majority of sports programs and many recreational activities. It will be a multi-generational, multi-purpose, and accessible building that will serve the community for the next 50 years or more. It is a project for which Montreal West will receive \$12.5M in grants from the federal and provincial governments as well as donations in the area of \$2.5M. And it will come with a bump in property taxes. How much will not be known until the bids are opened. If people vote against construction, the paths are less well defined. Eliminating the ice surface would require the Town to forego the grant and re-apply with a modified project, with no guarantee of getting a new grant. Because of the decrepit state of the existing arena, it will likely need to be demolished within the next few years. Very likely, the pool would also need to be rebuilt because it too has reached the end of its useful life. Unfortunately, that too would cause a bump in property taxes. And whatever that increase is, it would come with fewer services and decreased property values. Montreal West is already a high-tax destination, so a modest tax hike will have less impact than a large reduction in services. Conversely, a new facility will increase property values, make houses easier to sell and ensure that there are young families moving in Montreal West. Those are the facts. This being said, the community is divided over the issue. The Mayor said that he could understand and accept that some people do not agree with him on this one. But he expressed the hope that the debate will not polarize residents. Since there will be a vote, Council will abide by the will of the majority of votes cast. Therefore he asked for a respectful tone and promised the same. All the information that will be put forward will be clear, based on facts and complete. Opponents should do the same. At the end of this vote, there will be one of two possible paths. One leads to a new Sports and Recreation Centre that should ensure the vitality of our community for future generations. The other path leads to some unpleasant discussions about how to finance the demolition of the arena and north chalet and the future of the pool and Sports and Recreation offerings. In both cases, the whole community will have to put aside their differences and work towards solutions to make Montreal West a better place to live. The same spirit and cohesiveness residents have always shown will be needed.

7. Councillors' Reports

a) Seat Number 3

Councillor Colleen Feeney reported on matters pertaining to Finance, Recreation and topics related to the status of Age Friendly Municipality.

b) Seat Number 4

Councillor Maria Torres reported on matters pertaining to Urban Planning (1) and Environment (2).

c) Seat Number 1

Councillor Lauren Small-Pennefather reported on matters pertaining to Public Security and Urban Planning (2).

d) Seat Number 2

Councillor Elizabeth Ulin reported on matters pertaining to Public Works, Communications and Environment (1).

8. First Public Question Period

The Mayor announced the beginning of the First Public Question Period at 8:30 p.m.

Residents in attendance were invited to ask the Mayor and Councillors questions concerning matters of general interest. Questions submitted in advance were also taken.

1. Harold Knowles

Asked about the sequence of things between the tender opening and the holding of a vote on the sports center project. Also wanted to know if people will be called to choose between demolition and reconstruction, or just to vote against or in favor of the latter.

2. Alexander Graziani

Asked why taxes are so high in Montreal West and wondered if there are ways to change this situation.

3. Joanna Duy

Asked if and when will come a parking and traffic study on the situation on Bedbrook and neighboring streets. It was announced at a previous meeting.

4. Andrew Chapman

Asked if the Town will provide details on the budget for the new arena project before a vote is held, and if there will be an assessment of the fiscal impact depending on property values.

5. Sherri McGurnaghan

Asked if there will be some space for businesses inside the sports and recreation center. Also asked if there could be ways to increase the housing stock in Montreal West, like by subdividing lots.

6. Robert Deslauriers

Wanted to know under what rules would the vote be held, and according to which law.

7. Stanley Reinblatt

Asked if there will be further communications efforts on the part of the Town concerning the sports and recreation center.

8. Andy Michelin

Answered the former question by stating there will be occasions for people to meet and talk about the project in the coming weeks.

9. Sandy Kudo

Questioned the point often made that a new sports and recreation center will attract families with children to Montreal West.

10. Cynthia Nichols

Disputed a statement of offence she said that she was given for lack of maintenance of her property.

11. Daniele Lemieux

Asked why there are no senior discounts offered on fitness programs offered by the Town.

12. Rebecca Vanderelst

Asked if the greenhouse will be restored. Regarding the arena, asked if there could be a breakdown of male to female participation in current rink usage, and how the Town will make sure girls and women have equal and access to the rink, like expanded free skate hours.

