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Re-elected Liberals offer new incentives and programs to deal with inflated housing market

Park Ex News Exclusive

Federal Minister of Housing, Diversity and Inclusion Ahmed Hussen says Ottawa will be making good on election pledges to help home buyers with new incentives and programs.
(File photo: Newsfirst Multimedia)

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Road users be vigilant!

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Shield of Athena thanks Newsfirst, for raising awareness of domestic abuse

In Quebec, one woman a month has been killed since the start of Covid pandemic



MARTIN C. BARRY
marty@newsfirst.ca

Newsfirst Multimedia co-publisher George Guzman was one of 20 Montreal-area news media influencers who were presented with certificates of appreciation last week by officials from Shield of Athena in recognition of their efforts to raise awareness of domestic violence during the Covid pandemic.

Violence soared

As Shield of Athena executive-director Melpa Kamateros explained during an interview prior to the Victims and Survivors of Crime Week event held at Rotisserie Panama in Park Extension on Nov. 18, domestic violence against women increased in Quebec in the more than 18 months since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Underlining the reality, Shield of Athena compiled a list of the names of 24 women and girls who were killed since May 2020, two of whom were from Laval and seven from Montreal – including one in Park Extension.

Traumatic stories

"It's one woman a month who has been killed," said Kamateros. "With this terrible situation of Covid, it's just reinforced everything and there have been many more murders."

In a press release, Shield of Athena says, "Many victims have had traumatic experiences but it is only in the telling of their stories that we can raise awareness and prevention."

According to the organization, during this period of global pandemic, access to services and support for many victims has become very difficult. And in cases of violence against women, there has been an upsurge, particularly during this period when victims have been more isolated and vulnerable.

Yet another statistic...

Shield of Athena acknowledges the role that



Seen here with Shield of Athena's Melpa Kamateros and Chris Ann Nakis, Newsfirst Multimedia journalist Martin C. Barry (centre) accepted the group's certificate of recognition on behalf of Newsfirst co-publisher George Guzman. (Photo: Newsfirst Multimedia)

various media in Montreal have played during the pandemic to raise awareness of domestic violence "and thanks them for their constant support to victims, especially during the pandemic," they said. "Without their assistance, many could have died and become yet another statistic."

Vimy Liberal MP Annie Koutrakis, whose riding in Laval is home to a large number of the Montreal region's Greeks, delivered a message sent by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau who is the Member of Parliament for Papineau.

Message from PM Trudeau

"He wanted to be here himself, because this is his riding," she said. "And he's also a great friend of Shield of Athena and the work they've been

► Continued on page 3



From the left, Shield of Athena board president Chris Ann Nakis, executive-director Melpa Kamateros, Vimy Liberal MP Annie Koutrakis and board member Eramelinda Boquer. (Photo: Martin C. Barry, Newsfirst Multimedia)

Ottawa coming to the rescue of young home buyers, says Housing Minister Ahmed Hussen



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Faced with skyrocketing real estate prices that are shutting an increasing number of house buyers out of the market, the Trudeau Liberal government's new Minister of Housing, Diversity and Inclusion says Ottawa will be coming to the rescue with new incentive programs aimed especially at potential young home buyers.

House prices soared

According to the Canadian Real Estate Association, the average price of a home in Canada has gone up more than 50 per cent in the last five years.

Nationally, the average home price in September – when Canadians went to the polls and elected a new Liberal government – was up 13.9 per cent over the same month the year before.

"The current election has made it very clear that housing is a top priority for Canadians," Ahmed Hussen said in an interview with Newsfirst Multimedia. He noted that the government introduced a proposed housing plan during the election campaign that would build on a foundation based on an earlier Liberal housing policy.

Helping first-time buyers

In addition to provisions to build more affordable housing including rental units, the wide-ranging plan also includes new programs for "rent-to-own," which "should give more first-time home buyers, especially young Canadians, the ability to buy their first home," said Hussen.

"We'll also be implementing a promise to introduce a first-time home buyer tax-free savings account," he continued, noting that account holders will be able to put in up to \$40,000 tax-free as a down payment. At the same time, he said the federal government will be continuing a first-time home buyer incentive program to help with first-time home purchases.

Funds for cities and towns

As well as these programs focused on families and individuals, Hussen said Liberal government programs introduced during the Covid pandemic are making significant sums available to towns and cities for "100 per cent federally-funded rapid housing solutions for the most vulnerable in our communities, including the City of Montreal, which got money to build over 312 new permanent affordable housing units for the most vulnerable residents of Montreal."

One of the persistent problems that officials from certain municipalities like Montreal have expressed has been their inability to put together a "bank" of purchased properties to be developed into low-cost or social housing, because of the steep prices now being demanded in a very competitive real estate market.

Municipalities and housing

With this in mind, Hussen said his ministry wants to set up a \$4 billion accelerator fund to "incentivize municipalities to build more affordable housing, to build more housing supply and to overcome some of the barriers to building more housing. That includes, for example, helping municipalities purchase land, overcoming some of the other hurdles."

"And we want to make sure there is more supply of housing in Canada so that we can meet the really high demand for housing. So, that \$4 billion fund will be application-based, and we will encourage municipalities to do everything that they can to bring forth measures that will encourage more housing supply fast."

'We need more housing'

Hussen said this measure and others currently being offered by the federal government will encourage "and really help municipalities overcome some of their challenges. We need more housing supply in Canada, we need more affordable housing."

"We also need more mixed housing and we need more housing built around transit. All of those things encouraging more accessibility and energy-efficiency in housing projects are something we have supported in the past, but we will be able to even more with the commitments we made during the election."



Federal Minister of Housing, Diversity and Inclusion Ahmed Hussen says Ottawa will be coming to the rescue of home buyers beleaguered by inflated prices with new incentive programs. (File photo: Martin C. Barry, Newsfirst Multimedia)

ments we made during the election."

