COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WINNIPEG
Wednesday, January 28, 2009

The Council met at 9:34 a.m.

The Clerk advised the Speaker that a quorum was present.

The Speaker called the meeting to order.

The opening prayer was read by Councillor Nordman.

ROLL CALL

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, Councillor Lazarenko. His Worship, Mayor Katz, Councillors, Browaty, Clement, Fielding, Gerbasi, Nordman, Pagtakhan, Smith, Steeves, Swandel, Thomas, Vandal and Wyatt.

INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME OF GUESTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Speaker: Thank you. We have Pages Rory Mitchell of Kelvin High School who resides in the Fort Rouge-East Fort Garry Ward. Welcome.

I recognize Councillor Smith, Chair to Winnipeg Committee for Safety will present an award of recognition from CN to His Worship, Mayor Katz and acknowledgment of the City of Winnipeg's November 3, 2008 official designation of a safe community. Councillor Smith.

Councillor Smith: Colleagues, this award has been given to the City because the 54th City admitted to safe cities for Canada. This is amazing. I don't know if you remember the Mayor made an announcement oh, some time ago, abolishing, -- saying would he abolish the committee. And I went and saw him and we talked about it and I said look it, I will move a motion to abolish the committee if it doesn't achieve anything. And so we then set out to a new direction. We hired a new co-ordinator who was incredible and we're now in effect the 54th City under safe cities of safe communities in Canada. What that means is we did such a good job, we hired this co-ordinator, he went out and he brought in 200 organizations in Winnipeg, concerned about safety. And so we got them all together, set priorities, and we did such a good job that safe communities of Canada had their national conference here because of that. So,' with that we have this award from the CN Congratulations Winnipeg for making your community safer. There you go. And by the way, this…the initiative of this is from the World Health Organization. They've in effect got this thing going and this is what the Mayor can have on his desk, a globe of the world and it's a very nice…actually I don't like to give this to you, I would like to keep it. (laughing) so it's a major achievement and we wouldn't have achieved it without the Mayor's support. Thank you.

Mayor Katz: thank you.
(applause)

Mr. Speaker: Thank you Councillor Smith. The next guest I would like to introduce is former City Councillor Donald Benham is here with students from the University of Winnipeg and also the Canadian Mennonite University. The students and Councillor Benham (applause) I guess you heard I said Councillor Benham.

MINUTES

Councillor Nordman moves that the Minutes of the meetings held on December 16 and 17, 2008, be taken as read and confirmed.

Delegations, none. Now let's get right on to business for the upcoming year of 2009. First on the agenda His Worship the Mayor, Executive Policy Committee Report of Mayor Katz Report of January 8, 2009

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE DATED JANUARY 8, 2009

Mayor Katz: I would like to introduce the report and move adoption of Consent Agenda Items 1 and 2.

Mr. Speaker: All in favour? Councillor Vandal. Councillor Vandal.

Councillor Vandal: I was going to ask a question on number 2 actually. Sorry, I have the wrong date. It's a subsequent report.

Mr. Speaker: Okay. Councillors on Items 1 and 2. All in favour? Contrary? Carried. Report of January 16th of 2009. Mr. Mayor.

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE DATED JANUARY 16, 2009

Mayor Katz: Mr. Speaker I would like to introduce the report and move adoption of Consent Agenda Items 1 to 3

Mr. Speaker: All in favour? No Councillors, please. Report of January 16th of 2009, Items 1.3, All in favour? Contrary? Carried.

Report of January 21 of 2009. Mr. Mayor.

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE DATED JANUARY 21, 2009

Mayor Katz: Mr. Speaker I would like to introduce the report and move adoption of Consent Agenda Items 1 to 3

Mr. Speaker: Councillor Vandal. Number 2. Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Katz: Mr. Speaker

Mr. Speaker: Oh question on Number 2. Questions on 1 and 3. All in favour? Contrary? Carried.

Item 2 - Plan Winnipeg Amendment - southwest and northwest quadrants of Sterling Lyon Parkway and Kenaston Boulevard
File EP-1.1(PW 2/2008)

Mayor Katz: Mr. Speaker, at this time I would like to hear any questions from Councillor Vandal and then we'll try to address them

Mr. Speaker: Councillor Vandal I remind you we're not here to discuss about the application. That will be dealt with later on, if that's what you're referring to

Councillor Vandal: Okay. Can I ask the Mayor a question on this?

Mr. Speaker: It's in here before us now. It will be dealt with later. But if you want -- Councillor Vandal.

Councillor Vandal: My question is this. We all know this is the IKEA development coming forward and I think that's very positive for the City of Winnipeg. When I read this report, there is a paragraph in there that I've never read before. It's very definitive. It's on page 4 of 14 which essentially says "this will be a smart development where the surrounding area's current infrastructure deficit will be accelerated for implementation by the developer front ending the cost to extend services to their development. Council will be asked to use the incremental municipal tax dollars generated by the development to pay back the developer over a number of years." My question is very simple. Do we have an estimate over what those costs are that are going to be front ended by the developer, and do we have an estimate of what the incremental tax revenues will be to pay the developer back? The reason I ask that is obviously, there's been some negotiation. If you read further in the report, our Administration have met with the developer. Clearly, those numbers are out there. I'm assuming that we know what it is we're getting into. I just would like to know what those infrastructure costs are that will be front ended and reimbursed by the City. Thank you

Mr. Speaker: Mr. Mayor

Mayor Katz: Mr. Speaker, through you to Councillor Vandal, I thank him for the question.

It is my understanding in this development, Mr. Speaker, the developer has put on the table the fact that they will upfront the money and pay for all the costs and then that would be repaid from future revenues which obviously would not exist if this development did not take place. This is similar to what's taken place in other parts of the City in the past. I would have to say that at this point in time, there would definitely be a projected cost for this. I would be happy to get those numbers and share them with Councillor Vandal, be my pleasure.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you. Ready for the question? On Item Number 2, all in favour? Councillor Smith wants to be recorded in opposition. All in favour? Contrary? Carried.

The EPC motions, there is Motion Number 1, which is automatic referral to the next Council meeting of February.

EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE MOTIONS

Motion No. 1
Moved by Councillor Vandal
Seconded by Councillor Swandel

WHEREAS the City of Winnipeg should strive for the most transparent, equitable and fair system of municipal election financing;

AND WHEREAS Winnipeg has already adopted a partial public financing of municipal campaigns system, through the "Rebate of Election Contributions" By-law;

AND WHEREAS banning union and corporate donations to municipal campaigns will avoid disbursing financial rebates to corporations and unions;

AND WHEREAS the Government of Canada and the Province of Manitoba have prohibited corporations, businesses and unions from financially donating to their elections;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the City of Winnipeg allow only individuals to donate to municipal political candidates beginning in the 2010 municipal election;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the City of Winnipeg do all things necessary to ban corporate, organization and union financial donations to all municipal political candidates beginning in the 2010 municipal election.

Mr. Speaker: Motion Number 2 is automatic referral to EPC. That's it for motions.

Motion No. 2
Moved by Councillor Vandal
Seconded by Councillor Swandel

WHEREAS the City of Winnipeg has successfully hosted the North American Indigenous Games in the summer of 2002;

AND WHEREAS the United Nations and the International Olympic Committee have sanctioned the concept of a World Indigenous Games to take place;

AND WHEREAS the Province of Manitoba's department of Culture, Heritage and Tourism have expressed their support over the organizing of the inaugural World Indigenous Games to be held Winnipeg in 2012;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the City of Winnipeg endorse in principle, the concept of an inaugural World Indigenous Games to be held in Winnipeg Manitoba in 2012;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the City of Winnipeg administration negotiate with the Province of Manitoba and the Government of Canada the terms of reference for the Winnipeg World Indigenous Games, including the financial contributions per level of government, for further ratification by City Council.

Mr. Speaker: By-laws? Mr. Mayor.

EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION OF BY-LAWS

Mayor Katz: Thank you Mr. Speaker. I would move that By-law No. 2/2009 be read a first time

Mr. Speaker: All in favour? Contrary? Carried.

Clerk: By-law No. 2/2009

Mayor Katz: Mr. Speaker, I would move that the following by-laws be read a first time. By-law No. 6/2009 and By-law No. 11/2009.

Mr. Speaker: All in favour? Contrary? Carried.

Clerk: By-law No. 6/2009, By-law No. 11/2009.

Mayor Katz: And Mr. Speaker, I would move that By-laws No. 6/2009 and 11/2009 be read a second time.

Mr. Speaker: All in favour? Contrary? Carried.

Clerk: By-laws No. 6/2009 and 11/2009.

Mayor Katz: And Mr. Speaker, I move that the rule be suspended and By-laws No. 6/2009 and 11/2009 be read a third time and the same be passed in order to be signed and sealed.

Mr. Speaker: All in favour? Contrary? Carried. Question period. Councillor Gerbasi.

EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE QUESTION PERIOD

Councillor Gerbasi: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's been reported in the media that ultra lightweight aluminum tramways, such as those used in the Minneapolis airport, are being looked at by City officials as an alternative to the BRT Project that Council has approved. Could you confirm this, that this is being…what is being looked into by senior officials?

