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Kirkland launches e-forum for complaints

iCare can be accessed from city's website

By **Kristin Morency, The Suburban**

Kirkland residents now have an easier way to send their requests and complaints to city hall, thanks to iCare, an online system the city launched this past Monday.

Kirkland is the first municipality on the island of Montreal to use a web-based program to improve communications between a town and its residents.

iCare can be accessed from the Kirkland website (www.ville.kirkland.qc.ca), or by calling the city.

According to Kirkland spokesperson Lise Payette, issuing a complaint via iCare allows for the problem to be addressed more efficiently than sending it by e-mail.

"We have a library of about 250 to 300 complaints," Payette said.

"A complaint could be anything from not having the garbage picked up, to the park being dirty, or insufficient lighting on the sports field," she said.

"Each [problem] has been pre-established... Which means that we've already established who will take care of it, and what will be done. So right away when a resident sends a complaint, all the people involved in resolving the problem will receive an e-mail. And also, the resident receives an e-mail, acknowledging the complaint was received. They get a link, and they can go to it to see how it's being resolved and if it's progressing," Payette said.

Essentially, residents "can't say we're sleeping," she said.

Residents also get an estimated amount of time it will take to resolve the issue.

"It could take one day to 60 days depending on the problem."

The iCare system cost the city \$20,000 to install, Payette said.

It was installed by Techtra, a company that specializes in business process management and integration solutions.

"Now we'll have a better understanding of all residents' complaints and... we'll have established procedures -- all the same steps will be taken and all the same people will take care of it. And during the vacation, when someone replaces someone, they can go online and see what the complaints are and take care of them. We'll also have archives so we can do reports and get statistics, which we wouldn't have before," Payette said.

"If a resident says, 'I complained two months ago,' we can go back and see how it was resolved and what steps were taken and who took care of it."

2007-09-12 10:43:03