Foreign home investment ban

Hussen reiterated that the Liberal government plans to honour a pledge made by the Liberals prior to the September election that they would introduce a two-year ban on investment by non-Canadians in home ownership as one of several means to deal with the problem of housing affordability in Canada.

"We promised a two-year ban on foreign investment – not foreign ownership – moving forward," he explained. The proposed restriction would be an attempt by Ottawa to calm the Canadian housing market, which soared during the Covid-19 pandemic and has yet to cool down, while inflation takes a toll on the stability of the country's economy.

Shield of Athena...

◀ Continued from page 2

doing for many years. Unfortunately, he's in the United States right now and he was unable to be here himself. And so, his office reached out to me and asked if I would be able to deliver his message on his behalf."

Koutrakis praised Shield of Athena, especially for its diversity. "They've hired front-line workers to be there for the women and children who flee violence," she said, noting that the group has also gone to great lengths to make its services available in a wide range of languages.

"I'm really happy with the work that they've been doing. For our government to be able to partner with organizations such as Shield of Athena which take a leadership role means a lot not only to the Hellenic community, but also to women across all communities."

'A front-line role'

In his message, Prime Minister Trudeau said he felt honoured to be able to formally recognize the crucial role played by mainstream and ethnic media who supported Shield of Athena's campaign to raise awareness of domestic violence against women during the pandemic.

"Shield of Athena is the perfect example of an organization playing a front-line role to help women, children and the communities to break the cycle of psychological, emotional, verbal and economic violence," Trudeau said. "I would like to take this opportunity to thank the ethnic media for their continued support and work to address violence against women, especially during the pandemic."

'Ending gender-based violence'

"During Victims and Survivors of Crime Week, let us reaffirm our commitment to ending gender-based violence here in Canada and around the world," he added. "I invite Canadians to consider what we can all do through our words and actions to end gender-based violence and build a better future world."

Québec solidaire MNA for Laurier-Dorion Andrés Fontecilla underscored the fact that one of the femicides was in Park Extension. On July 19 this year, Rajunder Prabheed Kaur, age 32, was murdered by her partner, leaving behind two orphaned children. "These women are killed because they are women," he said, noting that media today are finally acknowledging this truth.

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OPINION & Editorial



Radon: the silent killer lurking in your home

Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer

When we think of a tasteless, odourless and invisible killer potentially lurking in our homes, carbon monoxide (CO) immediately comes to mind. What's beyond our radar, however, is radon. In Canada, radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer, next to smoking, and the number one cause of cancer in non-smokers.

While carbon monoxide poisonings kill 300 people in Canada each year and 200 more are hospitalized, deaths from radon-induced lung cancer top 3,200. That's eight per day.

"The problem is fixable and totally preventable," says Dr. Aaron Goodarzi, Canada Research Chair for Radiation Exposure Disease and University of Calgary professor.

But people can't be complacent.

Radon is everywhere. According to Health Canada, it's a naturally occurring radioactive gas created as uranium found in soil and rock decays. When released from the ground into the open air, it becomes diluted and relatively harmless. However, when it seeps its way into enclosed spaces like our homes, it accumulates at high levels easily and exposes us to serious health risks as we breathe in that air.

It's in old homes and new homes alike. It sneaks in through openings like floor drains and sump pumps, foundation and floor cracks, and tiny gaps around pipes and enters the home because of the differences in indoor and outdoor air pressure.

As we breathe in radon gas, we're also absorbing the radioactive particles it's releasing into our lung tissue, damaging the lung's cells.

"Particle radiation from radon hits the cells of our lungs and deposits its energy there," says, Goodarzi. "It reacts with our DNA and essentially breaks it apart. When our bodies try to heal it, it can cause genetic mutations that could cause lung cancer."

"Your lung tissue is completely vulnerable," says Kelley Bush, manager of the National Radon Outreach and Engage Program for Health Canada. "With almost four-day half-life, it sticks around for a while releasing this radiation and energy."

And if the levels are high enough over a long period of time, the risks go even higher, and it can stay in our bodies for a period of five to 25 years until cancer shows up.

And like any case of lung cancer, there are no symptoms until it shows up at a deadlier stage. Bush says that, often, if caught in the early stages it's because another health issue was being scanned or tested for.

In Canada, the guideline for what's considered low risk for indoor air is 200 becquerels per cubic metre (200Bq/m³). One becquerel equals one radon atom disintegration or the emission of radiation per second.

"While the risk is lower at lower levels, with radon there is truly no safe level," says Health Canada's Bush. If your readings are 200-600 Bq/m³ mitigate within two years, above 600Bq/m³ mitigate within one year. Mitigation can usually be done within a day.

Don't hit the panic button just yet. Unlike deadly carbon monoxide or fumes from a fire that attack quickly, radon is only hazardous over time.

Still, don't wait too long. Goodarzi's research at EvictRadon.org shows it's vital that you test and reduce your amount of exposure.

Testing can be done at any time, although it's typically recommended during the winter months when the indoor air is warmer and pulls the radon in and windows are closed. But because we keep our windows closed even during the summer due to fumes from fires and with the use of air conditioning, Goodarzi says studies have shown that exposure in homes has become increasingly uniform throughout the year.

Bush is adamant that the risk is higher or equivalent to all accidental deaths, such as fire, poisoning, car crashes and drowning, combined.

"If you are changing the batteries in your smoke detector, if you are putting a lifejacket on your child when you get into a boat or your seatbelt on when you get into your car," says Bush, "then why would you not test your home for radon?"

November is National Radon Action Month in Canada and the perfect time to get your home tested.

Greg Gazin

Lettres...



Y-a-t'il vraiment une si mauvaise manière de planter des arbres?

Je suis un lecteur assidu de *Parc-Extension News* et j'apprécie l'attention que le journal accorde à l'information locale. Toutefois, je me questionne sur la place que Matias Brunet-Kirk donne aux arguments d'Alex Megelas dans l'article « Verdissement et gentrification », publié le 19 novembre 2021. Sans le nommer, l'article donne beaucoup d'importance à un rapport qui critique le programme *Vert le Nord* de l'OSBL *Ville en vert*. Le texte de M. Brunet-Kirk ne détaille pas non plus dans quel contexte le rapport a été rédigé, ni où il a été déposé. Il cite aussi, de façon anonyme, un organisateur communautaire qui ne croit pas que les intentions de *Ville en vert* « reflétaient les besoins réels des résidents ».

