COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WINNIPEG
Wednesday May 16, 2007

The Council met at 9:32 a.m.

The Clerk advised the Speaker that a quorum was present.

The Speaker called the meeting to order.

The opening prayer was read by Councillor Smith.

ROLL CALL

Clerk: Mr. Speaker Councillor Lazarenko, His Worship Mayor Katz, Councillors Browaty, Clement, Fielding, Gerbasi, Leipsic, Nordman, O'Shaughnessy, Pagtakhan, Smith, Swandel, Thomas, Vandal, Wyatt.

INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME OF GUESTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Speaker: Thank you. We have pages with us today, Bryce Brousseau of Vincent Massey Collegiate resides in the St. Norbert Ward. Simone Jaman of Miles MacDonnell Collegiate resides in the Elmwood - East Kildonan Ward. Welcome. Welcome of guests announcement, Mr. Mayor. You have an announcement?

Mayor Katz: I do a very brief one and a very happy one, Mr. Speaker. I would on behalf of Council; I would like to congratulate Councillor Steeves and Lorrie on the birth of their daughter Camille Grace, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you. And this is just the beginning. Councillor Steeves is not here, but many more to come.

MINUTES

His Worship Mayor Katz moves the Minutes of the meeting held on April 25, 2007 be taken as read and confirmed.

All in favour, contrary? Carried.

DELEGATIONS

Mr. Speaker: Delegations, we have two. The first delegation is Meranda Merlin, in opposition to Item 3 of the report of the Standing Policy Committee on Infrastructure Renewal and Public Works dated May 8, 2007 regarding the Revised Boulevard Maintenance By-law and she has ten minutes. If you're present, please, ten minutes.

Meranda Merlin: Hello, my name is Meranda Merlin and I live in the north end of Winnipeg and I want to let you know, I do agree in part to the city trying to reduce the red tape for gardeners. I think it's a great idea. The boulevards do need improving.

I think that you might consider going a little bit further and this is where I have my opposition. I grow indigenous food plants. Now, indigenous food plants, a lot of them are on the noxious weed list. A lot of them are highly invasive due to just their nature and the fact that most, a lot of aboriginal families are experiencing chronic disease as well as diabetes where these plants are shown that they have an impact to help improve the folic acid that people are to eat and they need.

I think that if we were to look at revising this, that we should include indigenous plants as well, and I know that you're not growing food and berries on the boulevard, but really, where I come from, in the north end of the city, we have a lot of marginalized populations. I grew tomatoes on the boulevard last year. I had one incident where a plant was pulled up and vandalized out of twenty four plants.

Now for people who are new immigrants to Canada and for a lot of the families in my community, this was a rarity. They were able to pick, with permission, a tomato. Something that's, a lot of gardeners are worried about vandalism in their yard. I think this is just another way of having a chance for people who may not have a garden or their children are not perhaps, being brought up with gardening, a chance to experience a fresh fruit or a vegetable as well. And with the indigenous plants, I think more and more we're finding studies that back our findings, that we need to return a lot of people who have perhaps, older metabolisms such as the aboriginal people and perhaps we'll see in the future, the people who are immigrating

from other countries that are not used to our refined foods.

Indigenous plants can play a really important part. This also includes people who are homeless, having access to something on a boulevard to help people find food. I know we have a lot, up to, it's been estimated that 75% of our homeless people in Winnipeg are of aboriginal decent and I think that returning to indigenous foods is a small start and if you are, like I said, I do agree that you are trying to reduce the red tape, I just think that we haven't gone far enough to also include some measure of growing indigenous plants.

Now the federal government is to be looking at revising their noxious weed list, but still some of these plants are on the noxious weed list. And they probably will remain so because of their invasiveness. How this all applies I'm not sure. I'm sure the Council will perhaps, how shall I say; perhaps maybe even offer some guidance, perhaps from me coming here to speak.

But I do know that we need to re-look at indigenous food plants as being a valuable access, or a valuable treasure in our community as well and I would like to see that we have some type of program or perhaps law that enables someone like myself who's trying to start a north end greening project, be able to use the boulevards as urban agriculture, in a sense of urban agriculture. So when you make your decision, I think that if it's possible to also look at including indigenous plants, I would be grateful.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you. Councillors any questions? If not, thank you very much.

Meranda Merlin: Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Next delegation is Regan Wolfrom in opposition to Item 4 of the report of the Executive Policy Committee dated May 2, 2007. You have ten minutes.

Regan Wolfrom: Good morning. My name is Regan Wolfrom and I am the Vice-President of Bronx Park Community Centre. I am also the President of Concerned Elmwood Neighbours which is one of the user groups of the Bronx Park Good Neighbours Recreation Centre. I have spoken in this chamber before on the issue of Kelvin.

It's important that I speak to you today about the decision that you are making. The Kelvin clubhouse building was being used for essential drop-in programming and our patrons arrived on foot. Bronx Park Community Centre can keep this programming going if we can have access to that clubhouse building. We can also make use of this space during the upcoming closure of the Bronx Park clubhouse during construction.

I am here today to ask you to support the people of Bronx Park and Kelvin with their work. Locking us out of the Kelvin clubhouse is not helping anyone. It's also important that I explain to you what your decision to close the Kelvin clubhouse prematurely has already done to our community. Since the neighbourhood volunteers were locked out of Kelvin Community Centre, property crimes and other incidents near the empty club have definitely increased. Graffiti is up, other vandalism is up and thefts are up. I should know, my bike was stolen at Kelvin last week. When community members reported incidents to police including cars with bricks thrown through their front windows they were told that a lot of problems have been happening since the closure and the back lanes next to Kelvin have become an excellent place for late night business transactions.

This is only the beginning for Elmwood - East Kildonan. Most of the problems are being caused by youth that we didn't reach. Many of them are older than the kids we would often see at the club. The only reason they weren't causing trouble at Kelvin before, was because the lights and activity usually kept trouble makers at bay and if that didn't work, volunteers would confront the gang members and the drug users and ask them to find somewhere else to be.

Most of these trouble makers will eventually move on to more ambitious crimes but there will be plenty of younger

kids to take their place. These new criminals will certainly come from the ranks of kids that we have been trying to reach. What else can you expect from youth who are told that they aren't important enough to have a place to go.

So who is responsible for the trouble in Elmwood - East Kildonan? Is it the area residents? I can say with certainty that we are not to blame. We have done everything possible to improve the situation. We restored Kelvin Community Centre into a viable place, including recreational programs and a drop-in centre that operated five days a week. We have tried to reason with the General Council of Winnipeg Community Centres, with Mayor Katz and with this body. We have even offered to fund raise for capital for improvements or replacement of the clubhouse at Kelvin.

But not only have our efforts been rebuffed, but we ourselves have been treated with such oversight that I can scarcely believe that there isn't a long term strategy here to alienate and disperse willing community volunteers. So who is responsible for the trouble in Elmwood - East Kildonan? It is the majority of members on this Council. Those who either purposely misled in public statements or those who silently follow that course without any research or respect for the self determination of a community.

Councillor Browaty, you have just recently been given the responsibility to care for the people of North Kildonan and to heed their wishes, yet you are voting against the strong majority of your charges, including the people of Bronx Park. The people of North Kildonan respect their neighbours in Elmwood - East Kildonan and they know that there is no valid reason to lock us out of Kelvin before a replacement facility has been built. No valid reason, Councillor Browaty.

Councillor Wyatt, if you're indeed ready to support our community's attempt to create a not for profit organization to assume the clubhouse building, then please confirm it for us. You know that there's been movement in our organization. You know that we've been having fundraisers as you've been invited. You and I have spoken and you had no doubt then of my determination. So how can you support our efforts on the one hand, but not defend us here today? State your support for Bronx Park and Kelvin today, Councillor Wyatt.

Councillor Steeves. Where is Councillor Steeves? He's not here today? Oh, congratulations for him are in order. Well then, I will speak to that matter anyways. We've spoken in the past Councillor Steeves and I, and it's clear that Councillor Steeves and I will never agree on what's best for the city. But surely we can both agree that double standards are unfair and that this city should be a home to fairness.

Now, Councillor Steeves supported the amalgamation of Norberry and Glenlee Community Centres in St. Vital where the residents have been able to choose their own path to rationization including the concept of keeping the current facilities available until the replacement construction is complete. Yet, Councillor Steeves is fervently against the same allowance for Bronx Park and Kelvin. All we want today is fairness. Please do give us that.

Councillor O'Shaughnessy, you supported our efforts in the past, yet now you seem to have changed your mind. What have we not done? We have increased our work with you and we are working hard to provide a transition to the changes in our community. We need you to support a fair transition. We need you to continue to support of the work that we are doing in our community.

Mayor Katz, when you spoke to John King before the last election, you told him that you would support our efforts. But you never did support us and you never came to see the work that we are doing. Your plans to reduce graffiti and to reverse the increases in crime have left out the most effective solution. We are already fixing your Kelvins for you at Kelvin and you shut us out, but it's not too late to put us back into the game.

