STANDING POLICY COMMITTEE ON PROPERTY AND DEVELOPMENT

QUESTION PERIOD

Minute No. 473
Councillor Wyatt questioned if the Capital Region municipalities were invited to enter into a pilot project with the City to offer animal services and sewer / water services, and inquired if this was an experiment that Council was not aware of.

Councillor De Smedt referred to Item No. 4 of the Report of the Executive Policy Committee dated December 7, 2005, "Inter-Municipal Shared Services: Expression of Interest Process", adopted by Council on December 14, 2005, authorizing the Chief Administrative Officer to identify inter-municipal service sharing opportunities through an Expression of Interest Process. He advised that the administration met with representatives from Capital Region Municipalities in January or early February and discussed what the protocol might look like and invited them to submit proposals for consideration as a trial / pilot project. He added that proposals would be examined accordingly but emphasized that it would be an Inter-Municipal agreement between a municipality and the City and the City would establish what the services might be. He further noted that a key point is that services and revenue would be shared.

Councillor Wyatt requested that Council be supplied with information on the status of the closing date and if anybody had been accepted as part of the pilot; to which Councillor De Smedt replied in the affirmative.

Councillor Wyatt noted that one of the concerns expressed by the rural municipalities is that entering into service agreements with the City could lead to annexation and questioned how their fears might be allayed.

Councillor De Smedt replied that Council has tried to have a pro-active Capital Region strategy for many years and Mayor Katz took the initiative to develop a protocol that intends to seek mutual understanding of the strengths in each of the municipalities and to buttress each other in the years ahead that satisfy both the needs in growth and revenue demands. He added that this was a perception issue and whether there was an impression that it could lead to annexation, or not, was an issue they would to deal with themselves. Councillor De Smedt suggested that the practicality was that Winnipeg and region were growing and at some point in history he presumed there would be a voluntary annexation and referred to the City of Calgary where a lot of voluntary annexation was occurring.

Councillor Wyatt noted that a new organization called the Red River Infrastructure Committee, formed by the municipalities of East St. Paul, West St. Paul, St. Clements, St. Andrews and Selkirk, were discussing an expression of interest to look at offering and building services for sewer and water. Councillor Wyatt questioned if the Chair would agree that it would be preferable, since the existing treatment facility has the capacity, to extend the City sewer services

Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development - Question Period (continued)

as a potential revenue future for the City rather than having the municipalities in direct competition with the City.

Councillor De Smedt replied that there was capacity today but by mandate of the Provincial Government, the City will be spending approximately 900 million dollars to upgrade the wasetewater system and it was rather doubtful that the new system will have the same existing capacity. The new systems are modular and could be added on to when required so the City would not have to upfront a huge cost. Councillor De Smedt concluded that he was familiar with the issue and the particular area but noted that they had not come forward again with a proposal for the City's consideration.

Councillor Wyatt questioned if the Red River Infrastructure Committee were to come forward again with an offer to the City for services would the City look at it in a positive framework. Councillor De Smedt stated that the City was obligated by Council and was committed to a pro-active dynamic Capital Region Strategy and stated that their proposal would be examined as it didn't make sense to continue to be in competition with each other.