À mon avis, tout cet argumentaire est un peu trop flou vu l'importance des critiques envers l'organisme. Certes, les besoins des résidents de Parc-Extension, souvent de nouveaux arrivants, sont multiples et importants. Mais est-ce une raison pour exclure le verdissement et la plantation d'arbres? Peut-on vraiment être contre ces démarches en pleine crise climatique?

Les solutions proposées par le rapport sont difficilement applicables localement et pointent vers une méconnaissance des rouages politique des auteurs. En effet, quand M. Megelas suggère « de réduire la circulation des poids lourds et de collaborer avec l'industrie lourde pour réduire les émissions », il nomme des solutions globales qui concernent les paliers provinciaux et fédéraux, et qui dépassent les limites de l'arrondissement. Quant à la suggestion de « construire davantage de stationnements souterrains », il est difficile d'y voir un lien avec la réduction des îlots de chaleur que le verdissement tente de diminuer.

Il aurait été intéressant que M. Brunet-Kirk soutienne par des exemples les affirmations des auteurs du rapport quand ils affirment que « l'approche de Ville en vert reste très hiérarchisée, sans aucun mécanisme pour aider à la mise en œuvre ou au financement des initiatives de verdissement communautaire ». Comme Montréalais, ce n'est pas ce que je connais de cet organisme dont la mission environnementale est à mon avis exemplaire. De plus, l'article aurait dû donner l'occasion à Ville en vert de répliquer à ces critiques, ce qui n'a pas été fait.

En terminant, je ne peux m'empêcher de noter l'angle identitaire que prennent les commentaires de M. Megelas quand il explique à quel point les francophones « ne comprennent rien aux cultures locales que nous avons dans le quartier ». C'est simplement inexact, car plusieurs francophones œuvrent au sein d'organismes essentiels à Parc-Extension comme la Ressource Action-Alimentation de Parc-Extension, Afrique au Féminin, ou encore le Comité d'Action de Parc-Extension (CAPE). Cette vision condescendante est tout sauf productive.

Les différentes communautés qui composent Parc-Extension font la preuve depuis des années qu'il est possible de trouver un terrain commun malgré les différences. Établir un dialogue et une collaboration fructueuse demande un travail continu et des compromis, et c'est plutôt cette approche que M. Megelas devrait choisir s'il désire participer à la conversation.

Guillaume Paquin
24 novembre 2021



#NewsMatters:

The National Assembly Report

By Raquel Fletcher

COVID-19: An end in sight?

The Quebec government anticipates removing most COVID-19 health measures currently in place once 80 per cent of children aged 5 to 11 are fully vaccinated.

"When you add people between five and eleven years old, it changes the picture completely," says Premier François Legault.

Health Canada approved the use of Pfizer-BioNTech's pediatric vaccine last Friday. Quebec will unveil its plans this week to give children one dose of the vaccine by Christmas.

Approximately 88 per cent of the current eligible population of people 12 years old and over are fully vaccinated in Quebec. This week, the province will open up bookings for people 70 and over, as well as people who received two doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine, to receive a third booster shot.

The pandemic and the flu

Health Minister Christian Dubé is encouraging Quebecers who want to get a flu shot this year to make an appointment as soon as possible.

Due to a lack of volunteers to administer flu and COVID-19 shots during the Christmas holidays, availability for appointments might be limited, he says.

"With influenza and with kids that we're going to vaccinate very soon (for COVID-19), I can tell you that in December, I will not have as many vaccinators that we did at the height of the crisis this summer," the minister told reporters at the National Assembly.

Deflecting blame at coroner's inquest

A lawyer representing families of COVID-19 victims in Quebec long-term homes slammed former health minister Danielle McCann for

deflecting blame at a coroner's inquest looking into deaths during the first wave of the pandemic.

Last Thursday, McCann testified that the previous Liberal government cut hundreds of management positions in the province's CHSLDs, leading to major communication breakdowns between the ministry and workers on the ground.

The families of victims are not satisfied with the minister's testimony, said lawyer Patrick Martin-Menard, who represents the families of six victims. "It seems there is a shoveling of responsibility towards the establishments. And that is quite disturbing."

The return of the Nordiques?

After announcing a plan to get more Quebec hockey players into the NHL, Premier François Legault says there might be a role for the government to play in bringing back the Nordiques to Quebec City.

The premier has already spoken to NHL commissioner, Gary Bettman. "I told him about our interest in a return of the Nordiques. He told me he was open to meeting with us," Legault told reporters Friday.

He added that Finance Minister Eric Girard, still a fan of the Nordiques 25 years after the team moved to Colorado, would be speaking with possible investors, including Quebecor CEO Pierre Karl Peladeau.

Last week, Legault announced former NHL player Marc Denis will head a committee to study why young people are less interested in hockey than previous generations and why fewer Quebecers are playing in the sport's biggest league.

Raquel Fletcher is Global News' National Assembly Reporter

Road users be vigilant!

On November 19 2021, the Montreal police department (SPVM) held an awareness activity in Jarry Park. This activity is a part of the 100% vigilant program. Pedestrians and cyclists had the chance to view the danger zones around a heavy truck and to see the extent of the blind spots around it.

Socio community officers, neighborhood traffic safety officers from station 31, as well as road controllers from the Société de l'assurance automobile du Québec (SAAQ) were on site to discuss with citizens. More than a hundred participants were able to benefit from this experience, which was much appreciated.

Indeed, it was following two fatal accidents and an accident with a seriously injured person

involving heavy trucks in Villerey that this initiative took place.

Several important safety reminders were made to road users such as :

- Make sure you see and be seen
 - Avoid distractions
 - Do not text while driving
 - Walk on the sidewalk
 - Use the cycle paths
 - Cross at intersections
 - Observe the signs
- Road users, be vigilant!

