EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE

QUESTION PERIOD

Minute No. 564
Councillor Gerbasi made reference to the Winnipeg Housing and Homelessness Initiative, which was scheduled to end on March 31, 2008. She noted the success of the initiative and the positive impact it had had on the inner-city and questioned if City housing programs were non-core services and would end in March 2008.

His Worship Mayor Katz noted that the Winnipeg Housing and Homelessness Initiative was a line item in the budget, which he felt should be an indication of how serious he believed the matter was and something he hoped to continue.

Councillor Gerbasi requested an update on discussion about the Initiative with the federal and provincial governments in terms of renewing the agreement to which His Worship advised that discussions to date have been very preliminary.

Councillor Vandal questioned when the report of the Urban Aboriginal Youth Strategy would come forward for discussion and adoption by Council, to which His Worship replied he would take the matter under advisement.

Councillor Vandal made reference to the Economic Opportunity Commission Report and questioned what was planned relative to the amount of business taxes that were going to be reduced in the upcoming operating budget.

His Worship stated that in the last three fiscal years, the City had been able to decrease the business tax by twenty percent across the city. He further advised that they had been able to freeze property taxes and had also been able to add to the City's core services which had been cut back significantly. He noted the report's recommendations would be part of the budget process and discussed on the floor of Council.

Councillor Gerbasi noted that the Economic Opportunity Commission Report had not been referred to the administration and requested an explanation as to why not. Councillor Gerbasi stated that it effectively puts the report into a less transparent process from the point of view of non EPC members because it will go directly through the budget.

His Worship advised that it was the intent to have more consultation. He further advised that one of the reasons he hadn't made any comments at this particular point in time about the report was because he intends to spend more time speaking to Councillors and gathering input. His Worship stated that there was no reason to believe that there would not be further consultation.

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Councillor Gerbasi noted that her concern was about the broader public-at-large in terms of feedback. She cited that if public meetings aren't held, the public would not be able to respond to the report and asked if His Worship would be amenable to undertake meetings for the public as well as for Councillors.

His Worship stated that the process which took place included a broad consultation of Unions, businesses, Councillors and City departments, and that over fifty meetings were held. He further stated that there would continue to be a consultation process.