



## **2015-2016 President's Report**

The 2015-2016 year was one in which fewer contentious issues were experienced than in previous years. Once again, we continued the approach of monitoring the issues of our community and attempting to work with the Mayor and Council to find acceptable solutions to them. This approach has resulted in a good working relationship with the Mayor, Council and city administration.

### **Neighbourhood Watch**

As stated in last year's President's Report, while the Beaconsfield Neighbourhood Watch is not directly affiliated with the BCA, it is championed by our Vice President, Marcel Roux and myself.

Our relationship with SPVM's PDQ 1 has continued to improve. We have actively participated in the August 2015 back to school days, at two of the local schools. Throughout the year, we participated in PDQ1's initiative, "Coffee with a Cop". In June 2016, Neighbourhood Watch was represented at the B2K bicycle safety day, working with the officers from PDQ-1.

The continued interaction has had a very positive impact: we now receive weekly (anonymous) updates of crimes in Beaconsfield, allowing us to keep Neighbourhood Watch members informed.

### **Emerald Ash Borer**

In the summer of 2015, a number of EAB infestation cases were discovered in the Beacon Hill area, resulting in the application of the bylaw enacted in 2014. As of this date, some of the trees in the 'quarantine area' have been treated, while others remain to be treated.

While the EAB bylaw does impose controls on residents, we feel that it is far better in its current form than in the original proposal. Feedback from one of our members who has used the City's treatment plan is very positive. It was reported that the process removes a lot of uncertainty, simplifies scheduling and payment, and results in lower cost.

### **Tennis Club**

In the autumn of 2015, following an earlier rezoning, KF Construction and RE/MAX started a publicity campaign aimed at the residents in the proximity of the West Island

Tennis Club. Their goal was to propose a revised project, based on a four storey concrete construction, and try to obtain acceptance by area residents.

Several city councillors as well as some members of the BCA and its executive committee attended the open house. RE/MAX representatives were invited to attend a BCA monthly meeting to inform our members of the project.

At present, the first phases of the project have been approved based on the existing zoning which allows for a three storey building. An open house launch was held Wednesday June 15 for this project.

### **Attendance at BCA Meetings by City Council Members**

The Association reviewed its policy regarding the attendance of its meetings by elected and appointed city officials. The previous open-door approach proved to be disruptive and the members urged us to negotiate an agreement whereby city councillors and other city officials would attend BCA meetings by invitation only.

To date, we were pleased to invite Councillor Karen Messier to give a presentation on Beaconsfield as an Age Friendly Municipality. We hope that other similar sessions with other councillors will be possible in the fall of 2016.

### **BCA Participation in City Events**

It should be noted that the City Council has organised a number of events in the course of its mandate. In the last year, these events included an open house on the new trash pick up system, including a demonstration of the camera equipped garbage trucks. In addition to participating in this open house, we also met with Andrew Duffield, Director of Public Works to discuss some of our concerns.

A forum entitled "My City, Its Future" was held allowing all citizens the opportunity to complete an online survey regarding their views on how Beaconsfield should evolve. Select residents and groups were invited to participate in two evening sessions to address a number of issues of concern. The BCA was accorded the opportunity to attend on both sessions.

We were also invited to participate in a meeting hosted by the Culture and Leisure department, during which all groups providing services to the community were invited to describe their function and scope and provide links to other key groups.

Lastly, late in 2015, the Mayor and Council formed a committee to address land use, planning and development in Beaconsfield. I was pleased to be given the opportunity to serve as a member on this Committee. It gave me an insight into not only the issues that were part of the Committee's mandate, but also the functioning of these committees in general. The report prepared by the Land Use Committee will be presented to Council June 20.

## **City Budget**

One area that the BCA has become known for is its annual evaluation of the City budget. Dating back to the early 2000's, the Association has played a strong role in lobbying for lower tax rates. Through the efforts of many, but most recently those of Rick Jones, the Association has been able to compare our taxes to those of similar West Island communities. This study has become a much-anticipated document among the councillors and the media. We issued a press release earlier to convey the Association's assessment of the situation.

## **BCA Constitution and Bylaws**

During a reading of the Association's Constitution and Bylaws, it became evident that certain sections required revision and/or updating. Consequently, a committee was struck to deal with this task. It submitted the results of its work and a revised and updated version of the bylaws was presented and approved at our April 6, 2016 meeting.

## **Meeting with Other Associations**

Continuing the initiative that we started last year, when I met with the President of the Baie-d'Urfe Citizens Association, I met with the President of TMR's Citizens Association this spring. The meeting was extremely cordial and ideas of how our individual associations work were exchanged. Some of our initiatives such as our website and association flyer were particularly appreciated. It would be extremely productive to hold exchanges where the presidents and/or other executive committee members attend one or more meetings of the other association.

## **Emergency Preparedness**

This topic continues to remain a major focus of concern. After ongoing questions from the Association, the City hosted an open house, where it outlined its Emergency Plan to the residents in attendance. This meeting included presentations by Louise Bradette, Chef de Division au Centre de sécurité civile du Service de sécurité incendie de Montréal, as well as a representative from the Red Cross Disaster Management Office.

While the presentation was impressive, questions remain as to how the plan would be implemented in a variety of specific emergency situations. The BCA has formed a committee to further investigate some of these issues and carry out extensive behind the scenes research on some areas of concern.

## **The Future of the Association**

Over the past two and a half years, our Association has evolved from an often-confrontational watchdog to a more collaborative group. As a result, I am generally kept in the loop of upcoming issues and consulted regarding our views on various issues. We are seen more as a positive force.

To achieve these gains requires a lot of work and building trust. The more people we represent, the louder our voice will be heard. As we look around the room, we see many faces that have been the core of our Association for many, many years, long before I joined the group.

As our core ages, it is our responsibility to grow our membership, provide opportunities to learn and participate and ensure a future leadership and membership of the BCA. By building a dynamic force within our membership, we will assure the future of the BCA and a legacy to the efforts of the many core members that have built the Association.

### **Projects for the Upcoming Year**

As 2016 approaches its midpoint, the current City Council is also nearing the end of its term. The following items should be considered as action items for the year to come:

- The organisation of a debate night for the upcoming 2017 municipal elections.
- The continuation of the efforts of the BCA Emergency Preparedness committee.
- An invitation to Councillor Pierre Demers on the functioning of the CCU and its associated legal requirements.
- The formation of a membership committee whose mandate will include:
  - The verification of telephone and email data and ensure that members are receiving our emails;
  - The identification of alternatives for publicizing the existence of the BCA and encouraging attendance in our monthly meetings.
- Continued interface with other citizens associations in order to share knowledge and position our groups to be able to speak with a common voice on broader issues.

In closing, I would like to thank the members of the Executive Committee for their excellent work and support throughout the year. They sacrificed many hours of their time and I deeply appreciate their contribution. I would also like to thank Bruce Macdonald for his participation and efforts with regards to emergency preparedness issues. It was an honour to work with this excellent team.

Al Gardner

President