Potton receives visit from Stephane Tremblay, Deputy General Manager of the CIUSSS De L’estrie-CHUS

By Jean-Marie Dubois (Université de Sherbrooke) and Gérard Cote (Lennoxville-Ascot Historical and Museum Society)

The story of Atto-Beaver Park began in 1955 when residents of the St. Francis Street neighborhood established the Atto Beaver Club. The aim was to provide sporting facilities for the youth. Largely from families of veterans settled there since the end of World War II, the park was left with three part-time doctors and the fragility of the medical services offered became a concern for many. Potton Mayor, Jacques Marcoux has long voiced his concerns in this regard and has stayed vigilant in his efforts to keep Potton’s health needs at the forefront and a priority to the Health Board.

There have been a variety of changes to services and personnel at the Potton CLSC service point over the past few years where some 4000 live files exist of those requiring medical services. With some services being moved to more centralized service centers in larger areas, some of the services that Potton residents were able to access locally in the past must now be sought elsewhere. It is important to note that when we speak of Health Services, we are talking about both physical and mental well-being.

The purpose of Thursdays visit for Dr. Tremblay and Mr. Deslisle was twofold: one, to get a clearer picture of the health care situation and needs in Potton and two, to assure the community that the Health Board has every intention of keeping the local service points like Potton’s open and thriving.

“It is and has been a priority for us to bring additional doctors to Potton,” said Dr. Tremblay. “I can assure the population that we are doing everything in our power to make this happen,” he added.

With the recent cut in doctors and services in the Lac Brome/Knowlton area, and the fact that one Potton CLSC doctor is on a leave (leaving 50 of his 500 patients needing more urgent follow-up being covered by the remaining two doctors), some local residents are finding themselves on a very long waiting list to find a regular doctor.

“Our first priority has to be to stabilize things,” said Tremblay. “We must look at the entire situation and come up with a plan that will work and our focus is on the proximity of services as this is of the utmost importance; Potton is a priority.”

Thursday’s meeting brought with it one very clear message: the ear of the Director General is open and his intentions are sincere in his plan to improve the health services in Memphrémagog. The task at hand is a big one and while patience is necessary, the urgency is very clear. Dr. Tremblay does not mince words and functions with a very transparent and direct approach.

It has been over four years since hundreds of Potton residents wrote letters sent to the Commissioner of Complaints at the CIUSSS de l’Estrie-CHUS expressing their concerns in regards to Potton’s health services. The continuous efforts of the “Comité de Vigie” (Watchdog committee) of the Memphrémagog Hospital assures that the needs in regards to the health system remain a priority. The recent meeting in Potton made it clear that these efforts have not been made in vain.

A park of the Borough of Lennoxville named after the Atto-Beaver Club (1955-1973)

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The park is a green space of almost the same size as the park borders it to the north. There is a pond in this area, which fills an old sand pit. A trail network goes around the pond and leads to the park. About 1995, volleyball courts were added. Then the multipurpose trail of the Route Verte Saint-François corridor crossed part of the park. Later, in 1996, L’Envolley volleyball club was established. The baseball field was replaced in 2005-2006 by three beach volleyball courts. And in 2007, play equipment for children was installed. A third and larger service building was erected in 2011 in order to better serve the teams and the Sherbrooke City Council officially named it the Cecil-Dougherty Service Building in 2012.

Cecil Dougherty, Mayor of Lennoxville from 1967 to 1985 (Courtesy of Sylvia Coates)

Atto family farm house around 1904 (Courtesy of Lennoxville-Ascot Historical and Museum Society)