Mr. Speaker: Mr. Mayor?

Mayor Katz: Mr. Speaker through you to Councillor Gerbasi, I thank you. I'd be happy to address that. As we all know, Mr. Speaker, we have moved forward on BRT, $138 million project with all three levels of government participating. At the same time, I can tell you that the department has been doing due diligence and looking at other opportunities of Rapid Transit that would be potentially more efficient and would also attract potentially more people, so right now, they are doing due diligence and specifically what Councillor Gerbasi has referred to, my understanding is, that is one of the potential alternatives that has been looked into and there still is due diligence being done on that

Mr. Speaker: Your second question, Councillor.

Councillor Gerbasi: Has the Transit Department been asked to hold off on expending funds on the Council-approved BRT Project until a certain part of that due diligence is done, and if so, for how long?

Mr. Speaker: Mr. Mayor?

Mayor Katz: At this point in time, I'm not aware of the department being asked by anybody to hold off on the project, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Your final question, Councillor.

Councillor Gerbasi: I understand the project which is being led by Deputy CAO Phil Sheegl, to investigate alternative transit technology. Would you provide myself and all members of Council with the name of the consulting firm, the cost of the study and terms of reference for their assignment in looking at this alternative technology?

Mr. Speaker: Mr. Mayor?

Mayor Katz: Mr. Speaker, once the department has completed their due diligence, and if this is a real alternative that would be better for our City, and if that were the case, I would hope that it would be embraced by all. I think that the entire report should be shared with all Councillors and give them all the information that they would require, because in the end, if there is any change, Council will be the one to make that change and they will need all the information that was on the table, Mr. Speaker, so I would be happy to do that when the time comes and when they're finished

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. Councillor Smith your first question

Councillor Smith: Yes. Mr. Mayor, last May, our meeting of Council, I asked you a question about the cladding of the Police Service Building, and you said that we'd know by December. Well we're at the end of January and we still do not

know. And since we spent almost 5 million on cladding already, I think this is important to know exactly what we're doing with this building. Please inform me and Council.

Mr. Speaker: Mr. Mayor?

Mayor Katz: Mr. Speaker, I can't think of anything that would give me more...satisfaction than to bring Councillor Smith up to date on this project because what he said is very accurate. Where the situation is right now, Mr. Speaker, this started off as a project that was supposed to be somewhere between 8 and 15 million dollars. It has now skyrocketed to approximately 40 to 45 million dollars, and that includes, Mr. Speaker, not only the cladding but obviously interior changes, as well as having to move the Police Department in and out of that building. Once it was determined that this number had risen to such an astronomical amount and we've not even accomplished all the goals of the Winnipeg Police Service to make them as efficient as possible, we've started to explore other opportunities. I think it would be very prudent when you're going to that type of number as I said, 40 plus million dollars, and I can tell you right now that the Public Service is exploring some other opportunities, and I believe there will be a report coming forward, and I believe Councillor Smith and all others will probably have that within the next 30 days if not sooner

Mr. Speaker: Your second question, Councillor Smith.

Councillor Smith: So, Mr. Mayor, the rumour that CJOB announced that that would be the old Post Office site would be the…

Councillor Swandel: Point of order Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: What's your point of order?

Councillor Swandel: We can't really fall out to this game of confirming or not confirming media reports. In our Procedure By-law, it's actually contrary to our rules to put questions forward that are asking to confirm or not confirm media reports.

Councillor Smith: Is there any truth in the fact that we're looking at the old Post Office site as a possible new Police Service building?

Mr. Speaker: Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Katz: Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned earlier, the department is exploring many alternatives. Could that be one of them? Possibly, yes. But there are other alternatives as well, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Your final question? Councillor Vandal your first question.

Councillor Vandal: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Through you to the Mayor. Mr. Mayor we know we're heading into a by-election in seven weeks. We also know that your office has a long history of trying to influence results in ward races from sponsoring a poll in St. Boniface in 2006 between Franco Magnifico and myself, to releasing a high level staff member of yourself to manage Franco Magnifico's campaign in '06. My question, Mr. Mayor, is how much of your resources, either staff or financial, will you be utilizing to get Geoff Currier elected to City Hall?

Mr. Speaker: Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Katz: Mr. Speaker, I think it's extremely unfortunate but it's not the first time. Every single comment just made by the Councillor was totally inaccurate.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you. You have a second question, Councillor Vandal.

Councillor Vandal: Mr. Speaker, that was a non-answer to some very legitimate questions.

Mr. Speaker: Councillor Vandal!

Councillor Vandal: Do you deny, Mr. Speaker. Do you deny Mr. Mayor? Can I finish my question?

Mr. Speaker: Councillor Vandal, the first question you asked was not appropriate to ask the Mayor. Yes, but you know

you're making innuendos, and he said no, so what else do you want? What else do you want?

Councillor Vandal: I want a second question.

Mr. Speaker: Okay, what's your second question?

Councillor Vandal: My second question is do you deny the fact that your former staffer Brian Kelcey was the campaign manager for Franco Magnifico in 2006?

Mayor Katz: Mr. Speaker, as I said before, once again it's inaccurate. The Councillor loves to play. There was no poll done by yours truly and Brian Kelcey was not my staffer. Brian Kelcey was with the EPC Secretariat which Dan Vandal already knows, and on many occasions people working for different levels of government, if they want to support and walk away from their job for awhile and not get any revenue, any money and decide to make a contribution to democracy, it happens everywhere at every level of government, and Councillor Vandal may have been part of it at one point in time.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you Mr. Mayor. Your final question, Councillor.

Councillor Vandal: My final question, Mr. Speaker, if the Mayor can commit to this Council that he will give all candidates in River Heights a fair chance to become the representative of River Heights without interfering using your power or your influence or your money. Could you commit that to this Council?

Mr. Speaker: Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Katz: Mr. Speaker, I'm absolutely sickened and disgusted by those ridiculous comments. Maybe what should happen is the Councillor should not judge others by his standards.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you. Councillor Wyatt your first question.

Councillor Wyatt: Thank you. Let's get back to the issues of the day. My question is, we heard the budget yesterday, Mr. Speaker, the Federal budget and I realize that it has not yet passed parliament. But if and when it does there's a lot of resources coming forward for municipalities which is good news for infrastructure. My question to the Mayor is how fast…by the sound of it they're talking in terms of it being on a first come, first serve basis for infrastructure dollars flowing to municipalities across the country and not necessarily based on per capita funding or on the gas tax formula that we've adopted, so if it's first come first serve basis, how fast, number one, can we get this infrastructure out, these dollars moving as quickly as possible to take advantage of this windfall, Mr. Speaker. Thanks.

Mr. Speaker: Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Katz: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As a result of the announcement in yesterday's budget, we've already communicated with the Public Service. There will be a meeting with the Province as hopefully everybody here knows. The money will flow through the Province. The idea is to determine exactly what is available so that we can move forward. At the same time, we're also trying to determine, Mr. Speaker, what is required to make this happen. As you know in the past, there's been a lot of, I guess, joint projects where it's been one-third, one-third, one-third. Depending on the size of these projects, you can imagine the type of pressure that would put on any municipality considering everybody has already done their capital budgets. So we're trying to find out how much money is actually available, what those projects are, and how the funding actually works and what will be required of the City of Winnipeg.

I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, I still believe at some point in time as opposed to these types of announcements, which I'm not going to say are not positive, but the realities are that the way the gas tax is done, they need another formula similar to that so the municipalities can decide where that money is going, as well as they have an annual amount of money to

budget and their hands aren't tied. At some point in time in the near future, I hope that happens but in this situation, we are certainly going to try and take advantage of what other…whatever funding is out there and we've already met this morning to move that forward.

Mr. Speaker: Councillor Wyatt your second question.

Councillor Wyatt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In light of the fact that it's key to get, not only the announcements made, what steps have been taken to move our own processes along internally, to ensure that these funds are expended in both 2009 and 2010, which is what the Federal Government has indicated is a prerequisite for these funds. What steps have been taken to ensure that the process is tendered and that the Administration is on top of these projects?

Mr. Speaker: Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Katz: Mr. Speaker, the Public Service has informed us that we have a very lengthy list of what is being called shovel-ready projects, projects that we can move on very quickly. There is no shortage of that. It can go anywhere from Active Transportation, sidewalks, back lanes, intersections, South End Water Treatment, Rapid Transit, I could go on and on and on, and it's billions of dollars. Everybody is aware of those. We know which ones we can move on quickly. We know which ones would qualify, so we're ready to move once we determine, Mr. Speaker, exactly how much money is available and once again, what the formula is. Is it one-third, one-third, one-third? Is it 50/50? Are there projects where they're going to put up 100% of the money? These are the things that are being determined as we speak.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you. Your final question Councillor.

Councillor Wyatt: Yes, Mr. Speaker. In light of the fact that we may have to contribute one-third or potentially less than one-third by the sounds of it for funding, nonetheless, there is a municipal contribution. What are the discussions taking place with regards to the source of funding in light of the fact that they're looking for new projects? What source of funding has been identified and what mixture of funding potentially has been identified to fund the municipal share, whether it be one-third or less?

