EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE

QUESTION PERIOD

Minute No. 598
Councillor Swandel requested an update on the inland port project that was initiated by the City of Winnipeg.

His Worship Mayor Katz advised that when the whole process started, he stated that in order for it to be successful, it had to be private sector driven; it had to be under one single authority and it had to be one jurisdiction. He further advised that he has attended two meetings with many of the stakeholders along with the City's CAO and other representatives of the City of Winnipeg. He stated that the three key criteria that he based his support on have not changed and that he will continue to move in that direction.

Councillor Swandel stated that it sounded like the criteria for private sector ownership wasn't being met and that the government was in fact creating a corporation that is solely owned by the Province of Manitoba.

His Worship replied that in his one-on-one conversation with the Premier, they both agreed that this had to be private sector driven.

Councillor Swandel stated that if the Province is going to go down this route, under the auspices of private sector driven, even though the ownership lies with the Province, will the City have representation on the board.

His Worship replied that any committee or any board that has been discussed, there has always been representation from the City of Winnipeg.

Councillor Vandal noted that several weeks ago, His Worship had publicly stated that he had nothing to do with Riverside Park Management and that several days after His Worship had made that statement, it was revealed that His Worship was president of Riverside Park Management until April 2008. Councillor Vandal questioned if His Worship felt that this Council and Winnipeggers believed him when he said he had nothing to do with Riverside Park Management.

His Worship remarked that Councillor Vandal was inaccurate. He advised that he had stated on the record when asked by the media, that he had no involvement with Riverside Park. He further advised that the media were asking him if he was on the board at that particular point in time and the answer was no, which was an accurate statement.

Council Vandal commented that April 2008 was five months prior to today's date and questioned how His Worship could say that he had no dealings with Riverside Park Management.

Executive Policy Committee - Question Period (continued)

His Worship replied that since the day he was elected, he has tried to be totally transparent by setting standards and rules for this Council. He also noted that Council has rules and regulations they have to abide by. His Worship stated that when he was elected, he provided a list of the assets he had and he also provided a declaration of presents he received. His Worship further stated that he knows what has to be done and that he does it on a regular basis.

Councillor Vandal questioned if His Worship was saying that the current president of Riverside Park Management, who is the chief financial officer of the Winnipeg Goldeyes, never speaks to His Worship as president of the Winnipeg Goldeyes about any activity with Riverside Park Management?

His Worship Mayor Katz replied that with today's communication, whether it be by phone, meeting or email, for someone to think you're never going to talk to these people is rather foolish. He stated the reality is that whenever there has been an issue on this, he has recused himself.

Councillor Gerbasi questioned if a report was coming forward to Council clarifying how the accommodation tax revenue will be spent, to which His Worship replied in the affirmative.

Councillor Gerbasi questioned if there would be an increase in the amount of funding that Destination Winnipeg receives from the City to which His Worship replied that his hope would be funding in the amount of $2 million dollars for Destination Winnipeg.

Councillor Gerbasi requested confirmation on when the memorandum of understanding on the rapid transit project will be coming to Council.

His Worship replied that there would be a Council seminar first and then it would move on to Council.

Councillor Nordman referenced Council's discussions about six months ago on Upper Fort Garry, 100 Main Street, and asked if there was any information to share as to how the Friends of Upper Fort Garry are proceeding with their accumulation of land and the activity on that property.

His Worship recalled that the City of Winnipeg had an agreement with the private sector. The private sector came forward and they were prepared to give a two year extension to the Friends of Upper Fort Garry in order for them to have more time to accomplish their goal. He advised that there have been conversations with the Friends of Upper Fort Garry over the summer and that three key criteria were being looked at: 1) a new business plan; 2) acquisition of the Grain Exchange Curling Club; and 3) funding.

Executive Policy Committee - Question Period (continued)

His Worship advised that a new business plan was recently received as well as documentation outlining the plan to acquire the Grain Exchange Curling Club; and that they are still waiting for an update on the financial aspect.

Councillor Clement referenced a recent letter that went out from the League of the Physically Handicapped to residents who have handicapped passes for their vehicles wherein they were told they were going to have to pay for parking on City streets where there are meters. Councillor Clement questioned if this was accurate.

His Worship advised while parking has never been free, the department has never enforced anything. He further advised that nothing has changed; the individuals will get their passes and the City will not enforce the collection of those monies.

Councillor Browaty requested an update on the status of the replacement or refurbishment of the Public Safety Building.

His Worship noted that the department is looking at other options as the project started at one number and practically quadrupled to the point where they had to look projected expenditures and if the money was being spent wisely. He further noted that they have landed on nothing, but that there were a few opportunities being explored.

Councillor Fielding requested an update on the stadium proposal.

His Worship stated that David Asper and the University of Manitoba have an agreement to construct a brand new football stadium at the University site. In addition to that they're also looking to enhance some of the existing facilities and build some new facilities for the University of Manitoba. His Worship further stated that the project is approximately $135 million dollars. Mr. Asper has publicly stated that he will be putting in a minimum of $100 million dollars, asking the Province of Manitoba to contribute $20 million and the Federal Government to contribute $15 million.

His Worship noted that if all this happens, the land where the existing stadium is would be sold at fair market value; estimated to be somewhere between $25 and $35 million dollars. Assuming that development of the site will be retail, the City will collect property and business taxes.

Councillor Thomas reiterated the matter of residents who have handicapped passes for their vehicles and having to pay for parking on City streets where there are meters and asked that the matter be looked into.

His Worship replied that the department has told him that the status quo is being maintained - the City will not enforce the collection of monies for parking.