So what do we need? The people of Bronx Park and Kelvin are working together to build a stronger community. We have two sites to operate now and two neighbourhoods to serve. When Bronx Park Community Centre is closed for six months in 2008 we will need space for our programming. Why wouldn't we use the Kelvin clubhouse for some of that programming? Is it better for us to cancel our community programs or to cram them into places that are already full? Allow our community to take care of ourselves. Grant the people of Bronx Park and Kelvin the use of the facilities that are there. You have given us funding and the responsibility for the Kelvin area, and now we ask for the opportunity to decide what's best for us.

The people of Bronx Park and Kelvin will continue to serve our community as best we can and we are grateful for the funding for the new Bronx Park Good Neighbours Recreation Centre. We will operate programming at both of our community sites and we are looking forward to the partnership between our various user groups. But if you refuse this request today, if you tell us that we can't use the Kelvin clubhouse, then it's important that you understand that it is this Council that will be responsible for the consequences.

You will be responsible, Councillor Browaty, you will be responsible, Councillor Wyatt. You will be responsible, Councillor O'Shaughnessy and you will be responsible, Mayor Katz. This body will be responsible for the damage done to Elmwood - East Kildonan. But it's not too late to fight the trouble in Elmwood – East Kildonan. It's not too late for this body to support our community. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you. Questions? Councillor Thomas.

Councillor Thomas: Yes, thank you very much. First I wanted to congratulate you Regan for your election to the Bronx Park Community Centre Board. My questions for you have to do with the Greater Council Community Centres. They had made a commitment to meet with the community since programs had been displaced by the closure of Kelvin Community Club. Has anyone called you or attempted to meet with you with regard to that? They do have a representative who's been hired to do that.

Regan Wolfrom: Well unfortunately, all of the contacts that have been made between myself and General Council have been at my choosing because they have not contacted me on anything. Unfortunately, there's been a bit of a communication problem between our organization in Elmwood and the General Council. General Council has been speaking, briefly to Bronx in the past, so we'll be meeting with them in the near future as well. We are very concerned that they have promised a new fieldhouse construction but we're not seeing any plans of it in any kind of budget so we don't know where the money would come from or when that would be expected to take place.

Mr. Speaker: Your second supplementary question Councillor Thomas.

Councillor Thomas: Yes. What I'm talking about is, I believe they hired Cindy Fox and she met with the River East Neighbourhood Network and she was advised by that group to go talk to the Kelvin people and I was wondering if she had approached you or met with anybody on that, of that group.

Mr. Speaker: Excuse me, Councillor Thomas you may sit down.

Councillor Thomas: Okay.

Mr. Speaker: Yes, okay, thank you. Go ahead.

Regan Wolfrom: Certainly not. Neither John King nor myself, Vice-President or President of the organization has heard from anyone from General Council and that includes Cindy fox.

Mr. Speaker: Final supplementary question Councillor Thomas.

Councillor Thomas: I guess this makes it difficult to answer this question, but do you know what plans General Council has

arranged for the twelve programs that were operating out of Kelvin Community Centre because they made a commitment to find alternative spaces. Are you aware of any efforts they've made to find alternative spaces for this programming?

Regan Wolfrom: Well I think the word commitment may not best describe what I was told by President Steve Bemrose, the President of the General Council. He said that they would make an effort to provide alternative space. But when I asked, formally asked that our user group, Concerned Elmwood Neighbours be accommodated, he made it clear that probably, that it would not be very likely they would find space but they would attempt, but no contact was made. Other groups, some groups were offered, I believe, alternative space. Most of the groups I believe found that, that space was not going to suit their needs. One person in particular was running a creative movement program and she specifically asked Mr. Bemrose for alternative space to be arranged and he said at that point well I'll call you if I find it, you call me later and I'll tell you if I found anything, she said no you call me when you find something because we need something for our program, we need space and of course she was never contacted again.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you. Councillor Wyatt, your first supplementary.

Councillor Wyatt: Thank you, just, thank you for your presentation, just referring to, you raised the issue Regan in your presentation about our conversation; I think it was in February. At that time I indicated to you that I would be willing to assist with the development of a business plan for the purpose of fundraising for the new fieldhouse and infrastructure at Kelvin and if I recall correctly, we agreed that you would be coming forward with a request to Community Committee. Now that was back in February, we've had three Community Committee meetings since then. Is it your intent to come forward? I offered at that time per capita money from the Transcona Ward share of the per capita grants, which is not common you should be aware, but is it your intent to follow up and to do a business plan, because I'm still waiting for that as well. We had that conversation.

Regan Wolfrom: Yes, well it is indeed my intent to come forward to the Community Committee. There are several reasons why that hasn't happened yet. One of them being that knowing that the Bronx Park Annual General Meeting was coming and knowing that we needed to work together as a group, I didn't want to be making, I guess, executive decisions without having the input of that body and also, I need to consult with several different potential user groups. I'm trying to build partnerships between several different existing not for profits. We've been in contact with several different groups and there's been some interest expressed but at this point we're still trying to put everything together. I didn't want to come to you without having an idea of exactly what we're doing and unfortunately these things do take a little bit of time as I'm sure you've all noticed in the past.

Mr. Speaker: Your second supplement question.

Councillor Wyatt: And at the time we were chatting, you indicated that the Kelvin site would be workable as a satellite of the Bronx Park Community Club overall and you're fine with that still I'm assuming.

Regan Wolfrom: Yes. I mean I understand that this Council wishes to rationalize the community centre model to you know, amalgamate centres. I don't have a problem with the amalgamation of executives. I think it's actually a good idea because executives can use all the help they can get. The problem comes in when our green space and frontage is being removed. That is our concern and that is one area that we will never be pleased with. We will never accept that. I mean certainly, we don't have a choice if it's decided to do so, but we will never be pleased with that decision, but as a satellite, both groups working together is perfectly fine with us.

Mr. Speaker: Your final supplementary question Councillor Wyatt.

Councillor Wyatt: Thank you and just more, again as you are aware, a question about a month or so again at the previous Council meeting or the meeting before that, Councillor Browaty actually seconded a motion, moved by Councillor Thomas, are you aware of us to keep the community club open longer than it had previously been scheduled to do so, just so you're?

Regan Wolfrom: I'm pleased actually with some of the past votes from Councillor Browaty, some of the past support, unfortunately I'm, sometimes the support seems to be forthcoming, at other times it doesn't seem to be forthcoming, so, but at this point certainly I would appreciate any support that you can give to our group and I welcome it as basically we need to work together from now on anyways because I'll be at Bronx Park and that's your area.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you. No further questions? Thank you.

Regan Wolfrom: Okay, thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Mayor Katz moves the minutes of the meeting held on April 25, 2007 be taken as read and confirmed, all in favour, contrary? Carried. And a leave of absence moved by Councillor Pagtakhan, seconded by Councillor Swandel that Councillor Steeves be granted a leave of absence on family medical reasons, all in favour, contrary? Carried. Mr. Mayor, Executive Policy Committee.

**REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE
DATED MAY 2, 2007**

Mayor Katz: Thank you Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce the report and move adoption of the consent Agenda Items 1 to 4.

Mr. Speaker: All in favour, oh pardon me.

Councillor Vandal: Record me in opposition to number 4.

Mr. Speaker: Recorded opposition to number 4 and Councillor Gerbasi in opposition to 4 and that's it? All in favour? Okay just a minute hold it.

Councillor Gerbasi: Mr. Speaker, I imagine Councillor Thomas who was just out of the room probably wants to.

Mr. Speaker: She was not in the room sorry, she's out. Okay, all the rest, the rest, all in favour, contrary? Carried. Mr. Mayor the report of May 9, 2007.

**REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE
DATED MAY 9, 2007**

Mayor Katz: I would like to introduce the report and move adoption of consent Agenda Items 1 to 8 Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Okay I'm calling for number 1 and Councillor Pagtakhan would you come and take the chair.

Councillor Thomas: Can I have a point of personal privilege please. I was confirming some information on the Kelvin Community Club, I regret that I was out of the chambers but I would like to have that item pulled off the agenda so that I could talk to it please.

Mr. Speaker: Councillor Thomas it's passed, it's gone.

Councillor Thomas: That's why I'm rising on a point of personal privileges, I wanted to check some information before I spoke to the item and that's why I wanted to have it pulled off the agenda and that's why I'm rising on a point of personal privilege.

Mr. Speaker: Councillor Thomas I'll let Council decide. Those in favour of pulling that item back on the agenda, those opposed? It's lost.

Councillor Thomas: Can I have a recorded vote on that please.

Mr. Speaker: Recorded vote. Councillor Thomas is calling that the previous item be brought back to the floor for discussion. Okay, those in favour of Councillor Thomas's request please rise.

A RECORDED VOTE was taken the result being as follows:

Yeas

Councillors Clement, Gerbasi, Smith, Thomas, Vandal, Wyatt.

Nays

His Worship Mayor Katz, Councillors Browaty, Fielding, Leipsic, Nordman, O'Shaughnessy, Pagtakhan, Swandel and Mr. Speaker Councillor Lazarenko.

City Clerk: The vote Mr. Speaker, Yeas 6, Nays 9.

