EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE

QUESTION PERIOD

Minute No. 476
Councillor Gerbasi referenced a press release from the City stating that private financing was to be used for the Chief Peguis Trail. Councillor Gerbasi requested that His Worship explain why private financing was being used when public financing was cheaper, according to comments His Worship had earlier made.

His Worship Mayor Katz stated that the Public Service continually investigates the P3's that were committed to and watches the market to determine if changes need to be made. He noted that it was likely time for the City's policy of borrowing to be looked at and that Council would probably see it being discussed in the very near future to ensure sure that the City was making the right decisions.

Councillor Gerbasi questioned what His Worship could do to reassure Council that a reasonable deal had been made on the Chief Peguis Trail to which His Worship responded that he would be happy to get information to Councillor Gerbasi from the Administration.

Councillor Wyatt questioned if a property tax freeze was being contemplated for the coming year or if His Worship would prefer to have a property tax increase.

His Worship stated that it would be Council's decision, not the Mayor's decision, if there was an increase in property taxes or if they were frozen. He noted that it was important for all of Council to participate in discussion, listen to all the pros and cons and hopefully make a very intelligent decision. His Worship stated that it would be premature at this stage to decide whether or not there should be a tax freeze.

Councillor Wyatt asked if His Worship had to choose between service cuts or a property tax increase, what would he choose; to which His Worship replied that he was definitely not supportive of any service cuts.

Councillor Wyatt questioned if departments had been given a directive to formally lead the budget based on a property tax freeze or based on a property tax increase for 2010.

His Worship stated that departments were looking to see if a property tax freeze was possible and whether it could be accommodated. He further stated that if it can't be accommodated, then they would have to look at other options.

Executive Policy Committee - Question Period (continued):

Councillor Thomas noted that when the budget was passed last year, His Worship made a commitment that there would be no front-line service cuts. She advised that there were cuts to a youth-at-risk program in her ward and now another front-line cut to a City sponsored program run out of Salisbury School/Morse Place School. Councillor Thomas requested His Worship to explain why these cuts were occurring and to see that something was re-established in her community to replace the two closures of City services.

His Worship advised he had attended a press conference with the Province announcing more programming as a result of the Province agreeing to provide staffing so that community centres could be open for longer periods of time. His Worship noted that his commitment to recreation facilities was very strong and that was why they were spending millions of dollars on expanding and improving recreation facilities. His Worship asked the Councillor to provide him with the specifics of the two programs she noted and he would speak with the Director of Community Services about them.

Councillor Wyatt noted that the City had put in a request for funding through the Federal Stimulus, or some sort of tri-partite funding, for approximately $100 million to build the east extension of the Sterling Lyon Parkway, including an underpass. He advised that the Mayor had indicated that one government had agreed to fund the underpass and the other one was saying that they were not excited about it. Councillor Wyatt asked His Worship to elaborate on which government was in favour of funding and which government was not in favour of funding based on the request from the City.

His Worship stated that there was an old issue regarding the Waverley underpass. He advised that at one point in time, the member of Parliament and the former Councillor were very much supportive of it, but it did not happen. He further advised that a discussion did take place with the other levels of government on something that would basically alleviate the problem, and be a much better opportunity than an underpass, but at this particular point in time, it was no more than dialogue. His Worship stated that there had been no money approved to date and that he did tell Councillor Wyatt that one level of government liked the idea and another level of government wasn't very enthusiastic about it.

Councillor Wyatt requested His Worship to elaborate on why we would be asking for money for this extension when it does not exist in Plan Winnipeg.

His Worship advised that he did not believe it was through the Federal Stimulus, but probably through Building Canada. He noted that when it comes to that, all three levels of government discuss and make the decision, no different than has happened in the past. If one of the levels of government is in favour of an idea, then all three levels discuss the matter. He further advised that at this stage, nothing had happened.

Executive Policy Committee - Question Period (continued):

Councillor Wyatt asked if there was going to be an announcement regarding Federal Stimulus funding.

His Worship replied that there have been many announcements made recently by both the Federal and Provincial government regarding the Stimulus. He advised that he was not convinced that there was a significant amount of money in the Stimulus left for municipalities. He believed that the Federal and Provincial governments had used up the majority of that money and were discussing Building Canada as well as possibly some green programs. His Worship stated that he hoped to hear something after the prorogue period.

Councillor Swandel stated that he was still unclear as to why His Worship would be advocating for a major multi-million dollar expenditure for a road extension that was not even in Plan Winnipeg.

His Worship stated that he did not recall ever saying that he was advocating. He reiterated that there were some members of Parliament who thought it was a priority for them to deal with the Waverley underpass issue. He advised that is had been discussed a great deal and would continue to be discussed.

Councillor Vandal referred to a diagram in a report that was going to be discussed that contained the Sterling Lyon extension and the underpass/overpass and asked if it was an indication that the matter was on the radar screens for the administration and executive committee; to which His Worship stated that it was in the report put forward by the Administration.

Councillor Vandal questioned if His Worship supported spending City of Winnipeg money for the underpass/overpass and the Sterling Lyon extension.

His Worship advised he was not supportive of an underpass or the diagram being referred to. He advised that he was supportive of listening to the direction that comes from the department and also seeing where the other levels of government were at.

Councillor Thomas noted that the Chief Peguis Trail initially had two underpasses / overpasses, but that both had been scrapped for surface roadways due to cost. She questioned that if there was money for underpasses / overpasses, could it be put towards the Chief Peguis Trail rather than to something that was not in the five year plan.

His Worship advised it was his understanding that one of the underpass / overpass projects was most definitely on the table and that options were being explored to see if they could be done within the budget.

Executive Policy Committee - Question Period (continued):

Moved by Councillor Wyatt,

That Rule 14(3) of The Procedure By-law No. 50/2007 be suspended in order to allow for a third round of questions.

The motion for suspension of the rule was put.

Councillor Wyatt called for the yeas and nays, which were as follows:

Yea: Councillors Gerbasi, Orlikow, Thomas, Vandal and Wyatt 5

Nay: His Worship Mayor Katz, Councillors Browaty, Clement, Fielding, Nordman, O'Shaughnessy, Pagtakhan, Smith, Steeves, Swandel and Lazarenko. 11

and the motion for suspension of the rule was declared lost.