

Police to CSLers: Don't drop your guard against theft



By Joel Goldenberg
The Suburban

Côte St. Luc is one of the safest communities on the island, but residents should still be vigilant against individuals targeting them for theft, says Station 9's Lieutenant Bryan Cunningham.

Cunningham told Councillor Mike Cohen's District 2 meeting that local seniors are currently being targeted at local shopping establishments by thieves who want to steal their wallets.

"They do it in a very clever way, they'll distract the senior, talk to the person and, in the meantime, a second person will come and take it away, or whenever you go to a food court and you sit down, put your purse down and feel secure, they could be sitting behind you and someone can be sent to grab the wallet and get away."

Similar incidents took place more than a year ago at the Wilderton Shopping Centre in Côte des Neiges.

"We're working on this, but it's always something that keeps happening," the lieutenant said. "If you know people going

[to local establishments], always advise them to be careful with their belongings, keep them where you can see them, and don't rely on the impression of being totally secure."

Cunningham added that there have been thefts in cars at night.

"Most of the time, they'll steal the garage door opener, open the garage and go inside the house. We had a few bicycles stolen. Sometimes they find keys and go away with the car and take a joyride. We're waiting for fingerprints and video evidence, so we should be able to close that case soon. And most of the time, the thieves went into the cars because they were left unlocked."

Hampstead Councillor Harvey Shaffer warned town residents several times not to leave their garage door openers in their cars, if they are parked outdoors.

Cunningham said Station 9 serves the safest community in Montreal — Côte St. Luc, Hampstead and Montreal West.

"But don't get the impression that because it is the safest, nothing ever happens. Remind your neighbours to always lock their doors." ■

COUNCILS

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Hampstead and Montreal West — are officially recognized bilingual municipalities. St. Laurent has been officially francophone, both as a city and now as a Montreal borough.

In Côte St. Luc and Montreal West, the meetings are generally conducted in English, as the majority of those who attend are anglophones. Questions are answered in the language of the questioner — some residents have asked questions in French in Côte St. Luc and Montreal West. And in both places, one or two agenda items are dealt with in French.

Hampstead's council agenda is dealt with totally in English, and a question in French is a rarity.

During St. Laurent's time as a city, at least from 1989 to 2001, council meetings were conducted mostly in French, and questions were answered in the language of the questioner, as they are today. One exception was an extraordinarily emotional meeting in which St. Laurent debated the Staying Canadian resolutions

before a standing room-only crowd — in the aftermath of the 1995 close separation referendum — and statements were made by various councillors in both French and English.

The other exceptions were the occasionally ferocious and colourful debates between then-councillors Irving Grundman and Alan DeSousa — they were so colorful that the debaters evidently found it preferable to use English to express themselves.

Now, as there are pretty much no debates between St. Laurent borough councillors, the agenda — non-question period — portion of the meeting these days is mostly French. There are a couple of exceptions, one is Mayor Alan DeSousa's instructions to residents regarding question periods, which are stated totally bilingually, and DeSousa's explanation of some agenda items, if he feels they are of particular interest to English-speaking borough residents.

Notwithstanding St-Hilaire's call for totally French council meetings, in Montreal, there are common-sense exceptions where English is used. ■

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