13. Andre Chenier

Given that Canada is a country where it is remarkably difficult to get important things built on time and on budget, asked how the Town will find the money to complete the recreation centre, in the event that the project is approved and later it is learned that it will be over budget.

14. Scott Miller

Asked Council to commit now to schedule voting in the referendum on the new recreation centre over a multi-day period in order to facilitate voting by as many residents as possible. Also asked Council to submit an amended or new application for a grant to fund a new recreational complex and pool with no arena If the majority vote against the new recreational complex containing an arena.

15. Linda Hammerschmid

Asked how is it that Notre-Dame-de-Grâce can have two dog runs near Fielding very close to each other, yet in this Town north of the tracks there is only one non-permanent dog exercise area on Hodgson Field. There are at least 350 dogs in Montreal West.

16. Jim Mullaly

Stated that he had learned some time ago that the cost of the sports and recreation center would cost \$40,000,000.00. This was not admitted in order to not influence the tender process, but since then the Council, said the resident, has publicly indicated that with the grant, loan and fundraising target the total is over 42 million dollars. Wondered why and how this could happen.

17. Sharon McKechnie

Asked if a review has been conducted to determine which of the current Civic Recreation Association activities may be moved to the new recreation centre, and if this information is available to the public. Also asked if there has been any determination of how the current spaces will be used once the activities are moved to the new centre.

18. Nadia Dufault

Complained that the police drive on Westminster at unreasonably high speeds with sirens blazing at all hours of the day and night. Asked if police vehicles could use alternate routes such as Connaught and West Broadway in order to avoid near collisions with children on bikes and elderly walking slowly. Also asked if garbage, recycling and composting pickup could be on the same day.

19. Mia Massicotter

Said that her property tax increased by approximately 12% this past year (about \$1,000 for the year). Asked what the Town's average property tax increase was in the past year. Also asked if she may anticipate that the additional tax burden for the newly proposed sports facility will be, for her, similarly above or below the Town average, and in the same proportion.

20. Paul Kenton

Asked what the three components of the accumulated surplus found at the top of page 25 are in the 2022 financial statements, what was the operating surplus, and what was the bank debt. He also noticed that back in 2017, only 40% of respondents would accept a tax increase of \$200 for a new sports center. Wondered what is the maximum tax increase threshold that the Town now feels is acceptable.

21. Randi Park

Asked if there are plans for a permanent dog run north of the tracks, given that the one on Bedbrook will be coming down shortly.

22. Cyrille Vittecoq

Complained about nightmarish traffic affecting particularly Easton Avenue residents, Avon and Easton Avenue being a minefield around the condo project and Town Hall. Asked if there is a plan to mitigate a bit better the negative effects of the Easton Project, at the developer's expense more than taxpayers. Also said that the traffic light at Easton/Avon/Westminster/Brynmor should be replaced by a more appropriate system (more than three signals) for that five-way intersection.

The First Question Period ended at 9:25 p.m.

9. Contracts and Town Clerk's Office

a) Authorized signatory (cadastral operations)

It was moved by Councillor Lauren Small-Pennefather, seconded by Councillor Colleen Feeney and resolved:

That the Town Clerk of Montreal West, Me Claude Gilbert, be authorized to sign on behalf of the Town any permit applications and documents related to the subdivision of immovables owned by or involving the Town as owner, for administrative purposes.

Carried unanimously
#20230327-004

10. Administration and finances

a) Approval of disbursements – February 23 to March 21, 2023

It was moved by Councillor Colleen Feeney, seconded by Councillor Elizabeth Ulin and resolved:

That the list of accounts payable from February 23 to March 21, 2023 totaling \$4,500,373.98 be approved and paid as listed.

Carried unanimously
#20230327-005

b) Delegation of powers for the month of March 2023

It was moved by Councillor Maria Torres, seconded by Councillor Elizabeth Ulin and resolved:

To approve the report of the Director General concerning the exercise of powers delegated under By-Law No. 2005-002 for the month of March 2023.

