

VARS COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION / ASSOCIATION COMMUNAUTAIRE DE VARS

Annual General Meeting / Assemblée générale annuelle

28 sept 2018, Parc Alcide Trudeau Park

President's report / Rapport du Président - Gary Larocque

- Good evening, bonsoir, and welcome to the 2018 VCA's Annual General Meeting.
- Firstly, I wish to thank my colleagues, members of the VCA for their committed hard work for our community as well as all residents and supporters who have come forward to give us a hand in ensuring the best interests of our community.
- I wish to take a few moments to run down the activities that your association has been involved with over the past year.
- We have held monthly meetings, where as a team, we have reviewed issues, projects, concerns and priorities of interest for the village.
- Each member has had numerous one-on-one meetings with residents, our elected representatives, potential entrepreneurs and City officials to determine what else can be done to improve our village.
- Over the year, we have been involved with;
 - o The Remembrance Day ceremony
 - o Cenotaph maintenance
 - o Rink management
 - o Canada Day celebrations supporting the Optimist Club
 - o Alcide Trudeau Park construction proposal which is still being contemplated, pending funding
 - o Key agent for Alcide Trudeau Park and Bearbrook centre
 - o Summer youth program which has been postponed again this year due to lack of registrations
 - o Community garden maintenance which is somewhat being used
 - o The annual Christmas tree lighting
- Obviously, we did not do all of this alone nor did we do just that. While we have many friends throughout the community, our main partners have been Councillor Blais, his staff, especially Jason Coulas, and City officials, the school and most of all, the Optimist Club members.
- On the financial side, the VCA is in good financial health. We had decided to split our savings under different categories for better management and planning exercises. The VCA receives very limited funding other than from the City for specific activities like the rink and key agent. Over the years, while we have sponsored community activities and acquired some items for the community, we still manage to have some \$29,000 in the bank.
- We are in good business standing with Corporations Canada as well as with Revenue Canada, having filed our corporate tax returns on time.
- We are keeping an eye on the proposed development of the Taggart-Miller waste recovery plant as we now have VCA representation on the community steering committee.

- The establishment of Amazon in our backyard will certainly be beneficial for our economic growth and market value for our properties.
- With the recent weather devastations in our region, the VCA, with the cooperation of the school, parishes, local firefighters and City officials, is launching the process for an emergency preparedness program for our community and will allocate some funds to this initiative, just in case the misfortunes come our way ...!
- We have hosted these community BBQs and movie night in the park events to bring the community closer together. This compliments the terrific work already done by the school and the Optimist Club in support of our community social wellbeing.
- The VCA has been working with the Carlsbad Springs Community Association in developing a community radio station to serve our community. This would be a perfect communication tool for the village especially during emergencies.
- We are still working with city officials to replace our signage information board at the park or fire station for an electronic module, facilitating our messaging to the community.
- We have supported the school and city officials in finding a secured access to our school premises for the now 5 school buses that park in front of the school as well as for the drop off of the children by parents.
- The VCA had contemplated seeking funding for a tennis court at Casandra Park. However, this would be a “nice to have” as no funding seems available at this time for this project.
- The biggest challenge remains finding volunteers. We do notice that not only for the VCA but also the Optimist Club and parish organizations are having more and more trouble finding community members to help out. The solution is not that obvious and we all need urgent help in finding ways to increase community participation, otherwise programs will fall short. A perfect example is the Market Mobile initiative and to some extent the summer youth program.
- We are putting a special call out to students who require community work hours to complete their curriculum. We also need community input on what will make our village better, both economically and socially, for the benefit of all, young and old.
- While Vars is a so-called bedroom community, it is expanding with many new and young families. We are most fortunate to have the St-Guillaume school at our disposal and the terrific group of committed teachers to help out. Every single one of us makes the community what it is and we only can shape its future through our participation and ideas. This is what the VCA is all about. Merci.