Minutes – Executive Policy Committee – September 21, 2006

REPORTS

Minute No. 628 **Kelvin Community Centre – 2006 GCWCC Community Centre District Plan**
File PR-2

EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

The Executive Policy Committee received as information the recommendation from the East Kildonan-Transcona Community Committee regarding the disposition of the Kelvin Community Centre.

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DECISION MAKING HISTORY:

Moved by Councillor Steeves,

That the recommendation of the East Kildonan-Transcona Community Committee be received as information.

Carried

Regan Wolfrom, President, accompanied by John King, Vice-President, Concerned Elmwood Neighbours, submitted a proposed organizational structure for the Board of Directors of the Kelvin Community Centre and the Elmwood Community Advisory Committee, as well as a presentation in support of the East Kildonan-Transcona Community Committee recommendation to reconsider the Council Decision to declare Kelvin Community Centre, except the Field House, surplus to the City's requirements.

Steve Bemrose, President and Marlene Amell, Executive Director, General Council of Winnipeg Community Centres, submitted documentation regarding the disposition of the Kelvin Community Centre.

COMMUNITY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On September 12, 2006, the East Kildonan-Transcona Community Committee recommended to Executive Policy Committee that the July 26, 2006, Council Decision to declare Kelvin Community Centre, except the Field House, surplus to the City's requirements, be reconsidered.

Further, on September 12, 2006, the East Kildonan-Transcona Community Committee received from Regan Wolfrom, President, Concerned Elmwood Neighbours, supporting documentation, including three petitions purporting to contain the signatures of 589 names, in opposition to the July 26, 2006 Council Decision that the Kelvin Community Centre be declared surplus to the City's requirements.

COUNCIL DECISION:

On July 26, 2006, Council adopted the following:

"That the Kelvin Community Centre, except the Field House, be declared surplus to the City's requirements and be removed from the Community Centre Inventory."

The Future of Kelvin Community Centre

A Report from Concerned Elmwood Neighbours (savekelvin.com)
for the East Kildonan – Transcona Community Committee
Tuesday, September 12, 2006

The Situation

The General Council of Winnipeg Community Centres (GCWCC) made a recommendation to declare Kelvin Community Centre as "surplus property". This declaration was approved by a majority of city councillors.

The residents of the Kelvin Catchment Area gathered together on August 30th, 2006, to discuss the situation and to sign a statement declaring that the residents of Elmwood would not accept any decisions that were made regarding Kelvin Community Centre that were made without adequate community consultation. Over fifty voting members of Kelvin Community Centre attended that meeting, mostly due to a volunteer-run flyer campaign.

Since August 30th, we have gathered over five hundred signatures on our petition. We also sent a mailout (with the support of MLA Jim Maloway and the provincial NDP Caucus) that additional residents have signed and returned stating their opinion on whether Kelvin should remain open and if the future of the community centre should be decided by the residents of the community.

Also, as you can see, many area residents have taken the time to come down to this meeting to send a message that this community cares about Kelvin, and that this community is ready to take charge of the operation and future of Kelvin.

What the Community Wants

Despite the recommendations of the GCWCC, the residents of West Elmwood do not believe that their needs can be met by Bronx Park Community Centre. We also believe that our community, with the help of several willing community organizations, can and will organize and provide programming for Kelvin Community Centre.

Because of the needs of the community, and the desire of residents to revitalize and continue the work of Kelvin Community Centre, we are asking this committee to recommend that the Protection and Community Services Committee review the decision to declare Kelvin as "surplus property".

We would also like this committee to either grant or recommend to the proper committee a new Annual General Meeting for Kelvin, where a board of directors can be elected and programming implemented by the community centre. This board would then be able to

review the future sustainability of Kelvin and take steps to either continue the operation of the community centre indefinitely or to seek out other options, such as amalgamation or formal partnerships with other community organizations.

We do not believe that it is proper for the wishes of the community to be ignored by decision-makers, and we believe that Kelvin Community Centre should be kept open until the community can make its own recommendation on the future and viability of Kelvin.