Mr. Speaker: It's lost. Okay now we get into the Executive Policy Committee report of May 9, 2007. I've asked for Item 1 to be stood down. Any more, if not, the Mayor, can you introduce the clause 1. Councillor Pagtakhan.

(Councillor Pagtakhan in the chair)

Item 1 - Residential Infill Tax Credit Program File EX

Mayor Katz: Thank you Mr. Speaker. Clause 1 is the Residential Infield Tax Credit Program. It's basically three years, three million; it's for houses less than 230,000 dollars and its 2,000 dollars a year for a maximum of five years. I would be happy to hear any comments that you have on that, Mr. Speaker.

Councillor Lazarenko: Thank you Mr. Mayor, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise firstly in support of the clause that is here before us today. But I have some concerns as to the direction we're going in with this program, which includes providing total tax credit of 10,000 dollars per eligible property and we're talking about 600 infill homes that we'll be looking at for a total cost of three million dollars.

Now, I have seen a list of the vacancy properties that are on the list, it equates to about 600 properties, of which not all are on there, because I've checked in my area, houses have been boarded up for the six to seven years, they don't even have any kind of security or any kind of the boarding up that has to take place under the By-law that's presently exist.

So I raise that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, last week with the department, I have spoken to the Director, the Acting Director of Property and Development and also I raised this with our Chief Administrator. The, we're talking about the key issues of providing infill homes in areas that are needed.

The problem that I have, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have agencies that are working for the provincial government that are purchasing city properties which we have allowed them to buy the property for one dollar. Now we're asking the private sector to build new infill homes with the grant system. We know for a fact that policy implication on this is to support the neighbourhood revitalization and I guess the key is facility, provisions of safe and affordable housing.

I had a problem last week on the Thursday afternoon, a developer came down to my place. First time that I ever, ever had someone come and tell me that we were not doing a good job at all, that I was not doing my job, because to the fact was that this person is building around nineteen new infill homes in the area. He took me for a ride and I looked at some of them. The houses are just about complete, ready for, to be occupied. There were children on the other side of the back lane had smashed the back windows. These children during the daytime in the afternoon, riding their bikes, they're all kids about six to eight to twelve years of age and I looked and I thought you know what is happening, how come they're not in school, this developer told me that he has to be on the go twenty four hours a day to monitor, to protect his property and he had said now, what are you doing as far as Council?

We've got By-laws coming out of our ears to protect the property owners. We've got the unsanitary housing, we've got the housing that houses that are beyond repair. We've got houses that are, debris and garbage in the back lanes, shrubs up this high and it's not being looked at.

We've got boarded up housing. Houses that are not even like I said before, not even on the list and they've been boarded up, one was for six to seven years. I was so embarrassed when I talked to the developer. He had told me, look this house has been vacant for six to seven years, nothing.

There is not even a board on there to protect the windows they are broken. The undesirables frequent these premises and when I saw them I thought it was people living in there and you have the police there in the middle of the night trying to round up those who are maybe on, using that as their crack house or whatever.

So when we talk about the issue, Mr. Deputy Speaker and Members of Council, I'm asking the Chief Administrator and the administration staff to start enforcing the By-laws we've got in place. I don't want to go through another summer of grass, two feet in height. We have the right to go and cut the grass, clean the debris on any property and charge it to the tax roll of that, of the property owner.

Now in some cases this is not happening. We have the Fire Prevention Officer; from the beginning I was not able to get any information on who owns the property. Finally I did get, I started asking and I said since when are we not privy to this? We have homes that have been seized by the government, a government law and we can't even get the addresses or know which houses have been seized that the houses are vacant. People have told me the houses are vacant, all of sudden next week there are people living in there. And the question, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when we talk about infill homes and Councillor Swandel I know you want to raise a question but I'm speaking to the clause that's here, talking about infill homes. Stop my time.

Councillor Swandel: Point of order, I thought we were talking Infill Tax Credit Program here; we seem to be getting quite a bit off the topic.

Councillor Lazarenko: No, Councillor Swandel we're talking about providing infill homes and what is happening to the present infill homes that are being built, the problems we have of vandalism. This has to be addressed and I'll keep at this until I do get a response.

Now, I've asked the Chief Administrator to look into this and I hope that other Members of Council are faced with the same problem. I know Councillor Smith I have talked to, we have a lot of properties that are, some of them are beyond repair, and please, do what is right, take those buildings down and put up a new home. We're not talking about Tuxedo. If any of those houses had been in tuxedo they would be gone within twenty four hours and it's not because you live there, Mr. Mayor but you know Tuxedo is respected, to say that they will respond. The north end we have people that are scared even to come out at night-time because of the clientele of people that are living. We have government agencies. Now in this report, Mr. Deputy Speaker, says that the.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Councillor Lazarenko, Councillor Lazarenko are you in favour of the clause?

Councillor Lazarenko: Extension, yes, I'm in favour of the clause, I'm speaking to it. I said I was in favour right from the beginning. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the province has in this report, the province has not made, there's no written reply has been received to date from the provincial government on this.

But now, here's what is happening with the provincial government. They've established agencies, Winnipeg Child and Family Services are buying properties to house some of the children are coming into the city, without supervision. You have holding companies; Winnipeg Regional Housing Authority has purchased a number of houses, Manitoba Housing and Renewal Corporation, another, another agency of the provincial government. You have investment companies, housing opportunity partnership, CentreVenture. This is ours, are also involved in purchasing properties, North End Housing Project. These are just some of the agencies that I was able to find.

Now, what competition will that be to the private sector if they want to go and buy an infill home? If they want to buy and build an infill home I should say, firstly, these, you get the property for one dollar. I'm not against that. I've been supporting it, but we have to take at the level playing field to give an opportunity to some of the properties that we have that are vacant at the present time and have been vacant for a long time. One person I spoke to, he says, I've had a permit now, this is my last year if I want to get a permit to keep my house boarded up it'll cost me 2,000 dollars, he said the hell with it, I'm going to be selling it. Now, who's going to buy it? Next door it's a vacant house. You've got the undesirables are frequent there every day and what gets me, is when you have Child and Family Services are involved in the housing why don't they control and monitor and supervise the people that they.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Councillor Swandel moves extension of time, all in favour, contrary? Carried.

Councillor Lazarenko: Some of these people are in there, kids no school, they're roaming the streets all night long. The police have to be on the go, you have even drug users are using that. Now look its election time Councillors and I just can't understand the three levels of government that you know there's candidates running, leaders, there is no way that they'll talk. They represent the area; most of that welfare is under the provincial guidelines now, it's under theirs, not ours. You don't have them coming and saying we'll correct this situation, the slum housing you've got in the area. I will correct it. No they're silent.

They're silent because the big leader says you keep your mouth shut, I do the talking, most of it happens to be my kitchen not yours. Now what direction is each government, each leaders going into? They talk about the plight of poor people. They refuse to answer to the question that should be addressed. And before the elections is, do something for the community. Do something for the city of Winnipeg. Don't go up to the car thefts that are taking place, people are getting killed. A person who killed that person has been out, in and out of jail, in and out of the court system like a person goes shopping and nothing. They're out, they're loose. Nothing.

They talk about high price of gasoline; I had seen some of them, put that before the Public Utility Board. When they talk, when they talk about, when they talk they're concerned about the consumers, well you can have consumers, how can they be protected? Protect the consumers. When you talk about, when you talk about the high price of what takes people now to build, governments make a profit. The provincial and federal government through any infill home that's being built, they are making big dollars through the taxation powers they have and we're not, and we're not getting help and it's time, Mr. Mayor you and Executive Policy Committee have to take a lead role. I support this whole heartedly because it's long overdo of being there but these concerns have to be addressed, I'm speaking to the thousands of people that I represent and I'm sure other Councillors are in the same position as me.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Thank you Councillor Lazarenko. We've got a list of six speakers so far. Councillor Gerbasi you're up.

Councillor Gerbasi: Thank you Mr. Speaker. Well the only subject that wasn't raised in that speech was the Winnipeg Jets, bringing them back but I'm going to try and stick to infill housing. But first of all I certainly rise in support of this report today. I think something needs to be said about why we're doing this, which is the concept of infill housing. It makes sense to support infill housing, because you have existing infrastructure, you have existing schools, you have existing community clubs and these things, you know that's what we need to keep this city vibrant. That's what Plan Winnipeg says we should be doing, is encouraging infill housing for many very good reasons.

So I'm very supportive of the concept of this report. I would like to point out a couple of, sort of concerns or just things

to think about for the future. One is that the subsidy of 10,000 dollars, you know, is going to work for someone who already has some significant money to spend and it's going to work in the neighbourhood where the house can go for a significant price.

When we're talking about the most distressed areas of the inner city, this program will not see a lot of take-up I would predict. It will in some areas that are beginning to improve but in the most distressed areas we still require the type of programs that exist in the Winnipeg Housing and Homelessness Initiative that we've supported this year with a million dollars. And I just want to put that on the record, because, well I totally support this program, it's great for areas like Fort Rouge, it's great for many older areas, even areas like River Heights. I mean it's good, it's good policy. It's good for Plan Winnipeg.