For any questions or more information, we invite you to consult the SPVM website, under "Road safety", at the following address: spvm.qc.ca/fr/Fiches/Categories





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First meeting of newly elected Borough Council



MATIAS BRUNET-KIRK
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The borough held its regularly scheduled monthly borough council meeting last Tuesday evening, where city officials and politicians met in person to answer questions from citizens and vote on borough initiatives. The meeting also marked the first in-person council meeting since the start of the pandemic.

This week, an extraordinary city council session was also held at the start of a meeting to present and discuss the boroughs' budgetary estimates for 2022 as well as the ten-year program on fixed assets for 2022 to 2031. Elected officials also took questions from residents ranging from the Ogilvy crossing to the lack of street parking spaces.

The meeting takes place on the first Tuesday of each month and citizens can attend virtually or in person. Novembers' meeting was held

two weeks late, as the municipal election was held on Nov. 7. Citizens can also send in their questions to be answered by the mayor and city councillors.

Present were newly sworn-in borough Mayor Laurence Lavigne Lalonde and city councillors Mary Deros, Sylvain Ouellet, Josué Corvil and newly elected councillor for Villeraie Martine Musau Muele, along with city employees.

All elected officials thanked their respective electorates for going out to vote and thanked those who supported them and granted them their trust.

Budgetary previsions

The newly sworn-in council discussed budgetary previsions for 2022 that would subsequently be sent to the Executive Committee at the City of Montreal. For the coming year, the borough estimates a required budget of \$61,669,100, roughly 2.2 percent above last years' budget of \$60,365,500.

"This year we didn't dip into surpluses as much



This weeks' meeting marked the first in-person council meeting since the start of the pandemic. Photo: Borough of Villeraie—Saint-Michel—Parc-Extension

as we did last year, which is good news," said Mayor Lalonde. Priorities this year include maintaining local tax at the same level, balancing the budget and growing local revenues especially those related to the environmental transition.

This year the borough hopes to optimize its expenses related to operations, lowering them by \$433,000 while not affecting services. The borough also plans to maintain the local tax at approximately 5¢ per 100\$.

A Lean budget for a large borough

"Sometimes we say that 60 million dollars is a lot of money," said Mayor Lalonde but specified that "60 million to pay all city employees, to adequately maintain the network and to offer adequate services to our 148,000 residents, well its a budget that we have to manage wisely because there's no room for improvisation."

For every dollar spent, 18.5¢ goes to sports and recreation, 15.2¢ goes to roads and lighting and 13.4¢ to culture and libraries. The city hopes to balance services provided to citizens while also optimizing money spent on operations.

Much of the annual budget is transferred to the borough from the city centre, amounting to approximately 48 million dollars. Nearly 4

million dollars is raised locally through services like libraries and arenas, paid parking and occupation of the public domain.

Programme décennal d'immobilisations (PDI)

The new roster of politicians also presented the PDI for 2022 to 2031, which is a plan for long-term infrastructure including city buildings, roads and parks.

"Over 10-years, the borough can budget 70 million for our IDP, with 28.5 to building protection, 28 going to road rehabilitation and improvements on streets and 12.6 for the development of parks," noted Mayor Lalonde.

The mayor added that the borough could also count on extra revenue from the City of Montreal using subsidies for specific projects. In Parc-Extension, the borough wants to refurbish the Saint-Roch pool, build infrastructure to help calm traffic and redevelop Bloomfield Park.

The adoption of the decennial plan was voted on unanimously and will be presented to the City of Montreal within the coming weeks.

Question period

Following the presentation of the budgetary prevision and the PDI, the floor was opened up to citizens for a question period. This was also the first time in over 20 months that residents were allowed back into city hall to ask questions to their elected officials.

The issue of the Ogilvy crossing was again brought up by Simon Bouchard, who asked when the crossing would open to the public. It has been intermittently blocked by temporary fencing over the past weeks.

Mayor Lalonde responded saying there had been supply-chain disruption for some of the building materials. "We're going to look into reaching a temporary solution in order to keep it open," she said.

The issue of on-street parking also came up during question period, with many complaints coming from Parc-Ex residents. Resident Nada Temerinski brought up the difficulty of finding parking on Beaumont around Champagneur even with newly-implemented reserved parking. She also alleged that a mechanic shop used the street to work on cars.

Mary Deros responded saying she was aware of the situation and had herself seen the mechanic shop take up residential parking. "The information with pictures has been sent to the services, the inspectors should be doing their work anytime soon, hoping that the garages will respect to do the work in their garages and not take all the parking from the citizens," Deros said.

The next borough council meeting will be held on Tuesday, Dec 14, 2021. Residents can either tune in virtually or attend in person, space permitting.

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Première réunion du nouveau conseil d'arrondissement



MATIAS BRUNET-KIRK
matias@newsfirst.ca

L'arrondissement a tenu sa première réunion du conseil mardi soir dernier, au cours de laquelle des employés de la ville et des élus se sont réunis en personne pour répondre aux questions des citoyens et pour voter sur des initiatives. Cette réunion a également marqué la première réunion tenue en présentiel depuis le début de la pandémie.

Cette semaine, une séance extraordinaire du conseil municipal a également eu lieu pour présenter et discuter des prévisions budgétaires de l'arrondissement pour 2022 ainsi que du programme décennal sur les immobilisations pour 2022 à 2031 (PDI). Les élus ont également répondu aux questions des résidents, autant à propos du passage à niveau à Ogilvy que le manque de places de stationnement sur rue.

La réunion a lieu le premier mardi de chaque mois et les citoyens peuvent y assister virtuellement ou en personne. La réunion de novembre a eu lieu avec deux semaines de retard, considérant les élections municipales du 7 novembre. Les résidents peuvent également envoyer leurs questions pour que la mairesse et les conseillers municipaux y répondent.

