EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE

QUESTION PERIOD

Minute No. 523
Councillor Gerbasi questioned if His Worship supported Plan Winnipeg, and if not, what parts of it he was prepared to get rid of.

His Worship Mayor Katz advised that while Plan Winnipeg tells what we should be doing, it does not provide all the time and all the resources to accomplish those goals.

Councillor Gerbasi asked if it would be best to take the existing plan that has been developed over many years of public input and improve it or start from square one.

His Worship noted that every ten, fifteen or twenty years, things change and new things happen, and new situations have to be addressed.

Councillor Gerbasi questioned whatever happened to a public accountable Civic Environmental Committee.

His Worship advised that persons had met and that there will be people sitting on this committee and referred the Councillor to Councillor Steeves for details.

Councillor Benham made reference to a poll recently conducted by the Mayor and questioned in view of such directly political partisan questions, why should the taxpayers of Winnipeg pay for a poll that is designed for the Mayor's re-election campaign during the Mayoralty campaign period.

His Worship stated that there was no campaign taking place and that polling is done every six months and that this was not something new.

Councillor Benham asked if the Mayor would agree to release to Council and the public, all questions asked, the results of all answers, the polling sample, the sample size, the company that did the work, how much it costs and who paid for it.

His Worship noted that every Mayor's Office has done polling as long as he could remember and would abide by what's taken place in the past.

Councillor Benham asked if the Mayor would agree to refer to the Secretariat Committee the appropriateness of using taxpayer funds to fund a poll during the campaign period designed to elicit directly partisan and political answers from the respondent, to which His Worship stated there was no campaign.

Executive Policy Committee - Question Period (continued)

Councillor Thomas stated that inasmuch as the Environmental Committee had met and there had not been any motions approving members to the Committee, would the names of those persons on the committee be released.

His Worship clarified that it was not an official meeting that had taken place, but a meeting to talk to people who had a genuine interest and a concern about the environment, people with expertise as well as people who represent organizations, and that it was up to them to decide if they wanted to continue.

Councillor Thomas questioned when those names would be coming forward to Council for approval, to which His Worship deferred the question to Councillor Steeves for response.

Councillor Steeves noted that two meetings had taken place; the first to discuss the original terms of reference and the second to discuss expanded terms of reference. He stated that representatives from nine different organizations together with three citizen members from the former Committee attended.

Councillor Thomas reiterated her question if appointments to the Committee would be going forward to Council, to which Councillor Steeves replied that they were getting ideas from people to bring to Council.

Councillor Wyatt questioned if the Mayor would be open to having a meeting with the Oly opposition business group, without having any kind of preconditions to what that meeting could or could not consist of.

His Worship took the opportunity to address an inaccurate statement when his office was asked to have a meeting with Oly Opp. He advised that Oly Opp stated the starting ground was that OlyWest could not go in the St. Boniface Industrial Park - they did not want to talk about that issue. He Worship advised it was decided there was not much to talk about at that particular point in time. His Worship further stated that he was happy to talk to any individual or group but not if they were trying to hold a gun to someone's head.

Councillor Wyatt reiterated his question that if the group contacted the Mayor's Office to have a meeting to discuss this issue and the various concerns, would His Worship be available to meet with them

His Worship replied in the affirmative and stated that if an organization comes in with an open mind on whatever topic, he would be happy to meet with them.

Councillor Thomas noted that the Mayor wanted the Oly Opp group to come with an open mind and questioned if it was going to be an open mind by both sides.

Executive Policy Committee - Question Period (continued)

His Worship noted it was presented today by Oly Opp that they were unable to get a meeting with the Mayor on their request. He advised that the accurate statement is that Oly Opp asked for a meeting and were told yes. They then set the parameter that the meeting starts where we do not even discuss OlyWest being located in the St. Boniface Industrial Park and as a result of that being the starting point, there was no point in meeting as there obviously was not going to be a conversation.

Councillor Benham referred to the proposed environment committee and asked Councillor Steeves and His Worship what their commitment was to ensuring that the committee meetings are truly open and public and that recommendations from the Committee going forward on any aspect would also be open communications.

Councillor Steeves stated that there has been no commitment on this committee being exactly the same as the last committee, but that it was felt that should be a public component.

Councillor Benham questioned how the Councillor could justify secrecy with a body that is supposed to be part of this publicly functioning Council.

Councillor Steeves stated that based on what has been seen and heard, there is going to be a public component.

Councillor Benham questioned why the Councillor would not to commit to have a committee that meets in public and has a public agenda and reports in public.

Councillor Steeves stated that he does not own the committee and that his idea or the Committee's idea on the terms of reference might be radically adjusted by this Council at the appropriate time.

Councillor Gerbasi questioned why this committee would not work like one of the boards and commissions and asked if it was just an advisory group to the Mayor. Councillor Gerbasi requested clarification on what was meant by a component of public.

Councillor Steeves noted there could be some association with administration that might not be in the public, or that committee members will have a chance to interact with the administration. He indicated that they were trying to give the administration the support that they required and involve the public and political component as well - trying to strike a balance.

Councillor Gerbasi questioned if it was the political desire to avoid controversial issues that come forward.

Executive Policy Committee - Question Period (continued)

Councillor Steeves noted that he would like to have the chance for the administration to interact with the new committee in a non-political, non public forum at the early stages of idea development prior to it getting to the report stage.

Councillor Gerbasi asked to be provided with the names of the people already meeting to which Councillor Steeves replied that ISD, Fort Whyte, the Chamber of Commerce, SEAR, Terri Willard, Ken MacKinnon, Rodney MacDonald and John Sinclair were invited.