What the Community is Doing

Since a major concern of area residents is that there is no community programming available, our new community group, Concerned Elmwood Neighbours, is now organizing and will soon be implementing programming at Kelvin. We have rented space from Kelvin, and our first program, a **Parent and Tot Book Club**, will commence on Monday, September 18th.

Other programs that we are currently planning include:

- **After School Program:** we have identified a community partner that may contribute volunteers to this program. It will start as a one or two day a week program, and we are planning for it to be free of charge

- **Gardening Seminar Series:** there is an interest in the community for gardening seminars, and we have located several instructors who are considering donating their time.

- **Pre-teen Party Nights:** one of the suggestions we hear most often from residents is to recreate the very popular Pre-Teen Dances. We are also considering a Friday Night Karaoke and a Movie night. Many volunteers have mentioned an interest in helping with these events.

- **First Annual Elmwood Cares BBQ:** we have spoken to several sponsors already, and the biggest obstacle to having a successful barbecue for the community is how late in the year it is already. Our sponsors have offered to provide food, prizes, entertainment, and even security for this event.

- **Family Skate Night:** many residents have mentioned that skating is an activity that they have enjoyed at Kelvin, and by having a few volunteers, keeping the lights on a little later, and playing some music on the PA, we can create a much nicer skate night for our community. We are also discussing a possible "skate drive", where volunteers will ask for donations of gently used skates for residents who don't have their own equipment. We are also looking into organizing pick-up hockey nights, perhaps with ball or sponge hockey.

- **Hockey Skills Workshops:** we have no shortage of qualified hockey coaches in Elmwood, and several have stepped forward to volunteer to coach hockey skills workshops. Our workshops would most likely be free of charge (with donations accepted), and would give many residents their first opportunity to practice their hockey skills outside of formal league play.

Why is Kelvin Important to this Community?

In the past ten years, Kelvin has had very little formal programming. This has been due to two major reasons: 1) problems maintaining a board of directors, and 2) the changing needs of our community. This community has recognized and learned from these problems, and we have already taken concrete steps toward remedying them.

One of the biggest problems facing almost every community centre in Winnipeg is electing a board of directors. Many community centres have had difficulty in meeting quorum at annual general meetings, while others have had trouble getting enough volunteers to serve on the board. This community is well aware of these issues, and we are now taking steps to ensure that Kelvin Community Centre can avoid this problem in the future.

The East Kildonan Lions Club, which has been operating for over fifty years, has offered to assist Kelvin Community Centre in many ways: through fundraising, providing volunteers, and by bringing forward members who are willing to stand for election for the Kelvin CC board of directors. A partnership between the residents of this community and The EK Lions will help to stabilize the succession of boards for the foreseeable future.

The needs of this community are for low- or no-cost programming, whether athletic, educational, or recreational. The old emphasis on league sports has been replaced with a new community drive to offer programs that all residents, of all backgrounds and ages, can enjoy.

But why is programming important?

Elmwood is one of the more high-needs communities in Winnipeg. Our community has a high number of single-parent families, low-income seniors, and new Canadian families. The mandate of the city's Recreation Services Department includes a focus on high need areas, and Elmwood is certainly one of these areas.

By providing programs such as after-school drop-ins, literacy programs, and recreational opportunities for children and adolescents, community centres not only reduce crime and build a sense of community, they also change lives. Attached to this report is a letter from Bruce Clark, a former Elmwood resident who was personally affected by Kelvin Community Centre.

Another reason why Kelvin is so important is because it is the only place available for the programming that this community will be running. Bronx Park is not going to take the place of Kelvin because it is not located within this community. A large number of residents of high needs communities do not (and many can not) travel to another community for recreational programming. Bronx Park CC is a five kilometre round trip for many area residents (Chalmers CC is a four kilometre trip for many of the same residents). Many of the most high needs members of this community do not have cars, and do not have enough money to use public transit. For one adult and two school-age children to visit Bronx Park for an evening program, they would need to spend over ten dollars in bus fare.