But it doesn't replace the need to have Winnipeg Housing Homelessness Initiative Programs, because the amount of subsidy that a house in a troubled area of the city requires is more like when you add up all the programs from all the different levels of government, you're talking about up to a 40,000 dollar subsidy, a 10,000 dollar subsidy is not going to make it happen in reality, in practical terms in those neighbourhoods.

This is a great program for Fort Rouge, it's a great program for Transcona, it's a great program for most parts of the city. And I would also like to caution that we're spending a million dollars, that's the same amount we spent last year and the year before and I applaud that we didn't stop spending that million. But that's going to have to go up because we have expanded the number of neighbourhoods that we are supporting. For example, a new one was added in, there's now five, but there's something like thirteen or fifteen neighbourhoods that are in distress and they don't have any city, they aren't housing improvement zones for the city because we don't have enough money to spend on that and I fully recognize that the province and the feds have the primary responsibility. That's why we have a triple, a tri-level of government program for those issues.

So what I'm saying is, is I would like Council to think about next year, providing some more funding for those inner city distress neighbourhoods because we have seen in Spence and West Broadway where the recovery is starting to happen, that we're reaping the benefits in terms of increased tax return to the city on property taxes and we know that's really an investment. That million dollars and that's what convinced Council to continue with those programs is, it's an investment that pays us back in spades and it's worth investing, it's worth investing that million but we should be investing somewhat more and encouraging the other levels of government to invest a lot more.

So, and I'd also just like to point out that some neighbourhoods like West Broadway and Spence, while they're recovering and they're beginning to show some improvement and there's some hope there, it's a fragile recovery and they are doing, starting on another, for example West Broadway is doing another five year housing plan but their money may be getting reduced as we move to these other neighbourhoods. If we stick to the same envelope of money year after year, that's what's going to happen, is we're going to pull the rug out from under some of these place that are still going to need ongoing support for several years because there's just not enough to go around. We've added in the centennial neighbourhood.

So I know I'm getting, the reason I took this opportunity to say that is I want Council to know that if we want to have a comprehensive housing strategy we have to look at the differences in the different neighbourhoods.

So I appreciate the opportunity to put those comments on the record but I don't want to take that away from the fact that an infill housing program is an excellent idea. I'm a little concerned the net may have been cast a little bit too wide, because if you're building a house that's worth 230,000 dollars, you know in the upper end of the range; you know do you

really need that 10,000 dollars? I mean you can make your money back. You know, we shouldn't be subsidizing things that would happen on their own. The idea is to stimulate something that wouldn't happen without the incentive.

So I'm a little concerned our net may be a little bit too wide but certainly, I support in most cases and I hope that this will be evaluated to assess that, to assess you know which houses end up being built, is it the high end ones only or how, you know what kind of effect this has, needs to be reviewed. I would say after a year, not to wait you know for three years or something to look at that.

But I do rise in support. I think it's long overdo that we have an infill housing program for neighbourhoods, our regular, most of our neighbourhoods in Winnipeg where it is pretty pricey to do that, but I mean in other parts of those neighbourhoods, you know, people are making a lot of money taking houses in. But hopefully this will encourage a lot more. So I hope Council understands the intent of my comments and I'm very supportive of this program today. Thank you.

(Councillor Lazarenko in the chair)

Mr. Speaker: Thank you Councillor Gerbasi. Councillor Pagtakhan.

Councillor Pagtakhan: Thank you Mr. Speaker. I just want to say that I applaud the work of the Mayor and E.P.C. and all the work of my colleague on Property and Development and the Downtown Development for the work on this Residential Infill Tax Credit Program. I think it's a wonderful program. It'll make great strides towards redeveloping a large part of the vacant lots that are interspersed throughout the City of Winnipeg.

My hopes certainly of being an inner city Councillor is to see some of this program address some of the issues with the vacant lots in the inner city and the north end. I do have some concerns. I appreciate the comments from my colleague from Fort Rouge. I think her comments are valid and very important, very cogent to this particular issue.

The backdrop for development and you said some things Mr. Speaker that made me think about, wanted to say a few comments today. Certainly there is a lot of challenges in the inner city and the north end. This program that we have here which is a wonderful program, I don't think will actually attract a lot of development in the inner city or the north end because the backdrop of development is occurring amongst many boarded up and vacant, many boarded up and derelict homes. We've got some unsightly and untidy properties, there is a couple of properties that come to mind or away that where there's garbage on the public boulevard that hasn't been cleaned up for weeks, almost a month and a half now and it makes me wonder.

You said some things that made me think well if we do have these By-laws in place why aren't we doing anything about actually cleaning up the properties and putting them on the tax bill. So that's an important backdrop to understand amongst this particular really good initiative that we're taking here today and making a great step towards championing, building within the inner city and taking up the challenge to build within the vacant lots of the City of Winnipeg. But I do fear and I do have some concerns about how this program will have a positive effect in the inner city, some of the areas of the downtown and in the north end.

Having said that though, there are some heroic development charges that are happening right now with the Winnipeg Housing Redevelopment Corporation, Lazarus Housing, West Broadway Housing, Development Corporation, H.O.P.P., many others, Centennial Neighbourhood Initiative, there's tons of those non profit community organizations, development corporations, north end housing that are really, you know taking up a challenge and this thing will really help them a lot, but at the same time I think we have a responsibility to the city as City Councillors and as city administration to really look hard at our

By-laws and if we do have the tools and the power to actually clean up our city, then I think it would create a better canvas, a better backdrop for development both within the inner city and the north end. But I do want to say that I really do thank the Mayor and E.P.C. and my colleagues who made this great initiative happen. I know there's definitely more work to do and I appreciate the comments from my colleague from Fort Rouge. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Councillor Vandal.

Councillor Vandal: Thank you Mr. Speaker. I rise in support of this motion, simply because I think it's an another tool in the tool kit to address the housing need in the city of Winnipeg. And if you look back at the last ten years back in 1997 where none of these programs existed say for the number two, the Home Renovation Tax Assistance Program which gave support to renovation on a very, very minor scale, but ten years later we have this Residential Infill Program, the multifamily, mixed use building program, partnerships with the federal government, the provincial government on Winnipeg Housing and Homelessness Initiative which is essential I think to the advancement of our city.

I think the idea of infill housing credits is really attached to the prosperity and the future of our city. We do have emerging areas such as Sage Creek in Waverley West and Transcona area where there's loads of new construction there, but I think renovating and rejuvenating and bringing life back to the infill areas are essential.

And if there is one criticism, is that I think we need to in the future look at the renovation side. Presently, once this program is approved we're going to be offering a 10,000 dollar credit for new infill housing, actual new homes and that's fine, but on the renovation side, we're offering a max of 1,500 dollars credit over a three year period on renovation. And I think the challenge of our government, of the provincial government as well, is to give ordinary citizens a greater incentive to invest in their existing homes and by a greater incentive I'm talking about a greater level of renovation tax credit.

So I hope that in this upcoming year that the Housing Committee led by Councillor Pagtakhan and myself and I think Councillor Wyatt can sit down and do some consultations and some good work on how we best achieve that end. So I'm looking forward to the next year of rolling up our sleeves and getting some good work done with the housing committee to bring recommendations ultimately forward to Council to advance the infill housing costs. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Councillor Fielding.

Councillor Fielding: Good morning. I rise today in support of the new downtown housing tax credit initiatives introduced by Mayor Katz earlier in the month. My comments will be brief and really address items one through three and I know Councillor Vandal talked about some others as well including the multiple family dwelling grant program, Residential Infill Tax Program as well the home renovations program.

First off my general belief is the city has a limited role when it comes to housing. That is a provincial responsibility. With that being said, I very much like the package of programs we brought forward in the last month. The mixed use, multiple family dwelling grant program will encourage development and redevelopment of vacant properties into vibrant mixed use buildings and will develop a great living, urban living, compact urban living for downtown areas.

These incentives are valued somewhere in the neighbourhood of I believe ten million dollars for the downtown area, five million dollars for mature areas and I strongly believe we as a city need to look at more initiatives like this to encourage people whether you're living downtown or the some of the mature areas of our city. What I like about this initiative best is that its private sector driven. It's not trying to create a state run housing initiative. Revitalization in mature neighbourhoods will not occur by governments stepping in creating housing but by providing

incentives for the private sector to drive this growth to happen.

We need to ensure that more people are living downtown. I think it's in the neighbourhood of 15,000 people live in the downtown area right now. Whether that number should be 45,000 or 70,000, what needs to be addressed is more people need to be down there enjoying the quality of life that's down there and that's what's going to drive the development downtown and mature neighbourhoods.

You know, let's be clear with this, this program, it's not going to immediately revitalize the downtown and not everyone's going to want to move to a mature neighbourhoods or to downtown in of itself. People like myself with young families enjoy the quality of the suburbs that you have whether you're in St. Norbert, whether you're in Charleswood, whether you're in St. James, but what we need to be doing in these types of programs is targeting the people that are going to be there, whether it be the empty nesters, whether it be the young professionals, these are the people that are going to drive these types of initiatives and drive downtown and make it more of a vital place for us to grow and prosper.

