

Westmount LAP Community Meeting
Community Association Office
904B 22nd Street West
October 27, 2009
7:00 to 9:30 pm

Attendees: Nancy Boyd-Zuck, Terry Redford, Glen & Lana Kenney, Eric Regnier, Robert Hancock, Eleanor Knight, Shelly Fedrau, Geoff McLeod – Superintendent, Urban Forestry Section, Parks Branch, Wayne Briant – Manager, Parks Branch, Wade Gasmu – Manager, Public Works Branch, Chris Schulz and Courtney Johnson – Planners, Shirlene Palmer – Recording Secretary

1. Welcome & Introductions

Meeting called to order at 7:05 p.m.

Chris Schulz welcomed everyone to the meeting. He stated Courtney has given him the opportunity to facilitate tonight's meeting. He asked everyone to introduce themselves.

He reminded everyone after tonight's meeting there are only 3 more meeting topics: Heritage and Culture, Economic and Commercial Development, and Sustainability – unless the group decides there is something else that they feel needs to be discussed in greater detail. After these meetings, there will be a review and prioritizing session.

2. Agenda, Minutes & Successful Meeting Foundations

Agenda remained unchanged.

Correction to September 23rd meeting notes: Question 3 on page 4 was in respect to 29th Street not 25th Street.

Foundations for Successful Meetings specify how the meeting will be conducted. They are used to ensure that we feel comfortable sharing our concerns, opinions and ideas with the group here tonight.

- 1. Information Sharing & Gathering**
- 2. Respect & Understanding**
- 3. Integrity**
- 4. Fair and Equal Representation**
- 5. Collaborative Decision-Making**
- 6. Comments Remain Anonymous**

3. Other Items for Discussion – New building projects

Courtney informed the group of some exciting new developments happening in Westmount:

- a. On the 1400 block of 22nd Street the Bridgewater Hotel is being built by a Calgary company. It will be two storeys with 20 rooms on each floor and a lobby. There will not be any amenities such as a lounge.
- b. At 806 Bedford Road, Sask Housing is building 2 – 4 unit dwellings, these 3 bedroom units will be focusing on families. They will be affordable housing managed by Sask Housing Authority. These were previously thought to be owned but they will be rentals.

Courtney will check why this changed from ownership to rental.

4. Presentations

The term Municipal Services encompasses a wide range of services that the City provides. It generally refers to any of those sorts of activities that people tend to call basic services. Such as garbage collection, water and sewer services, snow removal, road and sidewalk maintenance, street sweeping, street lights, boulevard and tree maintenance, etc. A range of civic departments and branches provides these services.

Tonight we have representatives from a couple branches of the Infrastructure Services department to address some topics.

Wade Gasmol, Manager, Public Works Branch

The Public Works Branch, composed of 3 sections, is responsible for the operation, maintenance, and rehabilitation of roads, bridges, back lanes, sidewalks, water mains, sanitary sewer mains, storm sewer mains, lateral connections and overland drainage systems.

The Water and Sewer Section is responsible for the operation, maintenance and rehabilitation and inspection of the existing water distribution, sanitary sewer and storm sewer collection infrastructures. This consists of piping, valves, hydrants manholes, catch basins, storm retention ponds and streambeds. The Water and Sewer Section assists Strategic Service Branch in defining long-term funding needs for asset preservation and setting annual programs for major rehabilitation.

The Water and Sewer Section also provides the first response for water, sanitary and storm sewer service interruptions. This includes responding to water main breaks, service connection leaks, sanitary sewer mains and sewer connection backups. There are also programs the Section provides, which includes the operation and inspection of fire hydrants and water main valves; water main flushing to maintain water quality; cleaning catch basins (below the surface); and testing and treating storm retention ponds to maintain water quality.

The Roadways Section provides services for the maintenance and rehabilitation of all roadway assets including roads, bridges and structures, sidewalks, back lanes and pathways. The Roadways Section also manages annual programs for snow and ice, snow disposal sites, drainage, sweeping and earth dumpsites. In addition, the Section assists the Strategic Services Branch in defining long-term funding needs for asset preservation.

The Support Services Section provides internal support to other sections of the Branch, including dispatch operations, administration, carpenter shop, public works stores and maintenance of buildings and grounds. The Support Services Section is responsible for the Public Works Branch training programs, including operator certification, water operator certification and various other training programs.

