STANDING POLICY COMMITTEE

ON PROTECTION AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

QUESTION PERIOD

Minute No. 60
Councillor Thomas questioned what changes Council made to allow the foot patrols dedicated in 1995 to later become zone officers assigned to patrol cars. Councilor Steeves replied that he would endeavour to get that information.

Councillor Thomas asked why the two beat officers in her area, one in east Elmwood and one in west Elmwood, were pulled. Councillor Steeves advised that he would ask the Winnipeg Public Service to reply directly to Councillor Thomas.

In noting that tasers had been used approximately 150 times in the City of Winnipeg, while in approximately the same time period, the entire Province of Quebec had used tasers 51 times and the City of Toronto 66 times, Councillor Vandal questioned why the City of Winnipeg was using tasers so much more proportionately than these other cities and provinces.

Councillor Steeves indicated that Edmonton had used tasers approximately 400 times during the same time period, so there was a bit of disparity in the different cities to be acknowledged. Councillor Steeves stated that pursuant to the unfortunate outcome in the Vancouver airport, he had been informed that there was a reasonably rigorous process with respect to taser use, regarding policies as to what the training was, who can use them, the protocol for using them, and reporting required after using one. He added that there was no information in the City of Winnipeg of someone being permanently, in the medium or long-term, harmed by tasers. He cautioned that the method of reporting had to be taken into consideration when considering other cities. He added that there was different ways the City classifies taser use, citing examples such as drawing a weapon but not discharging it counting as a use. He added that he doesn't know if Montreal and Toronto use the same reporting structure and noted that he was not in a position to verify any of the numbers, any of the other systems, or more importantly the details behind them.

Councillor Gerbasi noted that the Standing Policy Committee on Protection and Community Services was the appropriate committee to look at the issue of tasers and asked if the Chair of the Committee would be willing to have a full briefing update about the policies and how it was working, and all of the surrounding issues, at the next Standing Policy Committee meeting.

Councillor Steeves replied in the affirmative and indicated that he would contact the Winnipeg Public Service to determine if it would be best done in public or best done outside of a public venue.