Carried unanimously
#20230327-006

c) Grant application – development of independent public libraries

It was moved by Councillor Elizabeth Ulin, seconded by Councillor Maria Torres and resolved:

- 1) That the Town of Montreal West apply to the Ministry of Culture and Communications of Quebec for a grant under the program for the development of independent public libraries, in partnership with the Montreal West Public Library and the Montreal West Children's Library (application number 542229).
- 2) That the Town undertake to comply with the conditions of this program in order to receive the grant.
- 3) That the Interim Director General of the Town, Ms. Valentina Maria Todoran, be authorized to sign any necessary documents for the purposes of this resolution.

Carried unanimously
#20230327-007

d) Amendment to Resolution #20211115-016 (credit transfer)

It was moved by Councillor Lauren Small-Pennefather, seconded by Councillor Elizabeth Ulin and resolved:

That the professional fees of the Consortium Blouin-Tardif Co-Architecture, for architectural and multidisciplinary services within the scope of the rebuilding of the Sports and Recreation Center, be paid by the unappropriated surplus, and that Resolution #20211115-016 be amended accordingly.

Carried unanimously
#20230327-008

e) New tariff proposal

It was moved by Councillor Maria Torres, seconded by Councillor Elizabeth Ulin and resolved:

That a new fee be charged for the following service:

- Public Works – sale of trees (including taxes)
 - Residents
\$20.00 /unit
 - Non residents
Not applicable

Carried unanimously
#20230327-009

f) Art Etc.

It was moved by Councillor Colleen Feeney, seconded by Councillor Lauren Small-Pennefather and resolved, Councillor Elizabeth Ulin having abstained after declaring she had an interest in the matter under review:

- 1) That Council agree to rent the Assembly Hall on the occasion of the Arts and Craft Fair that will take place during three days in November 2023, for a bulk discount amount of \$3,256.86 (taxes included), plus a fee of \$114.98 (taxes included) for a sign space, and a reimbursable deposit of \$500 to secure the reservation, in consideration of a total of twenty-three hours and a half (23.5 h) of rental for the event, setup and cleanup, and to keep the other terms and conditions of the previous agreement in effect.
- 2) That the deposit and an advance payment of \$500.00 on the rental amount be payable upon signing the agreement, followed by a payment of \$1,128.43 no later than May 1, 2023, and the balance of \$1,628.43 (plus the fee for a sign space) to be paid no later than August 1, 2023.

Carried unanimously
#20230327-010

11. Urban Department

a) Site Planning Projects and Architectural Integration Programs (SPAIP)

It was moved by Councillor Maria Torres, seconded by Councillor Lauren Small-Pennefather and resolved:

1) To acknowledge receipt of the minutes of a meeting held by the Planning Advisory Committee (PAC) on March 22, 2023.

2) To approve as presented under the SPAIP the following plans submitted to this meeting, in accordance with the recommendations of the PAC as outlined in the minutes:

Address	Project
1 Nelson 326 Brock N.	Replacement of the front stairs and landing; Transformation of a veranda into a four-season space.

3) To approve with conditions under the SPAIP the following plans submitted to this meeting, in accordance with the recommendations of the PAC as outlined in the minutes:

Address	Project
20 Fenwick	Replacement of thirty-two windows, the front door and a back door, replacement of one window by a door, removal of the chimney, replacement of the cladding material on the rear extension, modification of the ground floor rear extension roof to create a roof terrace, modification of two openings, painting of the cladding in front and on the sides, replacement of the rear extension ground and second floor metal roofs to membrane.

4) To defer the examination of the following plans to a next meeting of this Council, in accordance with the recommendations of the PAC as outlined in the minutes:

Address	Project
209 Strathearn N.	Replacement of the front stairs, landing and installation of railings;
25 Ballantyne S.	Demolition and reconstruction of a backyard one-storey extension.

Carried unanimously
#20230327-011

b) Minor exemption request – 49 Nelson

NOTE Councillor Maria Torres summarized the issues involved in the following matter. She also noted that it had been advertised in the newspaper. No comments were received since the publication (and none were made after these explanations).