La mairesse de l'arrondissement nouvellement assermenté, Laurence Lavigne Lalonde, était présente, ainsi que les conseillers de ville Mary Deros, Sylvain Ouellet, Josué Corvil et la nouvelle conseillère pour Villeray Martine Musau Muele.

Tous les élus ont remercié leurs électeurs de s'être déplacés pour voter et ont remercié ceux et celles qui les ont soutenus et leur ont accordé leur confiance.

Prévisions budgétaires

Le nouveau conseil a tout d'abord discuté des prévisions budgétaires pour 2022, qui seront ensuite transmises au comité exécutif de la Ville de Montréal. Pour l'année à venir, l'arrondissement prévoit un budget de 61 669 100 \$, soit environ 2,2 % de plus que le celui de 60 365 500 \$ de l'an dernier.

«Cette année, nous n'avons pas pigé dans les surplus autant que l'année dernière, ce qui est une bonne nouvelle», a déclaré la mairesse. Les priorités cette année sont le maintien au même niveau de la taxe locale, l'équilibre budgétaire et la croissance des revenus locaux notamment ceux liés à la transition écologique.

L'arrondissement souhaite rationaliser ses dépenses liées aux opérations, marquant une baisse de 433 000 \$. L'arrondissement prévoit également de maintenir la taxe locale à environ 5¢ par 100\$.

Petit budget, gros arrondissement

«Desfois on peut se dire que 60 millions de dollars, c'est quand même beaucoup d'argent», a remarqué la mairesse, mais a autant précisé que «60 millions pour payer tous les employés de l'arrondissement et s'assurer d'entretenir adéquatement tout ce réseau-là et offrir des services adéquats à nos 148 000 habitants, eh bien, c'est un budget qu'il faut bien gérer parce qu'on n'a pas de place à l'improvisation.»

Pour chaque dollar dépensé, 18,5 ¢ vont aux sports et aux loisirs, 15,2 ¢ aux routes et à l'éclairage et 13,4 ¢ à la culture et aux bibliothèques. La ville espère équilibrer les services offerts aux citoyens tout en optimisant

l'argent dépensé sur les opérations.

Une grande partie du budget annuel est transférée à l'arrondissement par la ville-centre, soit environ 48 millions de dollars. Près de 4 millions de dollars sont recueillis localement grâce à des services comme les bibliothèques et les arénas, le stationnement payant et l'occupation du domaine public.

Programme décennal d'immobilisations (PDI)

Le nouveau conseil a également présenté le PDI pour les années 2022 à 2031, un plan pour les infrastructures à long terme, telles que les bâtiments de la ville, les routes et les parcs.

«Pour l'arrondissement sur 10 ans ça représente 70 millions notre PDI. Il y en a 28.5M protection des immeubles, 28M qui est pour la réfection routière et les aménagements sur les rues et 12.6M pour réaménagement des parcs.», a souligné la mairesse Lalonde.

La mairesse a ajouté que l'arrondissement pourrait aussi compter sur des revenus supplémentaires de la part de la Ville de Montréal qui offre des subventions pour des projets spécifiques. Dans Parc-Extension, l'arrondissement souhaite réaménager la piscine Saint-Roch, construire des infrastructures pour apaiser la circulation et réaménager le parc Bloomfield.

L'adoption du plan décennal a été votée à l'unanimité et sera présentée à la Ville de Montréal dans les prochaines semaines.

Période de questions

Suite à la présentation de la prévision budgétaire et du PDI, la parole a été donnée aux citoyens pour une période de questions. C'était également la première fois en plus de 20 mois que les résidents étaient autorisés à revenir à l'hôtel de ville pour participer en présentiel.

La question du passage à niveau Ogilvy a de nouveau été soulevée par Simon Bouchard, qui a demandé quand le passage serait ouvert au public. Celui-ci a encore été bloqué au cours des dernières semaines par des clôtures temporaires.

La mairesse Lalonde a répondu qu'il y avait eu des perturbations dans l'approvisionnement de certains matériaux de construction. «Nous allons chercher à trouver une solution temporaire afin de garder le passage ouvert», a-t-elle déclaré.

La question du stationnement sur rue a également été soulevée pendant la période de questions, avec de nombreuses plaintes de résidents de Parc-Ex. La résidente Nada Temerinski a évoqué la difficulté de trouver du stationnement sur Beaumont autour de Champagneur, même avec des zones de vignettes nouvellement mises en place. Elle a également affirmé qu'un garagiste utilisait la rue pour travailler sur des voitures.

Mary Deros a répondu qu'elle était au courant de la situation et qu'elle avait elle-même vu les garagistes occuper du stationnement résidentiel. «L'information avec des photos a été envoyée aux services, les inspecteurs devraient faire leur travail d'ici peu, en espérant que les garagistes respecteront de faire le travail dans leurs garages et ne prendront pas tout le stationnement des citoyens», a déclaré Deros.

La prochaine réunion du conseil d'arrondissement aura lieu le mardi 14 décembre 2021. Les résidents peuvent soit suivre la réunion virtuellement, soit y assister en personne, si l'espace le permet.

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garde nos _____
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Parc-Ex Curry Kitchen

Local initiative connects home cooks with hungry customers



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Parc-Extension is a destination for its delicious food. From South Asian, to Greek, to pan-continental African cuisines, the neighbourhood's restaurants and eateries attract hungry customers from across the island.

But a new local initiative is hoping to expand on Parc-Extensions reputation for delicious food to more than just restaurants and cafes. Park-Ex Curry Kitchen recently opened as a catering service that connects customers to a group of women who cook homemade South Asian dishes.

Founded by Leonora Indira King, a McGill Ph.D. student and recent candidate for city council with Quartiers Montréal, the mutual aid initiative provides a means of financial support for women in Parc-Extension who face employment barriers because of their precarious immigration status.

With a broad menu of flavourful curries that can be either picked up or delivered, the service works with several local women who cook dishes for customers from home.