Questions:

- **Who does a person contact with concerns about roadways, water, sewer, etc?**

Wade stated the general dispatch number is 975-2476 and your call will then be forwarded to the appropriate department in regards to your concern.

- **How does roadway maintenance get scheduled after they are dug up for sewer repair?**

The department tries to have all the major roads paved after a sewer excavation prior to winter, as it is less work than if it is left to grade and take care of in the winter months. If they are unable to pave them they are fixed in the Spring.

Some of the improvements are taken care of by the Strategic Services Branch.

- **When are curbs and boulevards replaced?**

Curbs and boulevards are only replaced if they are severely eroded. If you know of any call the general dispatch number.

- **Why are there gravel pile ups at the end of the alleys all the time?**

Gravel gets pushed around with snow removal in winter or summer rain washes up. If this is happening call the general dispatch number and they will dispose of it.

Comments:

- Rusholme Road needs attention; its roadways are very bumpy.
- It was noted there have been very bad patch jobs and many dips in roads around the neighbourhood.

Wade stated he is trying to have staff focus on doing quality jobs so they don't have to go back again. If they do it properly the first time it saves time in the long run. In some newer areas it is not always excavations that cause the issue it is the connection are settling now that a few years have gone by.

Questions:

- **Is there a program to replace lead pipes?**

Wade stated there is not specific program to replace lead pipes but there is help. If you contact the branch they have contacts with companies that will look at replacing them. The home owner is responsible for 40% up to \$2,000, 60% is covered by the City and the cost to the homeowner can be added to your

monthly property taxes and it is tax free. Anything on the inside of the house may be on top of it all.

Wade stated you can't assume older houses have lead pipes this is why they check when a call comes in. The mains are not lead, it would only be in the joints/connections at the house. The water main program was a different program and it was confusing so City Council agreed to have them put together so homeowners only have to deal with one program.

Questions:

➤ **What criteria does City use before replacing sidewalk or roadway?**

The Strategic Services Branch will go out and do a survey for substantial damage, heavy sprawling, etc. If there is a specific sidewalk let the branch know and they will go survey it.

Noted: There is a sidewalk that is difficult for wheelchair to go across the alley, 800 block of Rusholme Road, north sidewalk alley driveway and east a bit, it is like it was a bad batch of concrete.

➤ **When is an alleyway deemed worth paving? The alleyway behind the Blue Diamonds is extremely busy and would benefit from being paved?**

The City will only pave an alley if it is the primary access to a business and this is Transportation Department's responsibility. The City will pay for survey, inspection and design but will not pave it. It is the responsibility of the business to have it paved if they feel it is necessary.

➤ **When are alleyways graded? Is there a schedule?**

The grading of alleys is complaint driven so you may have some alleys graded twice a year and other only every two years. General dispatch is the number to be called.

Comments:

- It was noted last winter an employee driving a grader stopped to help push a car that was stuck.

Wade stated positive comments about employees are also welcome as he likes to bring it to their attention.

Wayne Briant, Manager, Parks Branch

Geoff McLeod, Superintendent, Urban Forestry Section, Parks Branch

The Parks Branch is responsible for developing; preserving and enhancing the City of Saskatoon's investment of more than 1,100 Hectares of its park system and civic open spaces. This is accomplished through policy development; maintenance standards; developing safety standards and policies; conceptual planning; design and construction; consultation with both private and public stakeholders and project management.

The Parks Branch operates through seven functional programs:

The Design Section is involved in the planning, design and development of public lands, which includes all levels of parks, buffers, civic buildings, road right-of-ways, etc. The core area of responsibilities includes planning, estimating, and administration of capital budgets; conceptual and detailed design; project management; internal and public consultation; development and implementation of landscape construction standards; and the collection and maintenance of “as-build” data.

The Grounds Maintenance Programs, which includes the Irrigation Program, responsible for the maintenance of approximately 604 Hectares of irrigated turf, and the operation and maintenance of 381 irrigation systems, the Sports field Program which is responsible for the maintenance of 258 sports fields (which include 80 class 1 & 2 fields used for provincial, national and international sporting events), Horticultural/Turf Maintenance Programs are responsible for the maintenance of all “naturalized” areas/parks, turf areas, shrub beds, park trees, litter control, park pathway maintenance, which includes snow removal on the main lit, and secondary asphalt pathways, the maintenance and grooming of approximately 21 km’s of cross country ski trails.