Mr. Speaker: Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Katz: Mr. Speaker, I did meet with the CAO this morning to have a discussion on this. You know, depending on which project it is, we have as yet not identified where the City would find that money. There certainly are options that are available, and that would have to be something that Council makes that decision and we'll be working on that A.S.A.P. as well, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you. Councillor Swandel your first question.

Councillor Swandel: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to follow up on where Councillor Wyatt was going there. Knowing that our cash to capital that we contribute, even though our overall capital spending is in excess of $300 million I believe this year, our cash to capital is only about $63 million. If we have to come up with matching funding in these programs which sounds like if you're talking about $4 billion or more across the country, the per capita equation would suggest in the next two years that would be over $100 million dollars in the City of Winnipeg that we would have to match. Knowing that $100 million dollars costs about, if you were to annualize it, about $7 million approximately, you know, I don't know what the exact interest rates are today, but it would appear we'd have to do borrowing. Is that something that we would be considering doing in order to access these funds?

Mr. Speaker: Mr. Mayor?

Mayor Katz: Mr. Speaker, through you to Councillor Swandel, as I said earlier, there are many different options available. Obviously, the one that Councillor Swandel referred to, borrowing is certainly one of them. As we all know right now, this Council does not do that.

As a matter of fact by not borrowing we have put ourselves in a very, very good position and dug ourselves out of debt and hopefully that will continue. When the time comes, everything will be put on the table and every option will be explored, but ultimately, it will be Council that makes that decision, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Your second question, Councillor?

Councillor Swandel: Thank you Mr. Speaker. The prioritization of projects, I mean obviously we would love to have a lump sum of money land in our hands and we get to prioritize projects. Has there been any sense given from the other two levels of government how we would prioritize projects, these shovel-ready new projects, as I understand that they can't be in our budget currently?

Mr. Speaker: Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Katz: Mr. Speaker in a perfect world, it would be nice if Council had the opportunity to make a decision on what we need most, i.e., prioritize. The realities are, this is a world of politics and a world of politic it doesn't work that way. There is very little doubt in my mind that once this comes to fruition, I think the…between the other two levels of government, there will be decisions made towards projects that we need to get done, and I can't say whether that would coincide with what the City would consider to be a priority, but anything that's on our list is open game and I guess whatever monies come forward that we can use towards projects that we need would be appreciated. But, it's unfortunate and that's the way it seems to work which is why I would prefer having a system where there are no strings attached and we can pick the projects that we believe are needed the most. But I don't believe that's reality today, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you. Your final question, Councillor.

Councillor Swandel: Given that it's likely we would have to access some form of borrowing or further P3's in order to provide…to participate in this, and given that it would be better for us to have our own priorities, would it not make more sense for the City of Winnipeg just to go out into its own borrowing, control the projects that we do and spend the money wisely for the citizens of Winnipeg as opposed to a little bit of political parochialization. Would that not make more sense for the citizens of the City of Winnipeg?

Mr. Speaker: Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Katz: Mr. Speaker, I certainly would not disagree with that comment, and as I said earlier, when we finally understand exactly what this means and how much money is available and for what projects, at that particular point in time, we will decide whether borrowing is an option, and if it is an option, okay, there will be, you know, 16 people who have the opportunity to express their opinion if that is one of the options they wish to consider. It certainly is a possibility. It's something that's been talked about on a regular basis and it's not going to go away and I think that we'll get to that in the very near future. But I don't disagree what has been said. All I'm saying is that all members of Council will have the opportunity to voice their concerns and whether they think it's a good idea or a bad idea, and I'm sure you'll hear view points on both sides.

Mr. Speaker: We're getting into the second round. Councillor O'Shaughnessy, you haven't asked a question yet. Your first question Councillor.

Councillor O'Shaughnessy: Yes. I have, at the moment, just one question for the Mayor and it's based on what came up before.

The short preamble if I might. A number of years ago the City had a Capital Budget and it had priorities set throughout six years. On a moment's notice, the Provincial Government with the present Premier at the helm said to us, if you want our money, the number one priority is the Chief Peguis Bridge which wasn't even on any horizon. It became our instant number one priority. My question is, is

the City any worse off because that bridge was built then, or is the City's transportation network greatly enhanced because we were all of a sudden able to afford that project? And did the City suffer because any other projects were pushed back a year?

Mr. Speaker: Mr. Mayor?

Mayor Katz: I think, Mr. Speaker, that was a rhetorical question. I think. I'm not sure. I'm thinking about it. But the realities are, Mr. Speaker, we have so much work to do in our City, and obviously the Chief Peguis trail, that phase has been done. It's used on a regular basis and those who use it probably think it's the greatest thing since the invention of fire or the wheel or sliced bread. It's positive. So, I mean, I can't sit here and tell you that we were hurt by that. I'm sure there will be Councillors who would say it would have been better if it went somewhere else. But as I alluded to, and which I wasn't aware of that particular example, that is unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, the way it works. I mean there is a perfect example where we had our priorities, that wasn't even on there, and that moved to priority number one. And I guess in the end you made a decision. Use that money or lose that money. I think the Council at the time made a wise decision to use that money, and I'm sure this Council will make wise decisions in the future as well, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Your second question, Councillor.

Councillor O'Shaughnessy: I wouldn't take up your time, anything about film and saying use it or lose it for 13 and a half million dollars for the Charleswood Bridge either.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you. We're getting into the second round. Councillors I would just like to remind you of the questions. The last question that Councillor Vandal had asked was I think, inappropriate here.

We have a Premier of Manitoba that decided who was going to be the candidate in the Elmwood…in the ward where the gentleman went. He went Federally and he had pushed for Bill Blaikie, former Member of Parliament and he was successful…he was successful in getting that and no questions have been asked of the Premier. The Premier made a decision who was going to be candidate, of the candidates who were there, they withdrew their names. So, I mean it's not fair to be asking, so continue with the questions. Councillor Gerbasi your first question. Second time around.

Councillor Gerbasi: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In listening to the commentary about our ability as a Council to control our own priorities, certainly we all have seen examples where the Federal Government or the Provincial Government directs our priorities to some extent, but we also have seen where we showed the leadership to move ahead on some things such as the Rapid Transit proposal. We show we're willing to do it, then the other levels of government also become more willing. So my question to the Mayor is, are we going to…since we have committed to the second phase of the BRT to the University of Manitoba, it makes total sense as a completion of that project, it's hugely desired by cyclists and transit riders alike. Will we find a creative way to make our priority known for this type of…now that there's Federal money available, which wasn't available before for transit, I mean I think this is a great opportunity for that and I would hope that Mr. Mayor, you'll advise us as to what creative measures and pushing you're going to do to try to get this done because this is an opportunity for that potentially. But if we just sit back, you know, other political priorities will take over if we don't voice ours. So that's my question to you.

Mr. Speaker: Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Katz: Through to you Councillor Gerbasi, thank you for the question. I think Councillor Gerbasi knows me well enough, Mr. Speaker. I'm not one to sit back and do nothing. I can tell you that a month and a half ago, I had the opportunity to discuss with Minister Baird the Rapid Transit issue. I told the Minister at that particular point in time how important that was to our City. I also used the example of Ottawa and how

they got $200 million, and I would expect the same for the City of Winnipeg, and I also told him how this would be not only good for the City but good for the environment, et cetera, et cetera. We had a fairly lengthy conversation and so, I made that pitch long before this budget even came out, Mr. Speaker, so I can assure Councillor Gerbasi that I'm way ahead of that curve.

Mr. Speaker: Your second question Councillor.

Councillor Gerbasi: My second question is on a different, more local topic. You've all…I'm sure you're aware of the issue of Canada Post has purchased the field, the property next to Gordon Bell High School in the West Broadway community, and that community desperately, that school and community desperately need green space and a sports field and I'm sure you're aware of the community effort from the MP's, the MLA's and myself, trying to…and the community especially, immobilizing to try to convince Canada Post to look at other alternatives. My question is, would you be prepared as a Mayor, to support that effort in any way possible, that we could do as a City in terms of advocating to Canada Post and supporting the efforts of the community and perhaps helping with this initiative?

Mr. Speaker: Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Katz: Mr. Speaker, first of all, I believe that Canada Post is a very good corporate citizen. That's number one. Number two, anybody who is aware of that specific situation, I'm sure we've all driven by the school with its lovely concrete yard, which I thought disappeared because I recall going to school, I had one of those, and it's been a long time. I think it's very sad that they still exist, but they're there. What I really think Mr. Speaker is some of the leaders unfortunately were delinquent in their duties. That land, when that dealership was closed Mr. Speaker, and that land was put up for sale, I don't know where all these people who believed in something good could happen with the field, where were they at that particular point in time? That property was sitting there for quite a length of time before Canada Post bought it. It would have been real simple to purchase it at that point in time, get all the stakeholders involved and they would have had complete control. I'm sure it's much more difficult at this stage of the game since a quasi private entity has purchased the land, have a purpose for it, and you know, whether they're going to change their minds or not, I don't know. I only say to you, it would have been nice if it was done the proper way and someone had been proactive because I can't believe that this all of a sudden, suddenly emerged. Everybody should have identified the problem; you know whether it's the school board, whether it's Councillors, whether it's school trustees, whether it's principals, whether it's students, whatever. This isn't something new. It's been there and it would have been much better to be proactive. I think it makes it much more difficult at this particular point in time. If Councillor Gerbasi is asking me if I would communicate with Canada Post, I would be happy to do that Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Your final question Councillor Gerbasi.