Parc-Ex Curry Kitchen

The home cooks participating in the project prepare the orders at the end of the week and customers can either pick them up on Friday afternoons at *La Place Commune*, on the corner Querbes and Saint-Roch or have them delivered to their home for a small fee.

With over 15 dishes on the menu, people can choose from several South Asian recipes from chana masala, a spicy chickpea curry, to palak paneer, a flavourful curry made with spinach and Indian cheese. People can also add portions to their order and have them donated to a local family in need.

Helping immigrant women

King is a community-based researcher with Concordias' Office of Community Engagement and is also volunteers with Afrique au Féminin and Briquer par Briquer. The idea to start Parc-Ex Curry Kitchen came out of Kings' experience hosting integration workshops through Afrique au Féminin with newly-arrived immigrant women.

King and one of her colleagues came up with the idea as they wanted to finish their workshops off with something fun. "I knew that all the women there were such master chefs," said King, explaining that she had then "got a little bit of funds from Concordia to pay a woman after the end of each workshop to host a cooking class."

"One of the big issues that came up was that these women struggle with financial autonomy and finding work," said King, noting that there were still many barriers to employment like language, precarious immigration status, access to daycare and having to stay at home to care for children.

"It was great to empower the women and get them a little bit of money doing it," noted King, adding that the initiative not only gave these women some extra money but also helped them develop their entrepreneurial and professional skills.

Feeding others

The project also offers a food-aid program, where people can buy meals for local families or seniors who are experiencing food insecurity. Customers can choose to donate half of their order to a person in need of food and Parc-Ex Curry Kitchen will deliver it to them.

"I extended it to delivering these meals to elders," explained King, highlighting that "it was



Founder Leonora Indira King is a McGill Ph.D. student and recent candidate for city council with Quartiers Montréal.
Photo: Parc-Ex Curry Kitchen

really great because not only were these elders getting free food but they were also benefited from a visit."

She added that this aspect of Parc-Ex Curry Kitchen brought much-needed comfort to those they served. One particularly touching instance was that of a father of two who had just lost his wife to cancer.

Parc-Ex Curry Kitchen began delivering meals to the family as the children were often asking their father to cook meals their Indian mother had made them. "We were able to give him and his children meals that were not exactly similar to their moms, but somewhat similar to their moms," said King.

Mutual aid

Parc-Ex Curry Kitchen is another example of the vast array of mutual aid initiatives that have cropped up across Parc-Extension. Mutual aid is different from typical charity-based community initiatives as they work with the voluntary and reciprocal exchange of resources and services for mutual benefit.

King would like to see different strategies to address some of the issues in the neighbourhood. "I feel that Parc-Extension already has a lot of movements and it makes me really proud to see that in this neighbourhood people do come together to help each other and to help the community," explained King.

"I think the next step that we want to do is move into having them run it themselves," said King on the future of the project, adding that the entrepreneurial skills the women have acquired through Parc-Ex Curry Kitchen will help them expand.

"I encourage more residents to get out there and help others who are less fortunate and let's work together to see how we can benefit more people together," concluded King.

Volunteers and supporters celebrate FILIA Day after a two-year hiatus

Photos: Martin C. Barry, Newsfirst Multimedia

Guests included city councillor Mary Deros and Senator Leo Housakos



MARTIN C. BARRY
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For the first time in two years, volunteers and supporters of the Park Extension Association of Senior Citizens – better known as FILIA – gathered at the Château Royal in Laval on the afternoon of Sunday Nov. 21 for a celebration that everyone associated with the group has come to know as FILIA Day.

As has been the case for so many other organizations, COVID-19 sanitary restrictions made it impossible to hold FILIA Day last year. In keeping with a Greek community tradition, the event is held annually close to or on the actual date (Nov. 21) of the Presentation of the Theotokos.

There was wine, a multi-course meal, some great Greek music provided by a DJ, and a great mood settled down upon all the FILIA supporters.

Honoured guests

Among the guests were Senator Leo Housakos, Liberal MP for Saint-Laurent Emmanuella Lambropoulos, Montreal city councillor for Park Extension Mary Deros and Laval city councillor for L'Abord-à-Plouffe Vasilios Karidogiannis. Although she was unable to attend, Laval city councillor for Souvenir-Labelle Sandra El-Helou sent a letter of greeting and praise for FILIA which was read out.

"We are starting again because we have to start not only to celebrate FILIA Day, but people have to get used to beginning normal life again, especially the seniors who are a little more hesitant because they are concerned about Covid," said FILIA executive-director Johanna Tsoublekas.

New beginning for FILIA

Although the organizers welcomed more than 100 guests, they were far fewer than would normally be the case because of the restrictions. "This is a new beginning," Tsoublekas added. "We are very satisfied with the turnout."

Senator Housakos presented Tsoublekas with a Senate of Canada certificate of recognition for her exemplary leadership and dedication to community service.

"Johanna has given forty years of her life to community service, volunteerism – she represents the best of the best in the Hellenic community and the greater Montreal and Quebec communities," Housakos said in an interview. "As a Hellene, I'm so proud of her



During the FILIA Day event last Sunday, executive-director Johanna Tsoublekas was presented with a Senate of Canada certificate of recognition by Senator Leo Housakos.

and of the hard work she puts in and what she's accomplished with FILIA in the service of helping senior citizens. It's just outstanding."

A common mission

The afternoon's featured speaker, Shield of Athena executive-director Melpa Kamateros, gave a detailed presentation on some of the difficulties that non-profit community organizations encounter. FILIA and Shield of Athena have worked together for years for a common purpose.

Deros said she too felt very proud of Tsoublekas's organization which was founded and remains based in Park Extension, even though it has gradually been establishing new roots in Chomedey/Laval where growing numbers of Park Extension Greeks are migrating.

She said FILIA played a key role assisting senior citizens during the Covid pandemic. "Our seniors were isolated and couldn't see their grandchildren or their children," said Deros. "But Johanna provided that human touch on a weekly basis, keeping everybody in touch and making sure they knew that everything was alright. So, I congratulate her for everything she does for the seniors in Park Ex and in Laval."