If you build the incentives for development, the people and services will come downtown. Although I'm very much supportive of this program, there's a couple of elements where I think we could improve upon it whether it be in the next three years or so. First off, the cost of housing in condominiums, I noticed in St. James alone its gone up last year I think its somewhere in the neighbourhood of 17%, this year it's gone from 10 to 12% so I think just in terms of some the caps, I'd like to see the 250,000 dollar cap revaluated whether it be every year, every two years to ensure that we're making, to ensure that we are incorporating the growth in terms of housing and the values of housing.

And another element I think was written up in the Free Press over the weekend, in that piece is really encouraging the province, the province to step up to the plate in terms of the education tax and that's going to be a potent component of redeveloping downtown if we can have a matching program that's brought forward to the province. So I encourage us and administration to work with the province to match funding like this.

So in conclusion, I very much like this initiative. I'd like to congratulate Mayor Katz as well as Councillor Wyatt for bringing forth this administration from administration and as well for addressing this. Thank you very much.

Mr. Speaker: Councillor Swandel.

Councillor Swandel: Thank you Mr. Speaker. I rise to support the clause and just want to get everybody's attention back to what we set out to do here. What we set out to do here was to create an incentive package that would bring home ownership through the infill tax credit program into some of our areas that are, that are deteriorating and in particular, in the inner city.

You know, it troubles me a bit to hear everybody stand up and say I support but I want to latch on with all these other issues. You know, there's no better way to deal with those issues than to increase ownership. When people have ownership of property in the neighbourhood, they self police in that neighbourhood to a certain extent. They ask their neighbours to clean their garbage off the boulevard. They ask them to keep their house in a tidy and well run fashion and there's no downside to this, this is not something that we should attach any negative comments to.

This is actually a three million dollar commitment from the City of Winnipeg that will bring 600 new, estimated 600 new infill homes into much needed areas of the city. The analysis was done, and the bar was set because we know where those homes are going to go. We know there going to end up in the most needed neighbourhoods. They're not going to end up in the suburbs.

This is, for all intensive purpose, this By-law is, or this tax credit is going to do

what it set out to do, and that's to bring new homeowners into these old neighbourhoods which will greatly improve the neighbourhood in general.

Now, to suggest that we should be doing more in other areas, well we should look back and see what we have done. We are working right now; we have improved our By-laws in unsightly and untidy, or unsightly and untidy and the vacant and boarded buildings By-law. We have worked on those; we have made improvements to make them work better. We've made huge commitments in policing in the inner city and in the downtown so these things are being worked with and worked on and they are improving.

This By-law does not in any way do anything that will have a negative impact on those areas and we're already working on those areas which will have a positive impact in this tax credit program. So I just want to remind all of my colleagues here today, that this is something that will do what it set out to do, 600 new infill homes in the City of Winnipeg and in particular in the inner city will be a great benefit for all the citizens and all the taxpayers of Winnipeg.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you Councillor, no further speakers. Councillor Wyatt.

Councillor Wyatt: Thank you Mr. Speaker. I rise of course to support the report like yourself, I'll keep my comments very brief. This, these recommendations are very practical. This is a break through program. I credit the Mayor and all Members of Council for pursuing this. This is a program which will facilitate, there's a list of the neighbourhoods on this report. These are existing neighbourhoods, Mr. Speaker. These aren't new or emerging neighbourhoods, these are existing neighbourhoods that could see assistance through this program and it should be said that yes, the needs are crucial in the inner city and in the older, the very old neighbourhoods of old Winnipeg but I can also tell you that there's many neighbourhoods which are just as old in some of the suburb, so-called suburban communities that made up the original thirteen municipalities of the city and some of these neighbourhoods are also borderline neighbourhoods.

So the last thing we want to see, Mr. Speaker is a deterioration of existing neighbourhoods that are working right now. This helps. Not too long ago there was a recent report with regards to what is a growing phenomenon in the United States and to be predicted a phenomenon now in Canada, and that is, the decline and indeed the deterioration of suburbs. And these are older suburbs built in the 1950's, 60's and 70's which have not seen the type of renovation and renewal that should be there and are necessary.

It's crucial for our tax base Mr. Speaker, to support these existing neighbourhoods because we know that once they fall off, once they are in complete and total disrepair or there is a need for massive, there is a need then for massive amounts of reinvestment and we are really behind the eight ball. This will assist in preventing that from happening.

I've talked to some of the builders out there, those involved with building infill houses. There's a number of them in the city with the strong housing market; it makes it even more plausible and more attractive to invest in these sorts of infill housing. They have indicated to me that this program would be extremely welcome, that this would give them an advantage to be able to say look, build and invest and have a home in an existing neighbourhood verses in one of these new suburban neighbourhoods that are emerging.

This is a positive program. I agree with previous speakers we need the provincial government on board, there's no doubt about it that the province, their support would be crucial and indeed, we already have the program. They would not have to hire one administrator, not one penny would have to be spent on administration from the provincial side if they were to participate in our program and it's against future taxes Mr. Speaker.

These are taxes that are not on our payroll right now; not on our revenue

stream right now. These are taxes that do not exist. They're taxes against homes that do not exist. We would be in a sense Mr. Speaker, creating new homes, new taxes, and once the credit is up, these are new revenues flowing into the city.

So it's a positive program all around and indeed, if the provincial government does participate in the future it would make it even stronger. So, I think it's innovative, it's creative, it's very unique and indeed as was pointed out, more has to be done in the tougher neighbourhoods of our city where renewal is needed. This will be a part of it. It's not the entire solution but it's a part of it. So I encourage all Members of Council to support this new initiative. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Councillor Smith.

Councillor Smith: I obviously support this clause. Let me tell you this, you know developers, when they plan subdivisions, their cost is lower. Infill housing, they got to go here to there, all over the place. It is expensive. That's why this grant program is useful. It makes it more of a level playing field to where we're going to be able to get houses built on vacant lots.

Let me tell you this, it's going to be a tremendous difference. You know it's and I'm really quite surprised that this has come out of this; I would call suburban controlled Council. In fact, I might even call it right-wing Council. And yet this is, this strengthens the whole city. If part of your city needs revitalization, you want to revitalize it because it brings tax dollars in; it helps the suburbs as well as the inner city. So let's be unanimous on this. This is worth supporting whole heartedly.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, no further speakers. On clause 1, all in favour, Contrary? Carried. Unanimous vote on clauses 2 to 8 as consent agenda, all in favour, Councillor Clement.

Councillor Clement: Motion 2 which is the clause 2, I'll move referral, automatic referral.

Mr. Speaker: All in favour, automatic referral, all in favour, contrary? Carried. Item 2 to 8 all in favour, contrary? Carried as consent. E.P.C. motions, we have two. One is the, oh special report, I'm sorry, I see some people sitting and waiting for this. I'm waiting for it. Mr. Mayor, I believe you have a report that is to be dealt with May 16th of this morning.

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE
DATED MAY 16, 2007

Mayor Katz: Yes thank you Mr. Speaker. I did get to introduce the previous clause but I never got to close, so I will take this opportunity to thank Councillor Smith for that compliment which I believe it was meant to be. Continuing Mr. Speaker is that I would like to move that the rule be suspended and that the report of May 16, 2007 be considered.

Mr. Speaker: All in favour, contrary? Carried.

Item 1 - Winnipeg Fire Paramedic Service - Negotiations between the City of Winnipeg and the United Fire Fighters of Winnipeg File GU-4.9

Mr. Speaker: Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Katz: Mr. Speaker, I move that the item 1 be adopted.

Mr. Speaker: All in favour, contrary? Carried. You want to speak to it? Councillor Clement. You've got your, you can speak to it. Item 1.

Councillor Clement: Thank you Mr. Speaker. I'd like to speak to this because I've been waiting for ten or eleven years to have the opportunity to speak to this issue in the chamber.

It's an issue that's been, frankly, festering in our community for a long time and although it was tucked away nice and neatly one time way back in a budget document, there's never been a formal debate on this issue on this floor and it was never ever voted on formally as a clause on this floor. I know that because was here all of that time. And I found it very frustrating that it didn't matter who

the Mayor was, couldn't get them to understand that.

There was a reason for that of course, because there were some huge issues with this initiative and it was being driven politically and administratively. There wasn't a lot of interaction in my view with the unions involved.

So I'd like to start by thanking the heads of the firefighters union and the people at union for sitting down and working this out with, particularly Jim Brennan and Sudhir and with Cliff Jeffers and I'd also like to thank the Mayor for his guidance in this because I think that he's played a major role in this, something that the two previous Mayors in my view, didn't do.

Not that they didn't see what the problems were, but they were trying to approach it in a different fashion and it wasn't working itself out and I believe that the Mayor has provided some proper counsel in this regard and that's why it's finally here before us today.

You can't have an agreement like this unless your unions are willing to make some concessions, which is what they had to do. We had legal agreements in place. Legal agreements that we had voted on. But it would just moved forward anyway without the appropriate consultations, without trying to work out the changes that were required at the time. And I am very happy to be able to stand up here, in fact the only thing that was ever voted on in this chamber in regards to these issues was the name changed to the firefighters. Two of us didn't support it.

