Centennial Community Improvement Association

School Resource Officer Presentation

Good morning. My name is Gord Dong, the President of the Centennial Community Improvement Association. This is Molly Roulette, the Vice-President of the Centennial Community Improvement Association or the C.C.I.A. Our residents group represents the area bounded by the CPR Rail Yards to the north; William Ave. to the south; Sherbrook St. to the west; and Princess St. to the east. Thank you for providing our organization the opportunity to speak to the Executive Policy Committee this morning on the issue of School Resource Officers.

Molly

One of the main concerns identified by our residents association is the issue of safety. We all need to work together to create a safer neighbourhood. There is no one single solution to improve safety conditions in our community. We need to work from many directions on this issue.

We believe that there are some things that we as residents can do on our own. We believe that it is important that we get to know our neighbours better so that we can develop better trust and understanding between residents in order to feel

less like strangers and more like a community. The CCIA sponsors many community events to bring people together including neighbourhood feasts, barbecues, block parties and Christmas parties. We organize safety audits in our neighbourhood in order to identify unsafe conditions and develop strategies to address these concerns. We sponsor annual neighbourhood clean-ups to improve the appearance of our community and build pride in our neighbourhood. We work to fix up or demolish boarded up houses in our neighbourhood. We support new neighbourhood housing construction and job training programs for local residents. We are currently converting an abandoned warehouse that was the site of the one of the biggest grow op busts in Winnipeg into a 27 unit apartment block. We support programs for youth and seniors in our neighbourhood. In short, we do our best to build a sense of community in our neighbourhood.

a strong partnership with

The C.C.I.A. also sees that we need ~~help from~~ the Winnipeg Police Service in order to make our neighbourhood a safer place to live. In the fall of 2005, we met with the Police Chief and our local City Councillor Mike Pagtakhan to see how we could improve community policing services in our neighbourhood. We had a community officer working in our neighbourhood on a part-time basis – he worked 15 out of 30 days based on his shift work assignments. In April, 2006 we were assigned a second community officer to provide a full-time community police presence for the other 15 of the 30 days of the month. In the middle of

May, 2006, our first community officer got a promotion to be a sergeant. His position has not been replaced. So since May, 2006 we have been back where we started – one community officers working 15 days out of 30 days in our neighbourhood. The C.C.I.A. was promised a community officer so that there would be a full-time community officer presence in our neighbourhood. We expect the Winnipeg Police Service to keep this promise and commitment to our neighbourhood.

Gord

The C.C.I.A. supports the idea of having 2 School Resource Officers to work with the downtown schools. A School Resource Officer stationed at Hugh John MacDonald Junior High would provide services to our neighbourhood – including the elementary schools of Dufferin, Victoria Albert and Pinkham. All of these schools have a high percentage of Aboriginal, refugee and immigrant students.

A School Resource Officer would provide the students with the opportunity to develop a better relationship with the police. By building relationships with local youth, the police will gain the trust of students and their families. The SRO program in the north end demonstrated that the police were able to do more problem solving and mediation work – this diverted young people from becoming involved in the formal justice system.

The Downtown School Resource Officer proposal is requesting that City Council contribute $53,000 this year to be a funding partner with the Winnipeg School Division and the provincial government to expand the School Resource Officer program to 8 downtown inner city schools. The City Council budget this year is $741 million. The Winnipeg Police Service budget is $159 million. The police budget has been increased $6 million from last year. It is hard to believe that $53,000 cannot be found from these budgets to support this important crime prevention program. I am also a member of the ~~Residents~~ Neighborhoods Alive Interim Residents committee

When we all work together, we can make our city a safer place to live. The C.C.I.A. is trying to do our share. We are asking the City Council to do its share by becoming a funding partner with the Winnipeg School Division and the provincial government's Neighbourhoods Alive! program to support the expansion of 2 School Resource Officers in eight downtown inner city schools.

Thank you for listening to our presentation.