The Challenges Ahead

We know that Kelvin Community Centre has issues that need to be resolved; as a community, we feel that we should be given the opportunity to find solutions to these problems.

The GCWCC and other city agencies have referred to Kelvin as "dilapidated". There have been comments made that Kelvin is not fully accessible, and therefore cannot be used for community programming. Kelvin Community Centre is not dilapidated. The building is still structurally sound, and the Public Works Maintenance Inspection Report makes no mention of any issues that could not be solved with minor fundraising and/or volunteer contributions.

For accessibility, we are already formulating a plan to convert an under-used closet into an accessible washroom on the lower level. This would eliminate the notion that the lower level cannot be used due to accessibility concerns. Rather than wait for funding grants (which can be saved for programming), we are considering fundraising for this project.

If we are given the opportunity to keep Kelvin open, and to elect a board of directors, that board of directors will be able to solicit the volunteer help of various inspection specialists (engineers, electricians, plumbers, etc), who can inform us of any other issues that need to be addressed.

The Future of Kelvin as the Residents See It

Kelvin Community Centre can be sustainable and effective in meeting the needs of our community. No other community centre can provide programming for this community more efficiently than Kelvin.

Through ongoing support from The East Kildonan Lions Club, the City of Winnipeg, the residents of this community, and from other community organizations that have already

expressed interest in helping, Kelvin Community Centre can be an important part of this community.

We, the residents of Elmwood, are willing and able to revitalize Kelvin and to refocus its programming and purpose to meet the needs of our community. We know that our community will not be served by an outside community centre, and we know that the GCWCC does not know better than we do as to how best to meet our needs.

Please recommend that this decision be overturned. The residents of Elmwood deserve an opportunity to decide the future of their own community centre. Thank you.

Concerned Elmwood Neighbours
President: Regan Wolfrom
Vice-President: John King

A letter to the Mayor from a former participant at Kelvin Community Centre

Dear Mayor Katz,

I was disappointed and saddened when I heard Kelvin Community Club may be shut down by the city.

I can only speak about my own experiences when relating the priceless benefits that Kelvin Community Club afforded me during my impressionable years.

Between the ages of 8 – 17, I (like most kids in the area) was a fixture at Kelvin, or "The Club" as it was known to its patrons both young and old. In those years (the late 60's to the late 70's) Elmwood's demographic wasn't much different than it is today; a working-class neighbourhood that was home to some of the most colorful and interesting people in the city.

The concept of altruism (the very foundation of any good community) was introduced to me by the many volunteers who coached and managed the hockey, baseball, football, lacrosse and soccer teams or worked in the canteen.

My own father, a sheet-metal worker for the railway who did duct work and other odd jobs on weekends to make ends meet, was one of the most visible adults at The Club. It was witnessing my father donate what amounted to most of his free time to the community that effected me the most. Not only did he manage hockey and soccer teams, he made repairs around The Club at no charge. If a kid in the neighbourhood wanted to play a sport but the family couldn't come up with the money, my father pulled out his wallet (even though he could barely afford it) making sure that child wasn't left out. No questions asked.

Today, I coach hockey at my local community center and just last weekend spent the day helping repair the boards at the rink. My wife and I have sponsored several underprivileged kids by enrolling them in football and hockey. I state this only as an example of how the selfless acts of others creates a productive and compassionate citizenry.

The Club, and the caring, involved community it anchors, has also played a big part in my professional life. Venturing to Los Angeles to pursue my career in show business was made easier with the self-assuredness I gained from my experiences at Kelvin. Performing all over the world, writing and producing television and appearing on The Tonight Show with Jay Leno would not have become a reality for me without The Club.

Sentimentality is no reason to spend taxpayer's dollars. It's obvious to everyone that civic officials must carefully consider fiscal restraints when it comes to operating public property. It would be irresponsible for city officials to squander money on any community venture with no return on their investment.