That was the only thing, Mr. Speaker that was ever voted on in this chamber about this issue ever, as far as I'm concerned. And the, in this of course, there will be some alteration to that as well, so that the two groups will have their own identities under one head, which I think is a great compromise and they obviously feel the same way.

I'm very pleased, Mr. Speaker, for the first time that this issue has ever been raised informally, formally or otherwise in this chamber or anywhere else in our various meetings, that I can actually stand here and support it because I think that what's in front of us is a great solution. I think it's something that has provided an opportunity for everybody to come together, to create a solution and it's been a long time coming.

And unfortunately, that's not the way that this came forward initially. That was unfortunate. It's one of the reasons; in fact it's the main reason why I never supported amalgamation at any time, ever. But I'm supporting it now and I'm thrilled that we're finally going to put this behind us, and it was about time that this type of an agreement was dealt with in an appropriate way which is what's been done Mr. Speaker and I just couldn't let it slip by without standing up and saying a few words in that regard and congratulating the players that were at the table in this regard Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you Councillor Clement. Councillor Gerbasi.

Councillor Gerbasi: Oh I thought it was Councillor Vandal next.

Mr. Speaker: No, you're. Dan Vandal.

Councillor Gerbasi: I'm trying to get some stuff.

Mr. Speaker: You want him to go first? Okay, Councillor Vandal.

Councillor Vandal: Thank you. Thank you Mr. Speaker. There are historians and then there are revisionist historians. So after having discussed and debated this issue for the last ten years, I'm very, very proud to stand up and support this amalgamation that we have here this morning.

I want to begin by thanking Mayor Sam Katz for his leadership. I want to thank Councillor Gord Steeves for his leadership and the Executive Committee for finally bringing this forward in a positive way. And I cannot tell you how many times Mr. Speaker I've had people approach me over the last eight years from all facets of the city, telling me that

amalgamation can never work. It's the wrong model. What we need to do is send the Ambulance Services up to the province and keep the Fire Services at the city and do what every other city in Canada is doing.

I've never believed that, those statements and I'm glad to stand up here this morning and say that when the good will is there, when the people and the unions, the associations, the political leadership, the administration are aligned and most importantly, when everybody is dealing in good faith that we can achieve great things in this city and in fact, we could lead, we can be on the cutting edge of the very best service in the entire country.

So I'm proud to stand up here and support this motion and I can say that it's been a long time coming and it was certainly, it worked on paper. We knew that on paper, this was the best service to deliver to the citizens of the city. It took a little longer than we thought but common sense prevailed and I want to congratulate the Executive Committee for their leadership. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Councillor Gerbasi.

Councillor Gerbasi: Thank you Mr. Speaker. I also rise in support of this and I co-agree with the comments of Councillor Vandal. It has been a long haul for many of us. I would like to, I don't have the documentation about anything that specifically came to Council so I can't really debate Councillor Clement on the history of it. But I think one thing to be very clear about is that, and I used to be a member of E.P.C. and I used to chair the committee that was dealing with this issue for many years, and I can tell you that Councils, that the majority of Councillors have always supported amalgamation, have never wavered from that.

There's not been a Councillor that's come forward to challenge that over the last ten years, that has been our course and it's been a very difficult course, but Council has been committed to that goal and I'm very impressed and pleased that Mayor Katz and E.P.C. and the people involved in all of this and of course Chief Brennan I think has been a key person in that as well as all of the unions involved.

But I think the point is that, whether we have an official debate on the floor of Council, I can tell you, hours and hours and hours of work over the last ten years of members of E.P.C. have gone on discussing this delicate issue to try to figure out how to best serve the citizens of Winnipeg and I think today what the good news is and it's really nothing but good news, is that we are now going to have a cutting edge Fire Paramedic Service in Canada.

It says in the report, the City of Winnipeg is the first Canadian jurisdiction to negotiate comprehensive work-sharing agreements between firefighters and paramedics. That is a very significant statement and it's something to be very proud of for everybody. So, you know, whatever the fact is, the commitment which was not always easy to keep a commitment to amalgamation with the difficulty and the ugliness and the challenges, this Council did that. We stuck to it until it was solved. And so I think everyone should feel very good about that today.

The key thing is, is that we have an increasing demand for emergency response services, for medical services and we found a way to deal with it. We found a way to keep the employees satisfied that their sense of identity or whatever it is that people need, their working conditions, we hope will see improvements, we'll see the training that people have wanted, that we will see all these things happen and I'm very, I feel very good today and I'm very pleased with the work that the Mayor has done and with Chief Brennan and all of the union leaders, thank you everybody for coming to something that's going to provide better service, and we're talking about saving lives, we're talking about emergency medical service and when someone has a heart attack we'll be there faster and better, so that's what's really important here today and it's also important that our employees feel valued and that our city is a leader and that's what we are today. So

I'm very proud today. Thank you Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Councillor Wyatt.

Councillor Wyatt: Thank you Mr. Speaker. I can tell you that there were times in the last five years where I wanted to blow off this amalgamation and see the end of it. It was extremely frustrating at times, the issues arising out of it, but I believe Mr. Speaker, it's crucial to give credit where credit is due and to say it very clearly here on the floor of Council, and that is, it was the Mayor who after getting elected decided to take this challenge on, and went after this challenge, went out and looked at other jurisdictions, flew to San Diego.

So, Mr. Speaker, we're here today because the Mayor decided to grapple with this issue and so I'd like to thank the Mayor for the fact that he's taken this on personally to bring this issue to a head, because it was just going on and on and on. And what it needed was leadership and the Mayor provided that. And that brought it to a head and made this, made it possible to deal with this and to have this here today.

This wouldn't be happening here today, Mr. Speaker, to be quite blunt, it wouldn't be happening here today if it wasn't for the hard work and the leadership of Mayor Katz on this issue, because this has been going on for years. For years and years and years, and he through his leadership, he brought it to a head and made it happen.

And also, should note that there's other folks who should be thanked as well for their participation and assistance. Alex Forest of the United Firefighters and all the members of the United Firefighters for working and coming to the table on this issue as well as Travis Hildebrand of PEAPOD, the paramedics for coming together and making this possible today Mr. Speaker.

And finally, I want to also mention the new Chief, Chief Brennan and Annitta Stenning. Their hard work and dedication clearly is what has allowed this to come forward as well. They're behind the scenes, their work on this, Mr. Speaker, was absolutely crucial. So this has been a long, long, long road and we're finally seeing the benefits of strong leadership to bring this issue to a head and now, provide a core service, improve a core service to the citizens of our city unlike any service now seen in this country. And we have a lot to be proud of for that, Mr. Speaker. So thank you very much.

Mr. Speaker: Mr. Mayor, closing.

Mayor Katz: Thank you Mr. Speaker. I'm very gratified to see that Council very much endorses this and I'll make my comments which will apply to both items, Mr. Speaker.

We definitely had a problem, there's no question about it and I think Councillor Clement has made some comments on it and so has Councillor Wyatt, and there were certainly, there was political advice that was given to stay out of this, Mr. Speaker. You probably know me by now, that's not the kind of Mayor I am. I jumped in with both feet and a lot of people thought I would end up drowning in the quicksand and I can tell you that didn't happen because of the leadership that was shown by some of the people that have been mentioned today.

We were very fortunate at that time that it was at that point in time Acting Chief Brennan, it is now Chief Brennan and I think his skills came through. The leadership of Alex Forest from the UFFW along with his executive who pushed very hard and I'm very grateful for that. Travis Hildebrand who's not here today from PEAPOD but I do see Mark Savard is here, they came forward as well, and we all know the concerns and the issues along with Kent Brown from the senior paramedics, as was mentioned earlier, the CAO Annitta Stenning, Cliff Jeffers and Sudhir who handled the negotiations.

But the key thing that happened here Mr. Speaker, for the first time in a long time, we can actually stand here today and say that Winnipeg is a leader. We are doing things here today that are not happening elsewhere in Canada and people will be

following Winnipeg's lead. We are certainly making sure that the safety of our citizens is the number one priority and of course, the safety of firefighters and paramedics.

But the fact that we're able to work with all unions coming to the table and yes, when you sit down to resolve this type of problem which is a decade old problem, there is give and take. And everybody came in there with an open mind, with trust and I believe we resolved a major issue to the benefit of our citizens, to the benefit of all three unions and to me, that is very positive and I am very grateful for all those who participated.

And as Councillor Gerbasi did mention as I look around, when it comes to matters of health care, because many of us fall into that category of baby boomers, this is a growing problem Mr. Speaker, and I'm glad we're taking this step and I just want to thank everybody for participating and I hope that Council will endorse this unanimously. Thank you very much Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you Mr. Mayor. I will not speak. I just want to echo everything that's been said in the chambers. I thank the administration and thanks to Alex Forest and the union. It was a long battle, but it's finally here. Okay, now we'll call the question. All in favour, contrary? It's carried. Item 2 now, Mr. Mayor.