A growing impact in Laval

Karidogiannis said, "The needs are here as well, and we're happy to have Johanna and her



Special guests at last Sunday's FILIA Day included (from the left) Saint-Laurent MP Emmanuella Lambropoulos, Laval city councillor for L'Abord-à-Plouffe Vasilios Karidogiannis and his spouse Sheyda, Senator Leo Housakos, and Montreal city councillor for Park Extension Mary Deros and her spouse Peter.



A happy group of FILIA supporters are seen during last Sunday's event with Senator Leo Housakos and Park Extension city council Mary Deros.

organization here and we support her a hundred per cent. My council colleague, Mme El-Helou, is a huge supporter of her. Johanna is one of the ladies I have come to admire. She says things as they are, she finds out what is needed and she gets it done. She is a true force of nature."

While noting that Ottawa is always ready to provide FILIA with support when necessary,

Emmanuella Lambropoulos said, "For all these years, Johanna Tsoublekas has been leading an extraordinary organization that does very important work in the community. It's important for all community leaders and all organizations and all Greeks who can afford it to support this organization."



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Christmas gifts for local youth

Centre Jeunesse Unie holds online fundraiser after funding is cut



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With the holiday season fast approaching, many people across the neighbourhood are beginning to prepare for family celebrations and starting their Christmas shopping for gifts they will share with their families.

The holiday spirit is just as alive at Centre Jeunesse Unie on Bloomfield, which is currently preparing holiday activities. Celebrations and gifts are a yearly happening at the centre with local youth looking forward to it all year.

Pamela Baptiste is a social worker and a part-time volunteer at the centre, mentoring a small group of girls. Every year she organizes a holiday party for them and gives them gifts to celebrate the holiday season.

But with the loss of a portion of their funding this year, Baptiste has been forced to recalibrate how the centre pays for the presents they usually give out. She started a GoFundMe campaign in hopes of keeping celebrations alive this year.

Holiday celebrations

Baptiste works with a group of about a dozen girls every Saturday, promoting their participation in activities at the centre and mentoring them on a wide variety of subjects.

"They often have parents that are a little stricter with rules not always the same between the boys and the girls," explained Baptiste, adding that hosting the workshop on Saturdays gave them more liberties and time to see each other.

"Every year when there are special events like Christmas, we have a party with the girls," she said, adding it's "something the girls love and it's an opportunity for them to celebrate Christmas seeing as they often don't celebrate it at home."

"They grew up in Quebec and got to know the customs, Christmas has become more commercial than religious," explained Baptiste, saying the girls found it important to celebrate.

Fundraised gifts

Due to changes in government funding to the centre, they were forced to cut down on some of the Christmas activities planned for this year. "We don't have the funds to offer them Christmas gifts," said Baptiste.

She took matters into her own hands and raise money on her own. She set up a GoFundMe page with the fundraising objective of \$550. Since it was created on Nov. 13, the page has raised \$420 through 12 separate donations and is fast approaching its goal.

"I told myself I could start a GoFundMe to be able to offer them Christmas presents," she added, highlighting that "it would be their only

opportunity to celebrate Christmas and get presents like last year. They really loved it and had a lot of fun, it brings them so much joy."

"We will organize a Christmas party during our girls' activity and would like to give them a present for their hard work and participation all year long," reads the description. The fundraiser is still open and those who are interested can [donate](#) any amount they please up to Dec. 1.

Funding issues

Although the fundraiser is going well, the ordeal begs the question of why it is that Parc-Extension's only youth centre does not have enough funds to host a Christmas party for 12 girls.

According to the centres' Director-General Richard Vachon, the issue can be attributed to a change in policy implemented last year. "We lost about \$40,000 through a fund that comes from the provincial government and is subsequently distributed by the municipality," explained Vachon, specifying they had been receiving the funding since 2002.

"The city rethought its way of distributing money in the borough and it resulted in Parc-Extension's share reducing," he added, highlighting that it accounted for a large proportion of their total annual budget currently set at around \$300,000.

Vachon felt it was a shame as he had the impression the borough considered the centre an important project. "Other organizations that are quite big have kept their funding," continued Vachon remarking that organizations like PEYO have kept their financing of \$40,000.

Political decisions

The centre was founded in 1989 with the express objective of providing a space for youth in Parc-Extension while also promoting an environment of non-violence. What Vachon deplores is the stagnating budget, worth about half of what it was when the centre was founded.

"In 1989 the financing was \$60,000 and today we're still at \$60,000," he remarked, adding that it has remained the same over the years regardless of the increase in the cost of living. He said that this made it very difficult to maintain the same level of service.

"What I've lost over the last thirty years is stability in the social worker who works with the girls," he said, adding that "in a sense, it's the girls who have missed out." He added that the borough could follow the lead of Rosemont and index their budget to account for inflation.

He stressed that this was not about resources but rather political will. "Is youth in Parc-Extension in 2021 worth 50% less than in 1989?" he asked. "It frustrates me to my core."

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Pamela Baptiste is organizing this fundraiser

Created November 13, 2021 | Community & Neighbors

\$420 of \$550 goal

12 donors

Share

Donate now

This fundraiser is located near you

Jonah Campbell

\$500 - 10

Lyne Cholette

\$20 - 34

See all

See top donations

The fundraiser has raised \$420 through 12 separate donations and is fast approaching its goal. Photo: Pamela Baptiste via GoFundMe

HOROSCOPE

Week of **NOVEMBER 14 TO 20, 2021**

The luckiest signs this week:
VIRGO, LIBRA AND SCORPIO



ARIES

You'll be a chatterbox this week, but luckily there will always be someone around who wants to talk. At work, you'll expand your clientele considerably, and you might even make some new friends.



TAURUS

You'll find some money tucked away, perhaps in the pocket of an old ski jacket that you forgot about last year. In your love life, you need to communicate more openly, if only to receive the affection you desire.



GEMINI

You'll start to plan various events that you need to attend in the near future. If you're feeling a heavy emotional weight on your shoulders, some self-reflection would probably do you good.