Councillor Gerbasi: Thank you. Well I appreciate that response and yes it would have been better if they'd done it but they haven't and I guess the community came together, and it's kind of a dream of the community so I thank you for being willing to, and I would hope that you would write a letter to Canada Post or speak to them very, very soon because there still is a dream that our community has about this and it's still alive and they're still hoping…

Mr. Speaker: Your question. Your question.

Councillor Gerbasi: So, I take that answer as that you are willing to write a letter to communicate the City of Winnipeg's support for this initiative within the next week or so?

Mr. Speaker: You're asking the Mayor if he'll write the letter? Okay thank you.

Councillor Gerbasi: Yes.

Mayor Katz: I was actually going to thank the Councillor for that non-question Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think I've already said that I would be happy to communicate with Canada Post. I'm just telling you that, something that could have been very easy and accomplished something very positive, unfortunately, has become much more difficult because the proper action wasn't taken at the right time, but I would still be happy to communicate with Canada Post Mr. Speaker. It would be my pleasure.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you. Councillor Vandal your first question.

Councillor Vandal: We're heading into the budget Mr. Mayor in a few weeks, and I'm wondering if you can share with this Council what the likely scenario is with the taxes that we pay, property and business.

Mr. Speaker: Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Katz: Mr. Speaker, there is no likely scenario. The facts of life are right now, the Public Service, along with members of EPC, are working on this budget and as soon as we have an indication of where we're going, we'll be happy to share that with all the Councillors. Our goal is obviously to have a budget tabled somewhere around the third or last week of February.

Mr. Speaker: Your second question Councillor.

Councillor Vandal: So you're saying at this late date there is no indication, no direction about where we're going on property and business taxes? I find that hard to believe. Can you share with this Council that, what directives have been given to the Administration relative to their spending? Have they been directed to cut back five percent, two percent? Have they been directed to increase spending? Can you share that with this Council?

Mr. Speaker: Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Katz: Mr. Speaker, as I just said earlier, both the Public Service and the committee, which is EPC, has been meeting for hours and hours and hours. We will continue to do that, and once we land on something, I'm not one to speculate. I don't believe that's the appropriate thing to do. There is still a great deal of work to be done and once I believe we're there, I would be happy to share anything and everything with Councillor Vandal and any other Member of Council.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you. Your final question Councillor.

Councillor Vandal: So am I correct when I say there has been no directive given to the Administration relative to their spending per departments in '09?

Mr. Speaker: Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Katz: Mr. Speaker, as was, I'm sure many people have probably read today's newspaper and every Councillor has an opinion on the budget and on property tax, and some are happy to share those and make their opinions open. Others want to explore all the options before they settle in on anything. I am one who likes to explore all the options before we make a decision. These are very important decisions that Council will make when it comes to this budget. As we all know, these are very unique times, and I think we have to do our due diligence and make very astute decisions on anything that will affect the citizens of Winnipeg and that's what we're doing right now, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you. Councillor Swandel, Councillor Wyatt your first question. Sorry Councillor.

Councillor Wyatt: Thank you, quickly Mr. Mayor, just to follow up on the infrastructure questions and give clarification if you could, the Federal Government is saying they want shovel-ready projects, they want projects that are ready to go in '09 and '010 but at the same time they don't want projects that are in our capital or we've planned previously. It's a contradiction in a sense because of the fact, you know, everything that we have shovel-ready virtually is in our capital books. Is there, you know, a reality check coming forward with regards

to what the Federal Government's trying to do? If this is truly about jobs and creating jobs, let's get on and get that happening and building more infrastructure verses the politics of being able to make new announcements that have not been heard of before.

Mr. Speaker: Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Katz: Mr. Speaker, I thank the Councillor for the question. In the conversation that I had,

Mr. Speaker: Time has expired but you can answer. Go ahead Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Katz: Is that my pacemaker Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Speaker: Not yet. Not yet.

Mayor Katz: Thank you Councillor. Very quickly Mr. Speaker. In the conversation that I had with Minister Baird, I made three specific comments and I'm happy to share them with you. One of them is that the bureaucracy there is clogged up, the system doesn't work. It's hard to move anything through that process. It just takes far too much time. The other comment was that there are wonderful projects available and as you know in the past, if you had started on a project, you were not allowed to apply for money for that project, which made no sense because good projects were not happing because of that. I can tell you that there is still some interpretation. The Councillor is right when they talk about 2009, but there is still the opinion that projects in 2010 and '11 may qualify as well, so there's a lot of due diligence being right now, being done right now to determine if that is correct, to qualify for these shovel-ready projects. But I do agree one hundred percent; the idea is to do projects that are good for the City and that are on our priority list, not just the project for a photo op. I do concur with that.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you Mr. Mayor. Next on the agenda, Standing Policy Committee on Infrastructure Renewal and Public Works. Councillor Clement.

REPORT OF THE STANDING POLICY COMMITTEE ON INFRASTRUCTURE RENEWAL AND PUBLIC WORKS DATED JANUARY 13, 2009

Councillor Clement: Thank you Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to introduce the clauses from the meeting of January 13th and I'll move Clauses 1 and 2 as Consent.

Mr. Speaker: All in favour? Contrary? Carried. We have one motion which is automatic referral, Motion Number 3. Automatic referral to Public Works.

STANDING POLICY COMMITTEE ON INFRASTRUCTURE RENEWAL AND PUBLIC WORKS MOTIONS

Motion No. 3
Moved by Councillor Gerbasi
Seconded by Councillor Vandal

WHEREAS on December 5th, 2008, the Winnipeg Park Police were given 90 days notice that they would cease to exist on March 2nd, 2009;

AND WHEREAS the staff will be reduced from 14 to 7 and "downgraded" to a new "park patrol" concept that will employ untrained seasonal staff as ambassadors;

AND WHEREAS response to crime in our parks is an issue of concern for citizens;

AND WHEREAS the proposed plan shifts the responsibility of dealing with crime issues in our parks to the already high workload of the Winnipeg Police Service (WPS);

AND WHEREAS the new model will focus on the Assiniboine, Kildonan and St. Vital parks which could mean a lack of security in other City parks considering the high level of demand on the WPS for high priority calls;

AND WHEREAS the projected savings of $100,000 should be reinvested into park safety initiatives or the WPS rather than reducing coverage for City parks;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the proposed changes to the status of the Winnipeg Park Police be referred to the Standing Policy Committee on Infrastructure Renewal and Public Works for review;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Public Works Department and the Winnipeg Police Service be directed to provide further information regarding this matter to the Standing Policy Committee on Infrastructure Renewal and Public Works before this initiative proceeds.

Mr. Speaker: The Consideration of By-laws Councillor.

STANDING POLICY COMMITTEE ON INFRASTRUCTURE RENEWAL AND PUBLIC WORKS CONSIDERATION OF BY-LAWS

Councillor Clement: I'll move that By-law No. 10/2009 be read a first time.

Mr. Speaker: All in favour? Contrary? Carried.

Clerk: By-law No. 10/2009.

Councillor Clement: Ill move that By-law No. 10/2009 be read a second time.

Mr. Speaker: All in favour? Contrary? Carried.

Clerk: By-law No. 10/2009.

Councillor Clement: I'll move that the rule be suspended and By-law No. 10/2009 be read a third time and that same be passed in order to be signed and sealed.

Mr. Speaker: All in favour? Contrary? Carried. Questions. No questions? Oh, Councillor Swandel.

STANDING POLICY COMMITTEE ON INFRASTRUCTURE RENEWAL AND PUBLIC WORKS QUESTION PERIOD

Councillor Swandel: Thank you Mr. Speaker. Through you to Councillor Clement. In recent years we've seen a very robust construction activity in the City of Winnipeg, in and around the City of Winnipeg and it's really eaten up a lot of the industry capacity. I've heard numbers of inflation on projects where we've been limited to getting only one bidder and inflation was running as high as forty percent. Can you give us some indication of what, putting another hundred or two hundred million dollars of work in the City of Winnipeg in the next couple of years might mean to inflation on the already approximately six hundred million dollars of capital projects that we have on the go right now?

Mr. Speaker: Councillor Clement.

Councillor Clement: Well Mr. Speaker I suspect it would certainly be a positive situation going forward. But I'm not an economist. If the Councillor would like, I can try and find an economist to answer his question and then I'll get back to him. Thanks.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you. Your second question Councillor Swandel.

Councillor Swandel: Could you just confirm that when we had the very busy construction times and we had all the projects on the go both in the private and the public sector, that we did experience significant inflation in our projects as a result of that activity.

Mr. Speaker: Councillor Clement.