Item 2 - Winnipeg Fire Paramedic Service - Negotiations between the City of Winnipeg and the Professional Paramedics Association of Winnipeg File GU-4.9

Mr. Speaker: Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Katz: Mr. Speaker I won't speak on this. I think I've already done that but I will move that Item 2 be adopted.

Mr. Speaker: All in favour, contrary? Carried. Thank you.

EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE MOTIONS

Mr. Speaker: Two motions, a motion number 1, Councillor Gerbasi, Mayor Katz, is a Notice of Motion that'll be to the next meeting of Council.

Motion No. 1
Moved by Councillor Gerbasi
Seconded by His Worship Mayor Katz

WHEREAS public transit provides essential and universal mobility to residents within Canada's urban areas;

AND WHEREAS public transit increases roadway capacity by offering people a transportation choice other than the automobile;

AND WHEREAS public transit reduces greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution;

AND WHEREAS transit infrastructure investment needs for Canadian transit systems in the period 2006 to 2010 stand at $20.7-billion, with over $5-billion of this amount not fundable under current programs;

AND WHEREAS municipalities have inadequate revenue tools to finance the full cost of transit infrastructure;

AND WHEREAS, in response to these challenges and opportunities, the Big City Mayors' Caucus of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities has developed a National Transit Strategy containing the following key elements:

a) investment in public transit in the form of sustainable federal funding in the amount of $2 billion per year;

b) a commitment to integrated land use and transportation planning by participating municipalities;

c) federal tax incentives for transit users;

d) research that promotes information sharing and innovation among transit systems and identifies policy approaches

all governments can use to increase ridership;

e) appropriate accountability measures;

THEREFORE BE IT IS RESOLVED THAT City Council:

1. Endorses the National Transit Strategy put forward by the Big City Mayors' Caucus of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and;

2. Directs the City Clerk to forward copies of this resolution to:

•Stephen Harper, Prime Minister of Canada

•Lawrence Cannon, Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities

• all local Members of Parliament

•the Federation of Canadian Municipalities

• the Canadian Urban Transit Association

Mr. Speaker: Motion number 2, Councillor Vandal and Councillor Pagtakhan we dealt with that, this will be an automatic referral.

Motion No. 2
Moved by Councillor Vandal
Seconded by Councillor Pagtakhan

WHEREAS the 2007 Home Renovation Tax Assistance Program will have identical eligibility requirements as the 2006 program;

AND WHEREAS the HRTA programs' eligible assessed value has lagged behind the average resale value of the targeted homes in the City of Winnipeg;

AND WHEREAS the maximum annual tax credit available for an eligible residents has not changed since 1997;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the City of Winnipeg consult with the home renovation industry before the 2008 HRTA program with an aim to:

1. Increase the eligible assessed value of the program to an average resale value of a pre 1982 home in Winnipeg;

2. Increase the annual tax credit available for eligible residents to an amount which will act as a significant incentive for renovating existing pre 1982 homes in existing neighborhoods.

Mr. Speaker: By-laws, Mr. Mayor.

EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION OF BY-LAWS

Mayor Katz: Thank you Mr. Speaker. I move that By-law No. 46/2007 be read a second time.

Mr. Speaker: All in favour, contrary? Carried.

Clerk: By-law 46/2007.

Mayor Katz: I move that By-law No. 46/2007 be read a third time and that same be passed and ordered to be signed and sealed.

Mr. Speaker: All in favour, contrary? Carried. Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Katz: Mr. Speaker, I'll move the following By-laws be read a first time, By-laws No. 121/2007, 122/2007, 123/2007 and 124/2007.

Mr. Speaker: All in favour, contrary? Carried.

Clerk: By-laws No. 121/2007, 122/2007, 123/2007 and 124/2007.

Mayor Katz: Mr. Speaker, I move that By-laws No. 121/2007 to 124/2007 both inclusive be read a second time.

Mr. Speaker: All in favour, contrary? Carried.

Clerk: By-laws No. 121/2007 to 124/2007 both inclusive.

Mayor Katz: I'll move that the rule be suspended and By-laws No. 121/2007 to 124/2007 both inclusive be read a third

time and that same be passed and ordered to be signed and sealed.

Mr. Speaker: All in favour, contrary? Carried. E.P.C. Consideration walk on By-law, Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Katz: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that the rules be suspended and By-law No. 116/2007 be read a first time.

Mr. Speaker: All in favour, contrary? Carried.

Clerk: By-law No. 116/2007.

Mayor Katz: Mr. Speaker, I move that By-law No. 116/2007 be read a second time.

Mr. Speaker: All in favour, contrary? Carried.

Clerk: By-law No. 116/2007.

Mayor Katz: I move the rule be suspended and By-law No. 116/2007 be read a third time and that same be passed and ordered to be signed and sealed.

Mr. Speaker: All in favour, contrary? Carried. Question period. Councillor Gerbasi.

EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE QUESTION PERIOD

Councillor Gerbasi: Thank you Mr. Speaker. I have a question about the Housing Committee because that committee was appointed as far as I understand, there was a Chair appointed and I believe there was members appointed, but I'm not aware of them having had a meeting as of yet and it's already June and I know housing groups in the community are wondering, you know, is this, what is the role of this committee, is it going to be discussing items related particularly to the Winnipeg Housing Homelessness Initiative as it was set out to do? So, that's my question.

Mr. Speaker: Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Katz: Thank you Councillor Gerbasi. Mr. Speaker, the Housing Committee does exist, Councillor Pagtakhan is the Chair along with Councillors Wyatt and Vandal. We just heard a little while ago that Councillor Vandal is ready to roll up his sleeves, so I assume to say, a meeting taking place in the very near future, what I'm happy to do is to consult with Councillor Pagtakhan the Chair and get back to Councillor Gerbasi, but I'm quite sure that Councillor Pagtakhan will probably speak to her directly. Thank you very much Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Your second, that's it? Councillor Fielding.

Councillor Fielding: Yes, Mr. Mayor, can you please advise the Council on the status of the dispute between the federal government and the provincial government in terms of outstanding ambulance receivables resulting in big bills.

Mr. Speaker: Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Katz: Thank you Mr. Speaker. As I think the Members of Council are aware of, there is approximately 9.8 million dollars outstanding at this particular point in time that is comprised of 6.2 million dollars and 3.6 million dollars. The 3.6 million dollars Mr. Speaker, refers to outstanding invoices that are in the process of being paid, insurance claims, etc. The 6.2 million dollars has directly to do with the situation where people may be on social assistance or have treaty status and that's worth 6.2. I can tell you Mr. Speaker, that myself and the public service have had dialogue with the province. I do believe that the province acknowledges that these monies are owing and I believe that these will be paid in a very short period of time Mr. Speaker. We have had very positive dialogue, there are many alternatives to addressing this issue, mine has always been to speak to the parties at hand and I believe that through conversation with the Premier, this matter should be brought to an end in the very near future.

Mr. Speaker: That's it? Councillor Thomas.

Councillor Thomas: Yes, Mayor Katz last month during question period in answer to a question which I posed with regard to the state of the fieldhouse at Kelvin Community Centre, you informed me that you had been told that the fieldhouse was now ready for occupancy. Since the information which I received from our Director of Community Services was different, I wish to know from where you received your information and when.

Mr. Speaker: Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Katz: Thank you Mr. Speaker. I'm not sure when the Councillor refers to Director of Community Services, who she's specifically referring to, but I hope she's referring to Mr. Clive Wightman who is the Director and I can tell you that the information came straight from that department from Clive Wightman who is the Director of that department.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you. Second supplementary question Councillor Thomas. That's it? Thank you. Councillor Vandal.

Councillor Vandal: Thank you Mr. Speaker, through you to the Mayor. Several weeks ago you've sent out surveys and questions to the leaders of the three major political parties of the upcoming provincial election. I'm wondering if you could share with this Council the responses that you have received back from those three parties.

Mr. Speaker: Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Katz: Partially Mr. Speaker, I have received, the Premier did respond and it just was at, very much understands the concerns of the city, that today is much different then it was in days gone by where we have specific needs, we have the majority of the people living in urban centres, no longer living in rural communities and I believe he has prepared a, committed to more infrastructure dollars. I can also tell you that the leader of the Conservative party responded through the media, when we talked about having new sources of revenue, growth revenues and we talked about having an equivalency of ninety percent of one point of P.S.T. which would basically no longer make us having to rely on grants and the city could now determine its own future and decide how to spend the money wisely. They did come forward with fifty, half, fifty percent of one point. So there has been some comments as a result of that. I do believe its positive, but the realities are that we can no longer continue to do what we're doing and it would be much better if we were in a position where as opposed to getting grants, where we're told how to spend that money, i.e. there are conditions attached, that this would be the equivalency of, it would mean no more additional taxes, would be revenue neutral, but we would also have access to a growth revenue and we could also be control of our own destiny. Many years ago, we were told to clean up our house. Our house Mr. Speaker is clean. I think this Council is doing a remarkable job with the assets that we have access to, to make sure we're running the city properly. I think we've proven that to whoever may be in power and I think now we should be given what we need down the road. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you. Your second supplementary Councillor Vandal.