The Greenhouse and Conservatory Program is responsible for providing and maintaining floral displays for public viewing and/or landscape enhancement in the Civic Conservatory, City Hall and other civic facilities as well as major public roadways, parks, public open spaces. The Greenhouse Program produces approximately 45,000 annuals for the flowerpot program and flowerbeds in parks and civic open spaces. The Greenhouse program maintains the “Flower Pot” Program, comprised of a total of 860 plastic pots; locate along major public roadways and Local Business Improvement Districts (BIDS). The Conservatory program; welcomes approximately 80,000 visitors/year and our Greenhouse program produces approximately 4,000 plants/flowers for show changes annually.

The Urban Forestry Program is responsible for maintaining a healthy Urban Forest, which includes maintaining a pruning cycle of 1:7 years and the planting of approximately 1,500 trees annually, 6,000 – 7,000 trees are from our own nursery. Westmount is scheduled for their pruning this fall; notices should be coming in the mail. The components of this program include maintaining a comprehensive tree inventory of approximately 95,000 trees, production of diverse quality stock in the civic nursery, establishment of sustainable planting programs, and providing ongoing maintenance operations. Additionally, the program’s responsibility is to promote the benefits of trees in the environment, through public relations, fostering partnerships and educational activities.

The Pest Management Program is responsible for the control of mosquitoes and participates in the Government of Saskatchewan’s response to West Nile Virus. The section also conducts surveys of diseases such as Dutch elm disease and monitors for the presence of invasive alien species and when required implement an integrated pest management strategy to control the pests to a tolerable level. The program is also responsible for the administration of the nuisance wildlife management program.

The Inspection Services Program is responsible for the enforcement of the Provincial Noxious Weed Act; through the monitoring of alien invasive weed species and implementing integrated pest management control strategies. The program is also responsible for the City-wide hard surface weed control program. This is the second year of the hard surface weed control on the center medians and it has been successful.

Woodlawn Cemetery established in 1906 and is owned and operated by the City of Saskatoon, and falls under the responsibility of the Parks Branch. Woodlawn Cemetery offers a wide variety of services to the public at reasonable and relatively stable market prices, while maintaining the City's "pay as you go" philosophy. Woodlawn is centrally located and situated north of 33rd Street between 2nd Avenue and Warman Road, and is comprised of approximately 37.34 hectares with a well-established "urban" forest of approximately 3,500 trees. There have been about 500 lost over the last 5 years but these are slowly being replaced. It is operated as a self-funded cemetery with no public tax support.

The Nutana Pioneer Cemetery, situated north of Diefenbaker Park on the east bank of the South Saskatchewan River, was closed by City Council in 1911. The cemetery has been declared a "heritage" site and is maintained by the Woodlawn Cemetery Program.

For more detailed information on the above Parks Branch Programs, please visit the City of Saskatoon's Website, and look under "P" for Parks Department.

Questions:

- **How can so many trees be lost? Don't elms live to 200 years?**

Geoff stated not in the city, urban is different than wild; some trees live to be 700 years in the wild.

- **What kills them?**

Most times disease but also if it conflicts with electrical wires it may be required to be cut down. The pruning cycle keeps lots of them healthy and there is also the replacement program to continue the growth of the urban forestry.

Geoff stated there is a plant by request program as well, if you want a tree planted in your yard the City will plant one and take care of it for a couple years and then it is the homeowner's responsibility. This is an excellent program to enhance a neighbourhood.

The City also has the Schools Plant Legacy in Trees (SPLIT) program to get kids to learn about environmental enhancement programs.

Questions:

- **There is a SPLIT area behind the fence on Avenue K behind Westmount School. Who is responsible for the upkeep of this area?**

The schools are responsible for the upkeep.

Comments:

- These programs should be audited because no information has been passed to new management at the school and so this area was not being kept up. Need some way of transferring information to new management. In the summer there are no building operators to take care of this. The initiative was taken to have students to go and pull weeds but need to measure the success of these programs. Is it a good program if not kept up?

Questions:

- **At the north end of Westmount School there is a ball diamond, who does it belong to, the City or School Board? It is graded at the beginning of the season and that is it and it can be dangerous.**

It belongs to the School Board. Some neighbourhoods share space with the School Boards if they are short of green space in their neighbourhoods like King George does.

- **The Westmount playground needs revitalization and fundraising is just starting for this and wondered if there was anything they should know before going ahead with the revitalization?**

Wayne stated the participant should contact Ross Johnson, Manager of Infrastructure Services, Facilities Branch as he may have some insight.