Councillor Clement: Yes, that's true. In recent times, not very far back, when we spiked the amount of work that was taking place, the local industry pricing seemed to be higher than the average in the rest of Canada. We, as many Councillors know or all I hope, that we actually hired somebody to drill down into some of that and as a result of having better numbers, making sure that our numbers were inflated properly as well, going forward through the tendering processes, somehow magically last year when we were provided with further and better information, the tenders seemed to come in a lot closer to where they were in the rest of the country. So hopefully, going forward, the Heavy Construction

Association people will be as diligent as they were last year.

Mr. Speaker: Your final question Councillor.

Councillor Swandel: Thank you Mr. Speaker, through you to Councillor Clement. As the head of Public Works and knowing what our priorities are specifically in the area of roads and bridges, could you give us an indication of what our three highest priorities would be that weren't in our budget right now? I can't think of any off the top of my head, so I'm wondering if within the department there might be sort of a sense of what those three high priorities might be?

Mr. Speaker: Councillor Clement?

Councillor Clement: Well I know what one or two of mine are. Certainly love to, certainly love to find a few million dollars more in the budget Mr. Speaker to go with the existing fifteen million that's currently available for the intersection of Bishop Grandin and Kenaston and see an underpass there and I think that would cost us about another eleven million dollars or something. There aren't. I mean we can talk about a lot of things. We can talk about the second phase of Rapid Transit, but I don't know that we could make that happen in nine or ten necessarily, which is what the rules are. That's the difficult part of this…this stuff. The difficulty with, as I understand what's been presented are two or three fold. One, we don't really have the money, and there's going to have to be a lot of scratching and clawing to find whatever our share would be. Secondly, they want the work done in nine and ten which is difficult to, in terms of big projects and they're looking to cut ribbons frankly, which means they want big projects where most of the shovel-ready things that we could do in 2009 as an example, we all know, are more residential street renewal, regional street renewal, back lanes, sidewalks, curbs. Those things aren't ribbon cutting type of initiatives but the reality of what we could do in the short-term. So it's not an easy thing and that's why I believe the CAO and the Mayor and others are pouring over the language around the budget documents that came forward just yesterday afternoon, to try and see where we can best fit these projects, but I could stand here and name five or ten, when in fact we did make the list that went forward to FCM as I recall, and there were seven or eight I believe on there, and I recall that some of them were but I don't want to mention one or two and then forget one or two others, but I believe that that list was probably available. I'm pretty sure it was not only provided to FCM, but I believe it was also provided to the Federal Government, First Minister. But I think that's common knowledge and can be made available to anybody that wants it. Thanks.

Mr. Speaker: Councillor Gerbasi your first question.

Councillor Gerbasi: Thank you Mr. Speaker. We heard this week that there was a poll or study; I guess it was a study looking at recycling rates across the country and unfortunately Winnipeg is the lowest recycling rate in the country. I think that's pretty disappointing for all of us. I know it's not, it's the Provincial Government was the one that seemed to be responding mostly to it and, you know, saying they should do more and talking about it and I think we all agreed with that. But I'm just wondering from a City point of view, we do have, your Policy Committee through you, Mr. Speaker to Councillor Clement, your Policy Committee, are they looking at any measures that the City can be involved in, to reduce our waste stream and to divert more away from the landfill because it's pretty embarrassing to be the worst in the country.

Mr. Speaker: Councillor Clement.

Councillor Clement: Well, I believe that our staff are always looking at improving initiatives that we are carrying forward, and the article I read said we were the lowest participating in the country but it also said we were at eighty-eight percent which I don't think is a low number. It may be lower than some others. We all know that there is one fairly significant area of the City that doesn't recycle much and you know it doesn't matter, it doesn't

seem to matter how much information is put forward, you can't make everybody participate. It's a volunteer effort to do these things. But certainly, I'm sure that when we have our next Public Works meeting that, that issue will be raised so that we can find out whether there are some other things we could look at. It may be that we have to pursue the Provincial Government on some of them as well. There are some things that are recycled in other cities which probably help their numbers that we actually can't get rid of, and we know those items exist. The…and it's possible that they may do a couple of things. The other thing that would be helpful as well, is if they would leave us whole. When the funding first started, the two cent levy that we all pay when we go to stores, et cetera, at one time the majority of that money was with the City of Winnipeg and it's gradually been taken away from the City of Winnipeg and provided to other municipalities, and instead of just raising the levy another cent or something like that, which would give us more money and therefore more resources to pursue recycling, we've actually not been treated as fairly as the other municipalities in this Province unfortunately.

Mr. Speaker: Your second question Councillor.

Councillor Gerbasi: My understanding is that some of the other places that have higher rates do so because, A, they have composting programs that are perhaps, I don't know what we, we don't have too much in that regard, certainly not curb side, and they also, some places actually have limits on the amount of garbage you can throw out, whereas in the City of Winnipeg you can throw out twenty bags of garbage. I guess I'm just wondering if the policy is looking at any real innovative changes that would really affect our waste stream diversion.

Mr. Speaker: Councillor Clement.

Councillor Clement: I'm unaware of any review of that situation at the present time, Mr. Speaker. I'm sure that as a result of that interesting report that was in the paper the other day that, that there will be questions asked at Public Works Committee.

Mr. Speaker: Your final question Councillor? Councillor Nordman.

Councillor Nordman: Thanks Mr. Speaker. Through you to Councillor Clement, more of a comment than a question, but I would just like to stand before you and offer certainly the residents of St. Charles Ward's congratulations on what a great job the City has done removing the snow from our main thoroughfares and our residential streets when many of our fellow cities across Western Canada do little or no snow removal. I think Bill Larkin and his team should be recognized for the outstanding effort they've made. So, my comments.

Mr. Speaker: That was your question. Did you realize that? Councillor Clement.

Councillor Clement: Well I actually appreciate the comment, Mr. Speaker. I've personally shared that with some of our senior staff and certainly with some of the local foremen in my area. I think that they did an exemplary job notwithstanding one of the reporters in town doesn't necessarily think that they did. But, I believe that the majority of Winnipeggers believe that our staff and our contract employees as well did an excellent job of snow removal and they should all be congratulated on a job well done, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you. Is that it Councillor Nordman? Councillor Wyatt your first question.

Councillor Wyatt: Thank you, question for foreman Clement, I mean Councillor Clement. The question is, regarding, in 2001 I believe it was, Council passed a policy to consolidate our Public Works yards around the City. We have consolidated on the west side of the City, we've consolidated on the northwest side of the City, and we're still waiting for the east district side of the City to be consolidated. What's the status of that initiative Councillor?

Mr. Speaker: Councillor Clement.

Councillor Clement: I'm not really sure but it was likely put on hold because the Councillor in Transcona keeps driving the Public Works Director crazy with all of his other demands and he's spending so much time following up on those and spending what residual money he's got, to keep him happy that he's probably having trouble following up on that.

Mr. Speaker: Councillor Wyatt, your second question.

Councillor Wyatt: Would the Councillor be able to find out the status, as we know that there are various properties which could find a better use especially adding to the tax roll of the City if this initiative got moving?

Mr. Speaker: Councillor Clement.

Councillor Clement: I'd be pleased to talk to Director Larkin and find the answer out and get back to the gentleman from Transcona as fast as I can.

Mr. Speaker: Your final question Councillor?

Councillor Wyatt: No, thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Mr. Mayor your first question.

Mayor Katz: I only have one question Mr. Speaker. Through you to Councillor Clement and just to follow up on Councillor Gerbasi, I'm sure that Councillor Clement is aware that the provinces of British Columbia, Alberta and Saskatchewan all offer incentives to the public for recycling, basically cash incentives. I'm wondering if the Province here did that, if Councillor Clement thinks that would help us raise the bar.

Mr. Speaker: Councillor Clement.

Councillor Clement: Absolutely, Mr. Mayor and that was actually what I was alluding to when I suggested that I don't believe that we've been treated the same and given the same opportunities that some other municipalities have, either financially where they've clawed back at least three times that I know of, on the amount of money we originally had for recycling and also on the types of initiatives that have been allowed the citizens of Winnipeg verses citizens in other cities. And while it's incumbent on the City to pursue those, and we certainly will do that with Mr. MacBride and others that are involved in that process, but I think ultimately that the Provincial Government has to play a significant role in change to make some of this other happen.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you. Councillor O'Shaughnessy your first question.

Councillor O'Shaughnessy: Thank you Mr. Speaker. Mr. Chairman, do recycling participation rates differ between areas serviced by autobins and those receiving curb side pickup and if so, what are the percentages for each?

Councillor Clement: Could you ask me that again?

Mr. Speaker: Would you like to repeat it?

Councillor O'Shaughnessy: Good thing I wrote it down. Do recycling participation rates differ between areas serviced by autobins and those areas receiving curb side pickup and by how much? What are the percentages for each?

Councillor Clement: I believe that they do. I don't have any data in front of me to back that up but I believe that they do and I'll get it, I'll get that information for you, but I believe the answer to the question is yes, and I don't know whether that's got anything to do with autobins or not but that's certainly the area that seems to be not participating as heavily as others.