However, when it comes to the relationship between costs and benefits, the invaluable payoffs of having a neighbourhood community center cannot be represented on a spreadsheet. All the statistics and empirical evidence are, in fact, overwhelming when it comes to the societal benefits of having an accessible public facility.

Today, more than ever, it is imperative that those making these crucial decisions understand that importance. Destroying community facilities (especially in so-called core areas*) may save a few pennies now but closing Kelvin is an investment in cynicism. An investment that will undoubtedly pay off down the road in the form of disillusioned, directionless young people and a certain increase in crime.*

I hope public officials can find a way to keep Kelvin open and make the risk-free investment in a deserving, respectable community like Elmwood.

Bruce Clark
Palm Springs, California



The East Kildonan Lions Club
c/o The Good Neighbours Senior Centre
755 Henderson Highway
Winnipeg, MB R2K 2K5

September 11, 2006

Dear Kelvin Community Club Committee:

This is a letter of intention, that we the Board of Directors of the East Kildonan Lion's Club are willing to help keep the Kelvin Community Club open and serving our community. We feel that it is of utmost importance to keep this community club open. It serves the Elmwood area and we feel that to close it would be a gross injustice to the residents of the neighbourhood.

Thank you for attention in this matter.

Sincerely,

June L. Love, President
East Kildonan Lions Club

Friends of

Kelvin Community Centre Newsletter

September 2006

An update on Saving Kelvin

Many great things are happening in our efforts to save Kelvin Community Centre! We have organized our provisional board of directors, and have an executive committee who will be coordinating the effort.

Our elected officials are definitely starting to hear us, and we'll be sending a strong message at 5:30pm on Tuesday, September 12 at the Community Committee meeting, 755 Henderson Hwy. We're gathering together a good-sized delegation (please consider coming too, if you can) to show that this community cares.

Fall Programs at Kelvin

Parent and Tot Book Club!

Come and listen to stories and join in games and songs

Free for all children from ages 2 – 4 with an adult

Eight Week session Begins September 18th, 2006

Kelvin Community Centre

Mondays 2:00 – 3:00 pm

Each Week we will focus on a great children's author or fun theme

To register please call Christine at

Other programs:

We are currently planning several other programs / events for Kelvin this fall and winter. If you think that you may be interested in registering or participating in these programs, please let us know by phone or by e-mail (info@savekelvin.com). We'd also love to hear any other ideas you have about programming, or if you are interested in volunteering or developing programs.

Program List >>>
(see reverse)

Upcoming Fall Programs and Events:

- **After school program**
- **Gardening Seminar Series**
- **Pre-teen Party Nights (Friday Night Karaoke and Movies)**
- **First Annual Elmwood Cares BBQ (Games, Prizes, and Community Spirit!)**

Upcoming Winter Programs and Events:

- **Family Skate Night (music, refreshments, fun)**
- **Hockey Skills Workshops**

Our plan is to offer these programs at little or no cost to Elmwood residents. Some programs and events will include an option for donations.

Provisional Executive Committee

President
Regan Wolfrom

Vice-President
John King

Secretary / Treasurer
Linda King

Provisional Board of Directors

In addition to the executive committee, the provisional board of directors includes members with specific duties (youth director, facilities director, online communications director, etc) and several directors-at-large.

Information on the board of directors will soon be available on our website at www.savekelvin.com

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Contact Us

Remember, this group is YOUR group, and we're here to make sure your interests are heard. Please contact us if you have any questions, suggestions, or concerns.

Concerned Elmwood Neighbours

Statement by the Residents of Elmwood regarding the future of Kelvin Community Centre

We, the undersigned Residents of Elmwood, feel that the City of Winnipeg's decision to close Kelvin Community Centre was not made with adequate community consultation. We do not believe that the Annual General Meeting on April 10th, 2006 was advertised adequately, and because of this, quorum was not met. By scheduling and publicizing the date and time of our new meeting on August 30th, we have shown that quorum can be met and community commitment displayed when the community is adequately notified. Over **fifty** eligible voting members attended the meeting, and a provisional board of directors was elected.

