EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE

QUESTION PERIOD

Minute No. 500
In reference to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) Conference, held recently in St. John's, Newfoundland, Councillor Gerbasi asked His Worship why he was absent from the conference and whether would he reiterate his support for FCM which has secured money through its initiatives for transit, housing, and a possible gas tax.

His Worship Mayor Katz responded that the City was very well represented and noted that the Acting Deputy Mayor, Councillor Steeves, who is also the second Vice President of FCM, along with seven other City Councillors, represented the City of Winnipeg. He added that he was meeting in the very near future with Ministers to ensure that Winnipeg secures the monies that it needs to address citizens' concerns.

Councillor Gerbasi inquired if His Worship would acknowledge that any new infrastructure dollars should go to promote environmental sustainable initiatives, to which His Worship advised that he would fight and champion for what is best for the City of Winnipeg and the Province of Manitoba. He further added that there were many other Federal Government initiatives whereby Winnipeg could meet Kyoto needs and demands.

Councillor Gerbasi inquired why the 2005 Capital Budget for regional and local streets was $5 million less than in 2004 to which His Worship replied that you cannot spend what you do not have. He further added that the idea was to get more growth revenues from the other levels of government, noting that the City was still working with both senior levels to find new ways to become creative and find new sources of revenue.

Councillor Benham questioned if the Red Tape Commission recommendations would be subject to the full Committee and Council process before proceeding. His Worship replied that the Red Tape Commission ensured they had input from all Councillors by conducting seminars or interviews with Councillors to make sure that everyone could have input and be aware of the recommendations.

Councillor Benham asked Councillor Magnifico, as Chair of the Red Tape Commission, what continuing role he would have in pursuing his own recommendations once the Red Tape Commission report was accepted as information.

Councillor Magnifico advised that his Chairmanship of the Red Tape Committee was over and that the Mayor's Office now had responsibility for the project; he further noted that he would be, along with everyone else, looking to see that the recommendations were implemented for the sake of the City and its future.

Executive Policy Committee – Question Period (continued)

Councillor Benham questioned why it took the Mayor more than a year to release his appointment calendar and that when it was released, all matters of substance were blacked out, and further questioned who he was meeting with and why the public could not have access to that information.

His Worship advised that he was not aware, nor involved, with the request as it went through administration and the legal services department for response. He noted that Legal Services made a decision that there were certain things that should not be made public.

Councillor Swandel questioned if the $17 million dollars that was transferred from the Sewer Utility into the General Capital Fund, for investment in recreation and leisure facilities, could be accessed this year or would it be necessary to go through another budget process to initiate any new projects.

His Worship stated that the $43 million tri-level funding agreement for Recreation and Leisure Facilities was one of the most exciting progress moments to occur in a long time. He further added that although the commitments had been made, it was important to ensure that the funds actually flow before beginning any new projects. He added that the $43 million dollars would probably be available for the projects over a three to five year period of time.

Councillor Swandel inquired at what point the City of Winnipeg would transfer the $17 million dollars from the sewer utility for investment in recreation and leisure facilities to which His Worship responded that he would obtain that information and pass along the particulars.

Councillor Gerbasi questioned why the issue of the frontage levy, which could have brought $10 million dollars per year for fixing streets, was not brought forward for discussion with all of Council and requested His Worship to release the administrative briefing information pertaining to that matter. His Worship responded that if that report was available from the administration, he would be happy to share it.

Councillor Gerbasi requested that the administrative report on garbage user fees, which also addresses autobins in the Fort Rouge-East Fort Garry Ward, be made available to all Members of Council to which His Worship advised that he would look into the matter and respond back.

Councillor Gerbasi questioned when there would be an answer about the Humane Society, their funding and policies that would reduce the number of cats that were being euthanized. His Worship replied that he had met with the Humane Society, and that hopefully, after further conversations take place, a potential solution could be arrived at.