CANCER

Silence can often be worth more than words. You have an extraordinary well of creativity to draw upon. The comfort you feel at home will allow you to create a work of art or open yourself up to a spiritual practice.



LEO

Some friendships don't deserve your attention, so you may need to clean up your social circle. You'll take a liking to some of your colleagues as you collaborate on a project and take on a leadership role.



VIRGO

It's normal to want to celebrate after accomplishing a feat or completing a major project. That's why you won't hesitate to join in on any festivities organized by your co-workers or loved ones.



LIBRA

You need to have fun, and procrastination is in the air. Remember that relaxation is necessary at times. Afterward, you'll be able to move forward with more determination and avoid any kind of delays or distractions.



SCORPIO

If your family is scattered across the country, you'll start to plan a wonderful holiday tour to visit everyone. Alternatively, you'll consider going on vacation with your loved ones.



SAGITTARIUS

You're a master in the art of negotiation. At work or elsewhere, you'll successfully reach an agreement on the financing for a project. You might find yourself afraid to disappoint those around you.



CAPRICORN

You'll have a successful week, especially if you work in sales. You'll see an increase in customers to the point where management will have no choice but to promote you. You'll also be good at managing the little details.



AQUARIUS

At work, it's important to have a put-together look so you can present yourself in the best light. Being able to joke around will also be well received by your superiors. In love, passion leads to commitment.



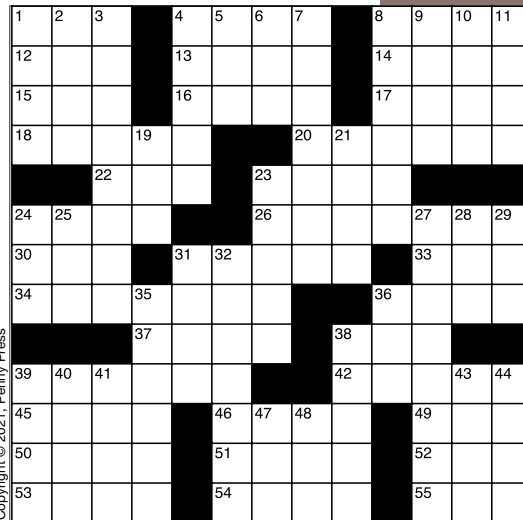
PISCES

You'll have a few small family matters to take care of. Don't hesitate to talk openly about them, as silence can increase the risk of miscommunication at home. You may have to work late into the evening this week.

Coffee Break

CROSSWORDS

PUZZLE NO. 103



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ACROSS

1. Snaky curve
4. Lead actor
8. As well
12. Dove's cry
13. Contend (with)
14. Lived
15. Deli purchase
16. Great Barrier ____
17. Speed competition
18. "Carmen," e.g.
20. Explodes
22. "____ Sawyer"
23. Riding whip
24. Hot and dry
26. Furnaces
30. Jamaican product
31. Sobbed
33. As of now
34. Bent down
36. Tariff
37. Flower receptacle
38. Favorite

39. Spicy sausage
42. Uprisings
45. Cattle stick
46. Large truck
49. Mine shipment
50. Skin affliction
51. Wood source
52. Monkey suit
53. Cast off, as skin
54. Hourglass filler
55. Yo!

19. Lightning ____
21. Path
23. Scold
24. Flood boat
25. Trot
27. Upper canine
28. Accelerate in neutral
29. Swine home
31. Closemouthed person
32. Withstands
35. Avoided
36. Flower garland
38. Used a crowbar
39. Luxury hotels
40. Curve
41. Only
43. Factual
44. Alluring
47. Age of note
48. "Of Mice and ____"

DOWN

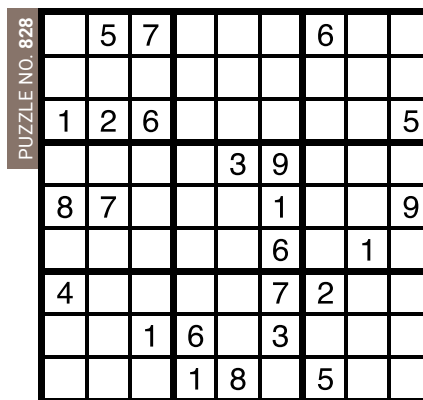
- Repeat
2. Bath bar
 3. At a future date
 4. Vamoose
 5. Foot end
 6. Monkey's cousin
 7. Hockey official
 8. Sudden
 9. Dancer's jump
 10. Religious faction
 11. Small numbers

Sudoku

HOW TO PLAY:

Fill in the grid so that every row, every column, and every 3x3 box contains the numbers 1 through 9 only once.

Each 3x3 box is outlined with a darker line. You already have a few numbers to get you started. Remember: **You must not repeat the numbers 1 through 9 in the same line, column, or 3x3 box.**

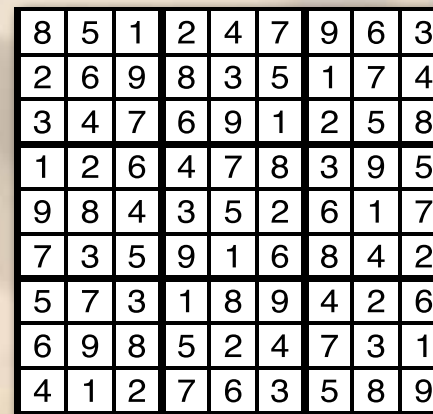


Last Issues' Answers

CROSSWORDS



Sudoku



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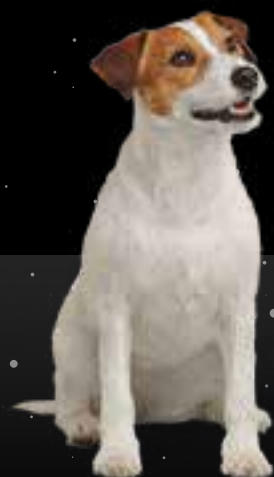
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