STANDING POLICY COMMITTEE ON

PROTECTION AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

QUESTION PERIOD

Minute No. 61
Councillor Gerbasi questioned Councillor Steeves if it was his position that the community policing program was simply a public relations program.

Councillor Steeves replied that he did not see the program as simply a public relations exercise, but acknowledged that he did feel some skepticism as to the effectiveness of the program, except in areas of high density / high crime. He added that as Chair of the Standing Policy Committee on Protection and Community Services, it was incumbent upon him to review what the City was doing and to offer advice and suggestions in regards to programs and policies under the purview of the committee.

Councillor Gerbasi inquired if the Chair was aware that the foot-patrol / ambassador program in the Corydon and Osborne Village areas, comprised of 40 to 50 volunteers and which costs the City no money, would not exist without the support of the local beat officers in the community policing program. Councillor Steeves acknowledged that he was aware of the volunteer program, and stated that his comments were simply to raise discussion about Community Policing, not to suggest that any programs be eliminated.

Councillor Gerbasi questioned whether Councillor Steeves was aware that if the beat officers from the Community Policing program were eliminated, that it would also have the impact of taking away the volunteer programs. Councillor Steeves noted that the community beat officers were doing a wonderful job of administering the program, but noted that there may be other ways to offer the same service and ensure the volunteer program continued.

Councillor Smith asked Councillor Steeves to identify his concerns about community policing. Councillor Steeves advised that the City is facing some acute challenges that have been manifested in some very unfortunate incidences recently. He added that his concerns and the debate started after meeting with the Winnipeg Police Association and hearing their submission at the November 7, 2005 Protection and Community Services meeting where they indicated they also felt this matter should be reviewed.