EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE

QUESTION PERIOD

Minute No. 331
Councillor Gerbasi noted that the Public Works Department would be hiring 75 less summer students this year to provide service in Parks and Open Spaces areas and inquired if His Worship was aware of the cut in service. His Worship replied that he was not aware of the numbers to be hired and agreed to look into the numbers and report back.

Councillor Gerbasi questioned if the Mayor, or Executive Policy Committee, was not aware that when Council accepted the efficiencies in the budget that it would lead to reduction in service.

His Worship Mayor Katz stated that all directors confirmed that there would be no cut in front line services and reiterated that he would look into this matter that Councillor Gerbasi had only recently been made aware, and would report back as soon as possible.

In noting that the indoor water park proposal at the Canad Inns Polo Park location was not proceeding and Council wants to move forward quickly, Councillor Browaty asked if consideration was given to looking at the other short listed proponents that responded to the invitation for the expressions of interest and qualifications (EOI & Q) for development proposals for an indoor water park

His Worship confirmed that as a result of what transpired to date, Canad Inns was not moving forward on the project and it was anticipated that a new expression of interest would be prepared hopefully for the next meeting of Council. Mayor Katz suggested that there was more detail available now for the EOI & Q, such as in areas like public access agreements, so this may generate more responses.

Councillor Browaty questioned if the city would entertain the proposal from Creswin Properties Ltd. even though it did not meet the criteria specifically that it did not have title or option to the land. His Worship suggested that it would be astute to let the process move forward very quickly and get proposals from whoever decides to come forward.

Councillor Browaty noted that the Mayor had stated that items such as the public access agreement would be different in the new expression of interest and inquired if His Worship had any details about what may be different from previous expressions of interest.

His Worship replied that, in his opinion, the more details put in the expression of interest the better and, going by memory, believed the public access agreement that was negotiated was for $700,000 over ten years to ensure that citizens could access the facility.

Executive Policy Committee - Question Period (continued):

Councillor Swandel questioned if there was a penalty in place for the proponent that just backed out of the water park deal for tying up $7 million of the City's money without moving forward.

His Worship Mayor Katz replied that, to his knowledge, there was no penalty and the public service would want to put some changes in the expression of interest to perhaps require a deposit. Mayor Katz advised that the City did not have large amounts of money simply sitting in the bank and that tightening up the EOI would help to avoid this situation in the future.

Councillor Swandel further inquired if there was an intent to put some sort of protection clause for the citizens of the City of Winnipeg to ensure that if 7 million was put out in a subsequent expression of interest that there would be some way to put a financial burden on the proponent to ensure they actually followed through on their commitment. His Worship replied that he would very much like to see some sort of safe guard in place, keeping in mind that Council makes the final decision.

Councillor Vandal requested an update on the status of the Long Plain's first nation's treaty land entitlement or urban reserve which was rolled out approximately three years ago. His Worship noted that he would use the term economic development zone, and stated that this was a very good project. He further advised that the City had completed its due diligence and had made arrangements to move forward on an agreement between the City, the Long Plain's first nation, and the assembly of chiefs imminently.

Councillor Vandal inquired if there would be any reports forwarded to Council prior to the entire project being signed off. His Worship advised that an agreement for services in lieu of taxes would be put in place and that said agreement was prepared and the City was ready to move forward once a response was received from the Chief.

Councillor Vandal inquired about the status of a motion pertaining to the world indigenous games in Winnipeg in 2012. His Worship replied that he did not have any new information but would follow up noting that the motion was forwarded to Destination Winnipeg and that they do have monies available through the hotel tax.

Councillor Wyatt inquired if there was an update on the status of federal / provincial infrastructure dollars, noting that construction seasons were moving by and if the public service did not start working on the projects, there was a risk of losing the entire 2009 construction season.

His Worship advised that he met with Ministers Toews and Baird and they had asked for details on some of the projects, which the City would supply and await a response on which projects they wanted to move forward with.

Executive Policy Committee - Question Period (continued):

Councillor Wyatt questioned if the City would push the federal and provincial governments so construction could get under way. His Worship reiterated that he met with the Ministers, the City was asked to supply additional information on some of the projects listed, which was being provided, so they were aware of the request, and the process was moving.

Councillor Wyatt inquired if either of the Centre Port and Stadium projects were on the list of priorities submitted to the federal government in January. His Worship noted that it was his understanding that the monies announced for CentrePort were not coming out of infrastructure money, and may have been coming out of building Canada fund. As for the stadium announcement, the Mayor stated that the federal government had put monies into the University of Manitoba for a recreational facility rather than the stadium.

In reference to the Swine Flu, Councillor Orlikow asked what the City's role was and how the City would get more information out to the public about its role and how they could help facilitate the issue.

His Worship noted that the City had a new data collection system called "first watch" that responds to key words which flag potential victims who might have contracted the virus. He stated that over the past weekend there were 41 calls for respiratory ailments and four were considered significant enough to take precautions with masks and isolation techniques. None of the four had contacted the Swine flu and city paramedics were well trained and prepared to deal with a case if the virus surfaces. Mayor Katz added that the city had a pandemic plan and in the case of a serious outbreak would implement the plan and had frequent contact with the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority (WRHA).