EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTE

QUESTION PERIOD

Minute No. 574

Councillor Magnifico referenced the filing of audited financial statements by Mayoralty and Councillor candidates, noting that statements are to be filed by a certain date or candidates could be fined up to $5,000.00. He further noted that no one has ever been fined by the City even though there were persons who, in the last election, did not submit their statements. He questioned if this practice would be changed.

His Worship Mayor Katz responded that the Executive Policy Committee had passed a motion to review the matter.

Councillor Gerbasi noted that the Humane Society would stop taking trapped cats as of September 1, 2005, if Council did not respond to their concerns about the high number of cats being euthanized, and questioned what the Mayor intended to do.

His Worship replied that he would be speaking with Human Society representatives to review some items before the week was over.

Councillor Gerbasi further questioned if there was anything that could be done before September when the Society would stop taking the cats.

His Worship stated that the last meeting with representatives of the Humane Society was very positive and noted although Council was entering its prorogue period, he would be here and would continue to have meetings on the issue to try and find a resolution.

Councillor Gerbasi requested an update on negotiations with Minister Godfrey regarding gas tax monies to which His Worship responded that he had a very positive meeting with the Minister in Ottawa and was hopeful that there would be positive movement before the end of September.

Councillor Benham asked if the Mayor supported the mosquito control policy passed by Council in March, to which His Worship replied that all of Council voted unanimously in favour of the policy.

Councillor Benham asked if the Mayor believed that the City's policy regarding nuisance mosquitoes was followed this year up until the time the Province issued a public health order regarding mosquitoes that may carry the West Nile Virus, to which His Worship replied in the affirmative.

Councillor Benham questioned if the Mayor believed that a special meeting of the Standing Policy Committee on Protection and Community Services should be held to review implementation of the policy and the communication strategy surrounding it.

His Worship replied that he was extremely disappointed in the communication that occurred between the department, the public and Councillors and thought that there was significant room for improvement.

Councillor Swandel noted that summertime river levels and summertime rain events were proving disastrous to the City in that the City's system is designed to serve spring run-off and spring river levels. He questioned what, if anything, could the Mayor do to help address this problem.

His Worship replied that Winnipeg was not the only community having serious problems with basement sewer flooding. He advised that he and Brandon Mayor Burgess would discuss the matter of overland flooding and sewer back-up with the Prime Minister at an upcoming function.

Councillor Swandel questioned if the Mayor would consider having conversations with the Province of Manitoba to look at the tight timelines in place as a result of the Clean Environment Commission hearing recommendations in order to lengthen the timelines to free up some dollars that would allow improvements to be made, to which His Worship replied in the affirmative.

Council Swandel questioned if the Mayor would provide Council with a general timeline as to when Council might received feedback on his request, to which His Worship replied that he would be meeting with the Premier in August and would bring up the issue at that time.

Councillor Wyatt questioned if the Mayor had had discussions with the Federal Government regarding flexible usage of the gas tax monies, or considered strategies similar to what had been done with the recreation program monies.

His Worship replied that he had had discussions with the Minister and was confident that a resolution that meets the Federal policy and meets the needs of the citizens of Winnipeg would be found.

Councillor Wyatt questioned how close the City was to getting a percentage of the gas tax allocated towards transit and transit improvements, to which His Worship replied that figure was between 10% and 15%.