This community **WILL NOT ACCEPT** any of the decisions that were made by the City of Winnipeg **WITHOUT ADEQUATE PUBLIC CONSULTATION.**

Name	Address	Phone	Signature

Statement by the Residents of Elmwood regarding the future of Kelvin Community Centre

We, the undersigned Residents of Elmwood, feel that the City of Winnipeg's decision to close Kelvin Community Centre was not made with adequate community consultation. We do not believe that the Annual General Meeting on April 10th, 2006 was advertised adequately, and because of this, quorum was not met. By scheduling and publicizing the date and time of our new meeting on August 30th, we have shown that quorum can be met and community commitment displayed when the community is adequately notified. _____ eligible voting members attended the meeting, and a provisional board of directors was elected.

This community **WILL NOT ACCEPT** any of the decisions that were made by the City of Winnipeg **WITHOUT ADEQUATE PUBLIC CONSULTATION**. These decisions include:

1. the transfer of Kelvin's management to the Greater Council of Winnipeg Community Centres;

2. the recommendation by the GCWCC for the immediate closure of Kelvin Community Centre;

3. the Winnipeg City Council vote for closure of Kelvin Community Centre;

4. any future decisions the city might make regarding the dissolution or sale of Kelvin Community Centre assets.

None of these decisions will be accepted by the residents of Elmwood **WITHOUT THE CONSENT OF THE ELMWOOD COMMUNITY AND THE KELVIN COMMUNITY CENTRE PROVISIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**.

The desire of the Residents of Elmwood is that the Community Centre should remain open for at least one more calendar year, to give the residents of Elmwood an opportunity to provide programming and to review possible alternatives for Kelvin. These alternatives include:

1. the continued operation of Kelvin Community Centre for the foreseeable future;

2. amalgamation with another community centre, or with another community organization, such as the Elmwood Community Resource Centre;

3. creation of a proposal for a large capital project, such as a combined seniors residence and expanded community resource centre.

These and other alternatives will be gathered from members of the community and described in a report to be completed and submitted by the provisional executive committee.

Name	Address	Phone	Signature

Save Kelvin Community Centre!

As residents of Elmwood, we need to make our voices heard!

The first step was a big success: **one hundred people** came to our Save Kelvin meeting on Aug. 30th. **This community does care!**

What's the next step?

The **East Kildonan – Transcona Community Committee** has the authority to forward our concerns with a recommendation to the **Protection and Community Services Committee**, who can then recommend to council that Kelvin Community Centre be kept open. The recommendations of the Protection and Community Services Committee carry a great deal of weight.

The Community Committee has its next meeting at **5:30pm on Tuesday, September 12th**. This meeting will be held at the Good Neighbours Seniors Centre (the old city hall building) at **755 Henderson Hwy**.

It's important that we have as many residents as possible attending this meeting, to show our support.

What can you do to help?

1. Fill out the ballot on the back of this page and bring it to the Community Committee meeting on Tuesday Sept.12 or drop it off at **255 Chalmers Ave** before the meeting!

2. Help us reach all Kelvin-area residents door-to-door with our petition so that everyone has a chance to let their voices be heard.

3. Let us know your ideas for programming at Kelvin.

4. Let us know if you can be a volunteer for Kelvin, whether it's for running programs or helping us to get a Kelvin Newsletter delivered.

Please call 6 or visit www.savekelvin.com to get more information.

... over

Please fill out this Section!

And remember Fill out the attached ballot and bring it to the Community Committee meeting on Tuesday Sept.12 or drop it off at **255 Chalmers Ave** before the meeting!

We the undersigned believe that Kelvin Community Centre needs to stay open to serve this community.

_____ **YES** _____ **NO**

We also believe that the residents of Elmwood should decide whether or not the community centre stays open.

_____ **YES** _____ **NO**

Name	**Address**	**Signature**