Mr. Speaker: Your second question Councillor? Councillor O'Shaughnessy. He's done? Councillor Swandel your first question.

Councillor Swandel: Thank you, just one quick question. Given that accessing the new monies put forward by the Federal Government will probably result in some borrowing and increased costs for the

City of Winnipeg of approximately seven to eight million dollars, if you were to annualize the cost of borrowing, and given that the Province isn't giving us access to any new revenue streams, would you prefer to see a tax increase, frontage levies, service cuts or some other way of paying for the increased cost of accessing these Federal dollars?

Mr. Speaker: Councillor Clement.

Councillor Clement: Some other way, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Some other way. That's it for Question Periods? Standing Policy Committee on Finance. Councillor Swandel, report of January 15th of 2009.

REPORT OF THE STANDING POLICY COMMITTEE ON FINANCE DATED JANUARY 15, 2009

Councillor Swandel: I'm pleased to move the report of January 15th, 2009.

Councillor Gerbasi: Call down Mr. Speaker. I'd like to call down Item 1

Mr. Speaker: Number 1? Okay. Councillor Swandel.

Councillor Swandel: It's a pretty straight forward report. I'll wait for Councillor…oops sorry.

Item 1 - Fees and Charges Increases for Public Works and Fire Paramedic Service File GL-5.8.1

Councillor Swandel: Mr. Speaker, the report is fairly self-explanatory. I'll wait and hear Councillor Gerbasi's comments and respond at that time.

Mr. Speaker: Councillor Gerbasi.

Councillor Gerbasi: Thank you Mr. Speaker. This report contains some increased user fees for various services including the Fire Paramedic Service and Public Works, and I recognize that some of these fee increases may be quite reasonable and are fine and others of them though do concern me, and one of the things is that this is a series of reports we've received with increased fees including, you know, we always get that with Transit fares, but with other fees from Community Services, that call for increased user fees but these reports are being brought forward outside of the context of the Operating Budget without knowing if there's going to be a tax increase, without knowing are we shifting to user fees, so that we can reduce the business tax. All of those things aren't clear because this is being done outside the context of the budget discussion, and I don't really think that's fair, or I don't really think that creates a really informed discussion.

I'd also point out that Appendix A, which is the list of user fees, some of these user fees impact the ability of neighbourhood community events to occur. For example, there's an increase from $66 to $150, which is almost three times the cost there, for temporary street closures for entertainment purposes. This makes it harder to hold neighbourhood events such as block parties and concerts. There is also a significant increase here for park space rental, picnic shelters, the band mobile, even for non-profit groups. And that was really my point, was here that we're making these…first of all that some of these decisions will affect community engagement, will affect neighbourhood activities, so they are pretty negative fee increases and they're being done outside of the context of sort of a fiscal plan of…are we going to pay for our problems? I mean Councillor Clement just said some other way. But, you know, it's really the reality is, it's either user fees or tax increase or something. And we are deciding user fees without knowing what those other options are that are in front of us. So I really also would point out that the secrecy of the budget process is very frustrating for non-EPC Councillors and the public. I know Councillor Vandal was trying to find out some information in Question Period and that wasn't forthcoming. You know, we have to wait until it's tabled three weeks before we vote on it to find out what's in there. And I'm happy that the members of EPC are having this wonderful discussion behind

closed doors, but Councillors and members of the public have no opportunity to be part of this whole discussion until the last three weeks when it's tabled and I think that's really unfair, and it's not inclusive, and it makes it a very closed process because people don't have time to react in a few short weeks and get involved, especially community groups and so on. And decisions like this that are completely separate, I'm sure people don't even realize, and they're going to find out later, you know, for example the Corydon BIZ, when they come to do their Friday night concert series, they're going to be coming to me going, what? They close about 8 or 10 times a summer and they wanted to double their concert series. They'll probably decide not to double it now. So we're reducing things that are happening in the community by adding on more and more user fees. We're tripling the cost of…part of their costs here.

So I really think that, you know, the Provincial Government had pre-budget consultations and these were the kind of issues they could have hashed…you know, they probably would have hashed out and people could have come forward, but we don't have anything except a three week budget process that gets announced and it's all decided and then people have to fight to change it after the fact. So, you know, I'm using this as an opportunity to make some of those comments, but I also have some specific concerns about some of these fees and the impact on the community. I doubt, you know, non-profit groups, I don't know. I'm not sure that they were consulted in this or organizations that are trying to create community vibrancy and neighbourhood activities. I don't know that they were consulted in this. I don't know if anyone was consulted in this. But I'm disappointed with it and the process that we are forced to consider these changes in. Thank you Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Councillor Smith.

Councillor Smith: Councillor Swandel, I would like to ask you about all these new categories. You know, Daily Non-profit Organizations. Well no, sorry that's not… Weekly Non-profit Organizations, Seven Days, $350. We didn't have this category today. Weekly For-profit Organizations, $700. That category doesn't exist today. Monthly Non-profit Organizations, 700. That doesn't exist today. Monthly For-profit Organizations, 1400, doesn't exist today. Seasonal Non-profit Organizations, $1,750, doesn't exist today. Seasonal For-profit Organizations, this went up from $301.52 to $3,500. I'd like an explanation why, are we going into a direction of, in effect, trying to rent more of our park space? You know, it seems to me that we should be…the parks should be for the citizens of Winnipeg and it sounds to me like you're going into a rental business here in a big way. What are…have you had any requests? That's all

Mr. Speaker: Thank you. Councillor Steeves.

Councillor Steeves: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. I'll be very brief on this. I just want to make sure we're going down the right path here.

I wasn't exactly sure what Councillor Gerbasi was getting at in terms of budget consultations. A lot of this has to do with the decision I think that was made by Council a short while ago to give more authority to our Public Service to make these decisions on our behalf. It was widely accepted by Council, not unanimously, but widely accepted by Council. I think there was only one person who perhaps didn't have a like mind that we should be moving forward with a lot of these changes. It's a question of philosophy, although if we get back to this report which I suggest we should it's a question of philosophy and I want to be 100 percent clear on this. We are moving more towards a system and we have over the course of the last several years, I would argue over the course of the last ten years, we were asking people to pay the costs associated with providing the service. Simply put. We don't want to use general taxation revenue to pay for some of the things, the examples of which were cited by Councillor Gerbasi. For example, if indeed the cost of a temporary street closure is $150, then that's what we

think should be paid for the cost of undergoing a temporary street closure. It shouldn't be $66.90 when we believe the cost is $150. The premise is actually pretty straightforward and I think pretty defensible in those contexts. If the Corydon group wants to have its events in the same way that a myriad of other groups across the City want to have their events, then we're going to ask them to simply pay a cost-recovery basis to allow that service to exist. If groups can't afford to pay that, then obviously they have to find the money elsewhere. They come to community committee and they can get things like…they can get things like Per Capita Grants to help offset the cost of doing these things. It happens all the time. It's very; very regular to see happen.

Councillor Smith talked about some of the costs that didn't currently exist and he went through a long list of examples. I'm sure Councillor Swandel will make allusions to some of these in his closing comments. I just want to highlight that, when we were moving to sort of the seasonal passes verses the existing one-off type passes, it had to do with examples like, I believe there was a discussion about balloon launching in some of our parks whereby some people might be better served by seasonal passes or they might be better served by…they might be better served to buy one pass. We had situations where people as I understand it, were sort of paying a certain amount that there were no strict time parameters and they could expand it out throughout the course. And all this is doing is try to make it more cost-effective for a lot of these organizations which are For-profit Organizations by the way, who are using our parks to, I guess, administer whatever…

Councillor Smith: Monthly?

Councillor Steeves: Yes, in some cases monthly. In some cases monthly. They exist to try to steward and to try to manage in some circumstances, For-profit Organizations who operate in our parks who are trying to I guess, pay a fair amount. The more we can do these sorts of things, the more that we can, I guess, receive from third parties, the fair costs for offering these services. The more that we can use the core tax funding that we receive from our citizens to pay for the core services that we were meant to provide. Things like paying our C.U.P.E. representatives and our C.U.P.E. employees to do the road work that we require. We all know what a challenge that is on an on-going basis to find the funding that we need to pay our good employees every day to be out there on the streets. Do we necessarily want to be dipping into these general revenue pots and not paying our C.U.P.E. employees to do things like offsetting the costs of a party on Corydon Street and those types of things. Is that the type of philosophy that we want to require, or do we want to use taxation revenue to pay our people to deliver the core services? Because let me tell you, as we all understand around this table, it is hard to find that money on an on-going basis and we all recognize that challenge. I think this makes sense and if you have difficulties with certain numbers, you probably should have sat down with Administration prior to this and said what is this for because I think all of the numbers are imminently defensible, although I think it's going to be hard to get a solid representation of each and every one of these numbers here today.

Mr. Speaker: Councillor Vandal.