- **Who is responsible for getting rid of alien weeds and other things coming out of sidewalk in front of house?**

Call the Parks general number 975-3300 and let them know your issues. The dispatch will pass you to the appropriate department. Your address will be added to the list to have someone come check it out in the spring.

- **Who is responsible for maintaining boulevards?**

If it is the front boulevard the resident is responsible but if it is the side flankage it is the City's responsibility. There is a Grass Seed Program that will supply you seed from central storage, all they need is your address and you can pick it up for free.

- **What policy does the City have in regards to use of chemicals in Pest Management? How do they go about pest control?**

Most efforts go into mosquito control, some into ground squirrels and the monitoring of tree pests. Poison is carefully put very deep into ground squirrels holes by experienced staff. To date there has not been any incidents of non target animals being affected, sulphur bombs are ineffective. This is never done on school grounds or on weekends when people are around. This has been very effective in controlling them.

Mosquitoes are treated with larvicide (spraying of the larvae) which has no impact on other organisms. Adult spraying or fogging has not been done since

1993. This will only be done now as a last resort for critical times such as if West Nile was prevalent, etc. We have gone to a pesticide free city.

➤ **When they do the pruning of the trees, do they take into consideration school hours?**

The areas they are pruning will be blocked off with no parking close as machinery will be used and want to keep it safe for all.

➤ **Should we continue banding trees for canker worms?**

Canker worms are usually the biggest nuisance for about 10 days when they are coming down from the trees. Once they are down they burrow into the ground. There is a spray that could be used but it very costly and not very effective. It is no use you banding your tree if your neighbour is not because they will just move across the tree canopy to your tree.

➤ **When pruning do you do a preliminary visit to the area or just come and prune?**

An inventory will be done prior to going out to identify the smaller trees that can be pruned by the City and the larger ones that have to be contracted out. An electronic inventory is currently being updated of all the trees and their values.

➤ **Tree was removed from the front of my house, across street from Westmount School, why this was done as I would like a tree there?**

Geoff stated he was not sure the specific reason this tree was removed but at times it is due to utility lines. Contact the department in regards to the Tree Planting Program. City is looking at the possibility of if a tree was over lines for 50 years and tree is removed why they can not replant one there. One initiative being looked at for the 3rd Avenue redevelopment is something that looks like a Lego made of some type of poly and is put into the ground; this would have roots go under buildings.

Geoff stated the Parks Branch is also responsible for the wildlife management component such as skunks, raccoons, foxes, coyotes, etc. Most of these animals are not dangerous and actually are helpful with rodents. They work closely with the West College of Veterinary Medicine. Animal Control is responsible for domestic animals.

➤ **Is there any way to monitor rats?**

This is virtually impossible to do. The way to prevent rats is to keep yards clean.

5. Group Exercise

Purpose: To identify issues and/or concerns related to Municipal Services in Westmount and suggest possible strategies to address them.

The participants divided into groups of two and each groups were asked to identify any issues/concerns, why it is an issue/concern, the location and possible options on worksheets. Chris reminded the groups to keep in mind tonight's presentations but also all the other areas of Municipal Services.

Chris asked groups to share briefly some of their issues were

Group Municipal Services Issues/Concerns:

- Double windrows (snowplowing on Rusholme Road), safety concern, they plow and pile across crosswalk
- Catch basin south east Avenue I and 30th , fills during spring thaw
- Avenue J & K shared - Rusholme Road & 29th , grading in lane, needs more attention
- S.P.L.I.T. area behind (west) Westmount School, needs maintenance
- Public awareness of programs – request a tree, grass program, etc (i.e. bill stuffer)
- Review tree replacement policy in older neighbourhoods, which may restrict new planting too much.
- Lead pipe replacement cost sharing program should to be communicated better

These will help us form the recommendations. It will give us a good sense of what is wanted.

7. Closing Remarks

FYI from School: H1N1 shot clinic at Westmount School
November 18, 2009 8:00 am – 4:30 pm
Breakfast from 8:00 – 9:30 am

Chris thanked all the participants for attending tonight and being involved in improving your community. Reminder if there are other major topics or issues that haven't been addressed or perhaps have come up since we developed the work plan let Courtney know so other meetings can be organized for these discussions.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, November 25, 2009
Location: Westmount Community School Library
411 Avenue J South
Topic: Heritage and Culture

Adjourned: 9:15 pm

Parking Lot:
NIL