Councillor Vandal: Perhaps you've already answered my supplementary, but I'll ask it anyways. Is there a particular policy from either of the leaders which you feel is, will best serve the interests of Winnipeggers into the future.

Mr. Speaker: Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Katz: I thank Councillor Vandal. First of all, at this particular point in time, I have not seen a response from the leader of the Liberal party, Jon Gerrard, I've only had communication with the other two. The only one that I can really comment on is like when we discussed having something specific, i.e. ninety percent of one point, but the only response that comes forward so far has been from the leader of the Conservative party and I said earlier that was fifty percent of one point. The leader of the N.D.P. Premier Doer basically has said that he was prepared to look at more infrastructure

money because we did talk about infrastructure and crime and safety, but I haven't got any specific details at that particular point in time. But I do believe that they do understand the needs of the city and that the city has grown up and we can handle you know the monies and make sure we do what's right, but I can't give Councillor Vandal any more details because that's all I have to date.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you Mr. Mayor. That's it for questions? No further questions. Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development report of May 1, 2007, Councillor Swandel.

REPORT OF THE STANDING POLICY COMMITTEE ON PROPERTY AND DEVELOPMENT DATED MAY 1, 2007

Councillor Swandel: Thank you Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to introduce the report of May 1, 2007 and move adoption of the consent Agenda Items 1 to 13.

Mr. Speaker: All in favour, contrary? Carried. Motions none. Consideration of By-laws Councillor Swandel.

STANDING POLICY COMMITTEE ON PROPERTY AND DEVELOPMENT CONSIDERATION OF BY-LAWS

Councillor Swandel: Mr. Speaker, I will move that the following By-laws be read a first time, By-laws No. 111/2007, 112/2007, 113/2007, 114/2007 and 115/2007.

Mr. Speaker: All in favour, contrary? Carried.

Clerk: By-laws No. 111/2007, 112/2007, 113/2007, 114/2007 and 115/2007.

Councillor Swandel: Mr. Speaker, I will move that the By-laws No. 111/2007 to 115/2007 both inclusive be read a second time.

Mr. Speaker: All in favour, contrary? Carried.

Clerk: By-laws No. 111/2007 to 115/2007 both inclusive.

Councillor Swandel: Mr. Speaker, I'll move that the rules be suspended and By-laws No. 111/2007 to 115/2007 both inclusive be read a third time and that same be passed in ordered to be signed and sealed.

Mr. Speaker: All in favour, contrary? Carried. Questions, none. Let's get on to the Standing Policy Committee on Protection and Community Services, there is no report. There is no motions. No Consideration of By-laws. Question period, none. Standing Policy Committee on Infrastructure Renewal and Public Works, the report of May 8, 2007, Councillor Clement.

REPORT OF THE STANDING POLICY COMMITTEE ON INFRASTRUCTURE RENEWAL AND PUBLIC WORKS DATED MAY 8, 2007

Councillor Clement: Thank you Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to bring forward the report of May 8, 2007 of the Public Works Committee and I'm move clauses 1 to 4 as consent.

Mr. Speaker: Councillor Smith, which one? Number 3. 1 and 4 is consent. All in favour, clause number 3, Councillor.

Item 3 - Revised Boulevard Maintenance By-law File PB-1

Mr. Speaker: Councillor Clement you want to hear what Councillor Smith has to say.

Councillor Clement: Yes.

Mr. Speaker: Okay, Councillor Smith.

Councillor Smith: Yes, you know I think the committee didn't, doesn't have enough to do, obviously they're overlooking all the problems of the city that is their responsibility and they're putting forward something that cannot be enforced and it seems to me we should not be supporting it.

Why not leave it the way it is? In my ward we have the most boulevard plantings of flowers in the City of Winnipeg. They don't ask permission. You know, one of the

things in the, key issues it says, to eliminate red tape. Well no one asks the city for permission anyway. You notice in this report they don't tell you the number of people that have asked, because I would suspect it could be none. They don't mention it.

And what are we going to do? What about vegetables? You know, let me tell you this, it might be a good thing for people who are in low income to plant vegetables in their boulevard. Why not? Or why not people who don't have that, who are not low income planting vegetables to give to Winnipeg Harvest? You know it just doesn't make any sense.

Here is another clause that we're going to pass and it means nothing. What will happen if someone in violation? Going to give a fine? You don't pay the fine what'll you going to do? Throw them in jail, put it on their taxes? You know it just doesn't make any sense. And then you're going to have to classify some things. How about herbs, can you grow herbs in the boulevard? You know, right now things are going along nicely. People are planting flowers. It's great. I see no reason for this clause, so we can junk it and not have to worry about adding more words to the city By-laws.

Mr. Speaker: Councillor Gerbasi.

Councillor Gerbasi: Thanks, I just couldn't resist the opportunity to quote the famous John Lennon; all we're saying is give peas a chance. Sorry. No, but the truth is I think there's a minor issue here with, in the inner city where some people may want to plant vegetables and I think that I did notice the wording of this is that as approved by the Director of Public Works, so fruits and vegetables except as approved by the Director of Public Works, so people will be able to I assume plant fruits and vegetables if they get special permission or is that what that means or am I misinterpreting it?

Anyway, I think there might be some situations in the inner city, for example, the woman who did speak here earlier made a fairly powerful case for in some cases exceptions being made. So those are my comments, thank you.

Mr. Speaker: No further speakers. Councillor Clement. Oh, Councillor Clement closing.

Councillor Clement: Yes, thank you Mr. Speaker. Interesting issue. To actually answer the query by Councillor Gerbasi, when it left Public Works without a recommendation, the issue of vegetables and fruits wasn't actually discussed. When it came to Executive Policy Committee that issue was raised and there was an amendment, I guess, of sorts, at Executive Policy Committee that vegetables and fruits would not be allowed to be planted.

The issue in terms of the Director was that there are certain cases where people want to plant herbs and so he said you know if somebody wants to plant some herbs, if they contact us, we'll deal with those on a one of basis and that's what the wording was all about. I apologize for my voice, Mr. Speaker. I'm losing it, some people might think that's a plus, I don't know.

The only thing I can say to Councillor Smith is that he is quite right, that many of the people who actually do plant things on the boulevard are living in his area. I'm sure he would like them to be able to go about their business in a legal and friendly way and so this was brought forward by the administration so that we could make a small alteration to the existing By-law and allow those few people in the city that want to do this type of thing, to do it without having to have somebody come along and tell them that they shouldn't or couldn't or that type of thing. And frankly, we were trying to solve an issue in his ward, and we think we've done that with this slight amendment, Mr. Speaker. Thanks.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you. All in favour, Contrary? Carried. No motions. Pardon? You want to be recorded in opposition? I wish you guys would do it sooner. Okay that's two. That's Councillor Thomas and Smith recorded in opposition to Item 3.

Consideration of By-laws, Councillor Clement.

STANDING POLICY COMMITTEE ON INFRASTRUCTURE RENEWAL AND PUBLIC WORKS CONSIDERATION OF BY-LAWS

Councillor Clement: Thank you Mr. Speaker. I'll move that By-law No. 125/2007 be read a first time.

Mr. Speaker: All in favour, contrary? Carried.

Clerk: By-law No. 125/2007.

Councillor Clement: I'll move that By-law No. 125/2007 be read a second time.

Mr. Speaker: All in favour, contrary? Carried.

Clerk: By-law No. 125/2007.

Councillor Clement: I'll move that the rule be suspended and By-law No. 125/2007 be read a third time and that same be passed in order to be signed and sealed.

Mr. Speaker: All in favour, contrary? Carried. Question Period. Councillor Swandel.

STANDING POLICY COMMITTEE ON INFRASTRUCTURE RENEWAL AND PUBLIC WORKS QUESTION PERIOD

Councillor Swandel: Through you Mr. Speaker, perhaps the Chair could enlighten us a little further, when Councillor Smith refers to herbs, of course those would have to be legal herbs.

Mr. Speaker: Councillor Clement.

Councillor Clement: I have a suspicion that cannabis and related plants wouldn't be acceptable Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you. Any further questions? If not, Standing Policy Committee on Finance, Councillor O'Shaughnessy. There's no report. Finance motions if any, none. Consideration of By-laws, none. Question period of Finance, none. Standing Policy Committee on Downtown Development report of April 30, 2007, Councillor Wyatt.

STANDING POLICY COMMITTEE ON DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT DATED APRIL 30, 2007

Councillor Wyatt: Mr. Speaker, I'll introduce the report and move adoption of consent Agenda Item No. 1.

Mr. Speaker: All in favour, contrary? Carried. No motions. No By-laws. Questions? No questions. Councillor Wyatt moves adjournment. Roll call.

ROLL CALL

Clerk: His Worship Mayor Katz, Councillors Browaty, Clement, Fielding, Gerbasi, Leipsic, Nordman, O'Shaughnessy, Pagtakhan, Smith, Swandel, Thomas, Vandal, Wyatt, Mr. Speaker Councillor Lazarenko.

Council Adjourned at 11:10 A.M.