Councillor Vandal: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is a…I've read the report a few times and there are some fees I don't agree with and there's other fees I do agree with. My principal concern is that, much like Councillor Gerbasi has stated, is that we're looking at this in a vacuum. We know that in three weeks we're going to be rolling out the budget. We've all read the newspapers this morning. We know what the challenges are. We don't have any indication of what we're going to do with property taxes. We know they've been frozen for a dozen years. Is that reasonable to assume that we're going to go down that route given that everyone wants more, more, more. Everyone wants more police officers, more public works officers. How long…what do we do with property taxes? We know Mayor Katz has a two-fold promise to completely

eliminate the business tax, and obviously that's something that's important for some of us and some of our citizens. We don't know what's going to happen with the business tax that's being rolled out in three weeks. We're going to know then. We're talking a million and a half dollars here. We're talking Public Works $415,000 for customer service. For Parks, $22,000. Fire Paramedics, Emergency Medical $832,000. Fire Prevention $264,000 of new revenue for a grand total of one and a half million dollars of new revenue. And I know in the past, where we talk about the Doing Business in Winnipeg By-law where I think we've all been burnt on that one with the phone calls ringing, people who used to run charity events who paid $17 for a permit are now paying $250 or $300 for a permit. We know water…the new water fees that we just increased, or approved an increase, have eight new fees associated with them. We now charge non-profits to take care of our public amenities. Whittier Park. All sorts of public parks that are maintained by non-profits. We charge them a $500 annual fee or $1,000 annual fee. So there's obviously a growing trend towards user fees, and that's not necessarily a bad thing but we need to know what the big picture is, where we're going. So my question is to the Chairperson, how does this fit into the big picture? Why can't we wait for three weeks and roll this into the budget deliberation where we'd have a greater context? Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: No further Speakers? Councillor Swandel.

Councillor Swandel: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let me just start by saying this is following policy, Council direction and policy that we have in front of us. A little while ago you may recall that we brought forward some other fees and at that time we talked about one fees by-law for the City of Winnipeg that we would bring forward prior to the budget each year; that we wouldn't be doing these sort of one-off lumps that we continue to do, and there would be some conversation in there about what was outside of inflation, in our attempts to get to cost recovery. So we have some policies in front of us that the Public Service has gone out and worked with in order to come up with this material. In addition, there are some new items that are in here. There's some new building code or fire code laws that required the addition of some other fees and charges in here.

As far as it being a part of the budget process, or the budget being done in a vacuum, this is being done outside of the budget process. It comes into the budget process as a result of what Council previously decided. The secrecy of the budget, you know, some would characterize it being done by EPC. Well I believe that's a policy set out in the Charter, and if you want somebody else to do the budget then you'd better be talking to the Province of Manitoba because I for one believe that we should respect the Charter that's given to us and operate within its parameters.

You know, certainly we can in and talk about individual fees. You know, the idea of whether or not these costs should be borne by taxpayers-at-large or individual organizations is certainly one that has some merit. We do that on a regular basis. I can tell you that these fees are, for the most part, I don't think that's new in there. It's just because they were previously done without any formal sort of statement of what they were and the parks where people were getting blocks of time for more than a day, they would just multiply by "x" number days and charge them so many days of four-hour blocks, which I guess constitutes a day space in the park. And this is just, you know, you want to use some space in the park. You want it aside for you as a Non-profit Organization or for a For-profit Company. These are what are considered reasonable costs in order to have that, and they've been brought forward by our folks.

Now the other things that are in here, you know, what should taxpayers-at-large be paying and what should be paid for as fees. You see the ambulance fees are in here. We are one of the only cities in the country, if not the only city in the country that subsidizes ambulance fees. You know personally, as an individual, I don't

believe that property taxpayers should be subsidizing that piece of health care, but yet that's in here and it's part of that going forward, and getting up to cost recovery and proper inflationary increases.

So to summarize, this is being done in a correct fashion. It's not being done contrary to our budget process. It's being done with the Council direction that was previously given. The fee increases are reasonable and in keeping with our desire to get to cost-recovery, and if people want to use their small bits of money in their Per Capita Grant program or other grant programs that individual Councillors have available to help Not-for-Profit Organizations do things like street parties and I know even the BIZ on Corydon, for example, or other places that do those, they do generate some of their own money and know that it's well spent in those areas. All we do here is we're trying to get cost-recovery from going out and blocking the streets or creating the insurance or the other pieces that are required for that. The specific one that Councillor Gerbasi mentioned by the way, that suggested that effected block parties, that's not what the block party street closure thing is. That number's way down. I think we have that at like $37 or something. It gets up to around $200 when you get into the insurance piece, but individuals can also come and pick the barricades up themselves. We make it a little easier for street parties, and all those questions can be answered by simply calling the folks in the Public Service. So with that, I'll let you call the question Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: The vote has been called by Councillor Gerbasi on Item Number 1. All in favour, please rise.

A RECORDED VOTE was taken the result being as follows:

Yeas

His Worship Mayor Katz, Councillors Browaty, Clement, Fielding, Nordman, O'Shaughnessy, Pagtakhan, Steeves, Swandel, Wyatt, and Mr. Speaker Councillor Lazarenko.

Nays

Councillors Gerbasi, Smith and Vandal and Thomas.

City Clerk: The vote Mr. Speaker, Yeas 11, Nays 4.

Mr. Speaker: Item 1 is carried. Consideration of By-laws, Councillor Swandel.

STANDING POLICY COMMITTEE ON FINANCE CONSIDERATION OF BY-LAWS

Councillor Swandel: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let me get back to my right page here. I will move that the following By-laws be read a first time. By-law No. 7/2009 and By-law No. 9/2009.

Mr. Speaker: All in favour? Contrary? Carried.

Clerk: By-law No. 7/2009 and By-law No. 9/2009

Councillor Swandel: Mr. Speaker, I will move that By-law No. 7/2009 and By-law No. 9/2009 be read a second time.

Mr. Speaker: All in favour? Contrary? Carried.

Clerk: By-laws No. 7/2009 and 9/2009

Councillor Swandel: Mr. Speaker, I will move that the rule be suspended and By-laws No. 7/2009 and 9/2009 be read a third time and that same be passed in order to be signed and sealed.

Mr. Speaker: All in favour? Contrary? Carried. Question Period.

STANDING POLICY COMMITTEE ON FINANCE QUESTION PERIOD

Mr. Speaker: Councillor Gerbasi. Vandal. Councillor Gerbasi your first question.

Councillor Gerbasi: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Through you to Councillor Vandal. Councillor Swandel, sorry. Wishful thinking. Just kidding. (laughter). I'm dreaming.

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, my question has to do with the budget process. Councillor Swandel in his earlier comments pointed out that the City of Winnipeg Charter Act has EPC preparing the budget and obviously I'm aware of that. I have actually been a member of EPC in the past and I'm aware that it's EPC's responsibility to prepare the budget. But there are options that does not spell out in the Charter that other Councillors and other people cannot be included in things such as pre-budget consultations. You know, it does not spell out the time frame has to be three weeks or less. You know I mean, obviously, EPC and the Mayor and yourself as Chair have made choices as to how you're going to proceed in this budget process. So I'd like you to comment as to whether you would be open at any point, particularly as we're going into a very significant budget discussion now. Would you be willing to increase openness, inclusion and involvement in citizens and non-EPC members in the budget process?

Mr. Speaker: Councillor Swandel.

Councillor Swandel: I'm always open to receiving more information from the public and other Councillors. I think as Councillor Gerbasi is probably aware, a great deal of time, most of the time when we're preparing budgets in any given year, we're also dealing with the timing of Federal and Provincial budgets and their ongoing negotiations there that are sometimes being done behind closed doors and trying to see what happens there, so trying to get a final indication of whether or not we will be increasing taxes or not increasing taxes or doing something for residential taxpayers or non-residential taxpayers, we really don't know until the very minute, but you know if anybody wants to bring forward ideas and certainly into my office, I would welcome those ideas and bring them forward in the EPC conversations around the budget.

Mr. Speaker: Councillor Gerbasi? You've got a second question? That's it? Councillor Vandal, next.

Councillor Vandal: Thank you Mr. Speaker, to Councillor Swandel, we know the budget is going to be tabled very soon, I'm wondering if you can give us an indication as to the recommendations from EPC on property taxes and business taxes?

Mr. Speaker: Councillor Swandel.

Councillor Swandel: At present, I can tell you there is no recommendation. I can tell you that we've stated previously in the last couple of budgets that we would hold the line on business taxes as far as what the total amount of revenue that was generated from it. So if we generated fifty seven million dollars last year; we'll try and generate fifty seven million dollars this year. I can tell you that if there was any tax increase coming, it would affect both residential and non-residential properties. We're not at the point where we can make a final, bring a document forward with a recommendation. We still have some conversations ongoing with the Province. We also have some very big concerns in the out years, in '10 and '11. We'd like to tighten those numbers up, so that, you know, part of not being able to get the budget done in a timely fashion is dealing with, we could get it done much more timely and in front of people much quickly if we could resolve, or get our estimates for '10 and '11 much closer to where they should be. So that's basically where we're at right now. We hope to bring further information forward as soon as we can, but there's still a lot of work to be done.

Mr. Speaker: Your second question Councillor.