It was moved by Councillor Maria Torres, seconded by Councillor Lauren Small-Pennefather and resolved:

That the plans and request submitted to the February 22, 2023 meeting of the Planning Advisory Committee be approved, in accordance with By-Laws 2020-002 and G-18-0005, for the following minor exemptions from the schedule of uses and standards in effect under section 3.2.2, the second paragraph of section 4.1.6, section 4.1.9 and paragraph 15 of section 4.1.10 of the Zoning By-Law, regarding the immovable located at 49 Nelson in zone RB-2 to:

- Normalize the front setback of the main building, which is 3.07 metres instead of the minimum 4.57 metres, the consequence being to reduce this requirement by 1.5 metres.
- Normalize the rear setback of the main building, which is 4.8 metres instead of the minimum 6.1 metres, the consequence being to reduce this requirement by 1.3 metres.
- Normalize the distance of 1.12 metres between the detached garage and the main building instead of the minimum 2.0 metres, the consequence being to reduce this requirement by 0.88 metre.
- Normalize the setback of the detached garage in the side yard, which is zero (0) metre instead of the minimum 1.0 metre, the consequence being to reduce this requirement by 1.0 metre.

Carried unanimously
#20230327-012

c) Minor exemption request – 28 Fenwick

NOTE Councillor Maria Torres summarized the issues involved in the following matter. She also noted that it had been advertised in the newspaper. No comments were received since the publication (and none were made after these explanations).

It was moved by Councillor Lauren Small-Pennefather, seconded by Councillor Maria Torres and resolved:

That the plans and request submitted to the February 22, 2023 meeting of the Planning Advisory Committee be approved, in accordance with By-Laws 2020-002 and G-18-0005, for the following minor exemption from the schedule of uses and standards in effect under section 3.2.2 and paragraph 9 of section 4.1.10 of the Zoning By-Law, regarding the immovable located at 28 Fenwick in zone RB-7 to:

- Normalize the setback of the front porch with a cantilever construction, which is 4.2 metres instead of the minimum 4.57 metres, the consequence being to reduce this requirement by 0.37 metre.

Carried unanimously
#20230327-013

12. Public Works

There was nothing under this item.

13. Human Resources

There was nothing under this item.

14. Appointments

There was nothing under this item.

15. Deposit of Documents

a) Commission municipale du Québec – performance audit report (website)

The performance audit report by the Commission municipale du Québec on the website of twenty municipalities, including Montreal West, was tabled with Council.

b) Treasurer’s report on the financing of municipal election expenses

The report of the Treasurer on activities related to the financing of independent candidates and the control of election expenses was tabled with Council.

16. Notice of Motion, Reading and Adoption of By-Laws

a) Adoption of By-Law No. 2023-002 – By-Law Amending By-Law No. 2019-003 Establishing the Remuneration of Town Council Members

WHEREAS a copy of this By-Law in draft version was previously tabled at a Council meeting when the notice of motion was given, and made available in accordance with the law;

WHEREAS the purpose and scope of this by-law were summed up at the present meeting;

THEREFORE:

It was moved by Councillor Colleen Feeney, seconded by Councillor Elizabeth Ulin and resolved:

That By-Law No. 2023-002 entitled “By-Law Amending By-Law No. 2019-003 Establishing the Remuneration of Town Council Members” be adopted.

Carried unanimously
#20230327-014

17. Second Public Question Period

The Mayor announced the beginning of the Second Public Question Period at 9:40 p.m.

People in the room were invited to ask the Mayor and Councillors questions concerning the matters on the agenda of this meeting. Questions submitted on line were also taken.

Joanna Duy asked why the expenditures related to the contract for the architect of the new recreation center have been charged to the unappropriated surplus.

Sherri McGurnaghan asked if the SPAIP approved for 20 Fenwick is the same place as the minor exemption approved for 28 Fenwick, or not.

18. Termination of the Meeting

At 9:45 p.m., no other questions being asked,

It was moved by Councillor Elizabeth Ulin, seconded by Councillor Maria Torres and resolved:

That the Meeting be terminated.

Carried unanimously
#20230327-015

Beny Masella
Mayor

Claude Gilbert
Town Clerk

*The annexes mentioned above are deposited
in the municipal archives in File Archives-20230327*