Councillor Vandal: Can you share with this Council the directives that have been given to the Administration relative to their spending? Have they been given directives to cut five percent, cut two percent or spend as usual or increase spending in the departments?

Mr. Speaker: Councillor Swandel.

Councillor Swandel: I couldn't give a specific indication that anybody's asked for a specific amount of money or to increase spending in any department. Spending is always driven by revenue and we're still resting a great deal with the revenue side of the equation. Obviously, we've made the statement in previous budgets and I think we'll probably make the statement in this budget that we do not want to affect our services in the City of Winnipeg. That's always the wrestle you get down to when you get into the short strokes. Is it about increasing taxes or affecting services, and I think we will do that as a Council together when we get a document that we're comfortable putting forward to all of Council and have some good public debate in all of our Standing Committees and ultimately come up with what we as a whole believe is in the best interests of, or at least the majority of Council, believe is in the best interests of the citizens of the City of Winnipeg.

Mr. Speaker: Your final question Councillor Vandal.

Councillor Vandal: As the Councillor for St. Norbert, could you share your individual position on a property tax increase below the rate of inflation?

Councillor Swandel: As the Councillor for St. Norbert, I would suggest that we eliminate all property taxes in St. Norbert, whether or not we will be able to do that, I don't know. As the Chair of Finance I'm privy to some information out there and I've said it publicly that as a result of you know, failed, or not failing, losses in pension fund investments by the fund, those funds, we have to increase our contributions to pensions in forward years. That's a significant amount of money. I don't have an answer as to how we're going to do that over the next three years. Do I think that there might, we might have to do the responsible thing and raise taxes if we can't find other ways of dealing with that problem? That's a possibility. Whether we have to do it in '09 or '010 or '11, I don't know which of those years but I think it is coming.

Mr. Speaker: Councillor Steeves, your first question.

Councillor Steeves: Thank you Mr. Speaker. Through you to the Chair of Finance, regarding the issue of non-EPC Councillors being concerned they're locked out of the process, my question is this. If a non-EPC Councillor was to state publicly or privately to the Chair of Finance that they believe that we should be increasing or decreasing property taxes, or that they believe that we should be increasing or decreasing business taxes this year, if they were to make that statement publicly or privately to the Chair of Finance, would he be prepared to receive this information from those non-EPC Councillors?

Mr. Speaker: Councillor Swandel.

Councillor Swandel: No. (laughter). You know certainly any information that comes forward and I say, you know like we say to everybody when we go through these processes that if you're bringing one side of it forward, bring the other side forward. So if, you know, if you want to talk about how to better finance the City so that we can do more, improve the quality of life of our citizens, bring that forward as well. If you want to talk about the fact that we should tax more and make these improvements this is where we should spend that money, do that. If you believe that we should decrease taxes and we should eliminate some services or lessen some services somewhere, then let's talk about both sides of the equation. It's not just one side or the other. This is the budget, both revenues and expenditures, and for anybody to stand up and just jump on one side or the other, it doesn't do us any good. This is a budget.

Mr. Speaker: Councillor Steeves your second question.

Councillor Steeves: To date, has the Chair of Finance received any advice from non-EPC Councillors, any of them, as to whether or not he should be considering raising or decreasing property taxes or whether or not he should be considering raising or decreasing business taxes?

Mr. Speaker: Councillor Swandel.

Councillor Swandel: I don't think specifically I have. In general conversation I know that you hear quite often whether it's with Councillors or just in public, the fact that we have held the line or decreased taxes for a very long time and you know, people are wondering how long we can continue to do that. You know, I know that some Councillors are pro-business tax, some Councillors are anti-business tax. You know, that conversation has come up, but specific to this year's budget, I don't believe that I have had any Councillors come forward and say they would like to raise taxes or not raise taxes.

Mr. Speaker: Your final question Councillor.

Councillor Steeves: For abundant clarity Mr. Speaker, if a, any Councillor wanted to make their feelings on taxation known to the Chairperson of Finance, either raising or lowering property taxes, or raising or lowering business taxes, what process would that Councillor have to go through to get that information to the Chair of Finance.

Councillor Swandel: Oh just a quick email would be probably the easiest way and put some sense around it, some depth of information. I mean anybody can stand up and say raise taxes, don't raise taxes, you know raise business taxes, don't raise business taxes. At the end of the day it's why you want to do that and why you believe it makes sense in the overall big picture of the City's budget on both the revenue and expenditure side and what you hope to gain by doing it. You know, so we've got, you know, the City of Winnipeg is doing very well. When you look at major cities and by major I mean cities of over half a million people or so, the City of Winnipeg has the lowest property taxes, even when you combine things like school taxes and utilities in on top of that, the City of Winnipeg does extremely well. So, you know, we certainly have some wiggle room relative to the rest of the country, but do we want to affect the quality of life of our citizens? I'm pretty proud to say that we have the finest snow clearing in the country. I'm pretty proud, you know, of some of the things that we're doing like the Human Rights Museum and other, you know, pieces that are going on in the City of Winnipeg. We're putting additional funds this year into Assiniboine Park and our good partners that are working there. The stakeholders group that's working there, you know the policing; we've got one of the highest police per capita ratios in the country. We continue to invest there as do our partners at the other levels government too. When you look at the Provincial and Federal commitments into policing, you know, one of the curses was great to give us the money and they'd say well here is ten officers; they don't index that, so we as a Council have to find that money every year. You know so bring the depth of information when you bring a request to talk about taxes. Say what it is you would prefer to see, where you would prefer to see funding. If you want it to go into social programs, you want it to go into emergency services and, or where you would like to see cuts if you were going to offset a tax increase.

Mr. Speaker: Councillor Vandal your first question.

Councillor Vandal: Back in October, at the Council meeting, I moved a motion that a fire hall be constructed in the southeast quadrant of the City, in South St. Boniface essentially, that was referred to your Committee. I appeared in delegation. My question is, is there any intention at all of bringing that motion back to the floor of Council or is…what's the status of it?

Councillor Swandel: I believe the status is, the report is forthcoming. I can't tell you exactly whether it's at this meeting or not. I know that the department has completed their work and they're ready to bring something forward, whether it's vetted through the rest of our system to

get the report there, but I do know that there was, I can tell you just informally that there was some positive indications of a need for a couple of different police stations and some restructuring and I think your area was one of those that was mentioned, or pardon me, not police, fire stations.

Mr. Speaker: Your second question Councillor? No further questions? Standing Policy Committee on Downtown Development report of January 5 of 2009. Councillor Pagtakhan.

REPORT OF THE STANDING POLICY COMMITTEE ON DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT DATED JANUARY 5, 2009

Councillor Pagtakhan: Thank you Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to move the report of January 5, 2009, and move adoption of the Consent Agenda Item Number 1.

Mr. Speaker: All in favour? Contrary? Carried. On the motion, there was a motion that was distributed to members of Council, Motion Number 4, that has to be changed. It's not to go to the Property and Development, it is to go to the Downtown Development. That motion will be automatic referral to Downtown Development.

Councillor Swandel: Mr. Speaker, can I move that we suspend the rules to deal with this item now? I think it would probably…it's about the Habitat for Humanity land. If there's not comfort on the part of Council after hearing it, then we can perhaps move to move it forward and have it come back, but I think it would be worthwhile to have a discussion now.

Mr. Speaker: Councillor your motion is now to move suspension of rules to deal with Motion Number 4? Councillors you've heard that? All in favour? Contrary? Carried. Councillor Swandel briefly.

STANDING POLICY COMMITTEE ON DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT MOTIONS

Motion No. 4
Moved by Councillor Swandel
Seconded by Councillor Pagtakhan

WHEREAS the City owns a substantial piece of vacant land at 311 Ross Ave that has been underutilized for over 10 years;

AND WHEREAS the area is considered a neighbourhood in need of revitalization;

AND WHEREAS increased home ownership versus rental housing will assist in revitalizing this community;

AND WHEREAS Habitat for Humanity can quickly bring new homes and home owners to the area;

AND WHEREAS Manitoba Lotteries will match the value of any in kind contribution to Habitat for Humanity;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City sell the subject lands to Habitat for Humanity for the sum of $1;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Public Service do all things necessary to assist in the land sale and the subsequent redevelopment of the land by Habitat for Humanity.

Councillor Swandel: Thank you Mr. Speaker. I'm fortunate enough to have been dealing with this piece of land with Councillor Pagtakhan over the last couple of years. There's been some stuff that's happening going on back and forth. Councillor Pagtakhan and I were recently both made aware that Habitat for Humanity has an arrangement with Manitoba Lotteries where they can receive matching funding for any contributions from the City. Our efforts to try and get home ownership on this empty lot resulted in a lot of reports and a lot of wrangling between the different housing groups whether it's the City and the Province or some not-for-profits and the Province, and it's just sort of been drawn out bureaucratically. Given that Habitat can access funds from Manitoba Lotteries

and given that they can move quickly without some of the bureaucratic stumbling blocks that our housing folks encounter in all three levels of government, this motion basically just says that as we do with other lots for Habitat, that we give them this land for a dollar. They will leverage the value, the true value of the land to gain money back from Manitoba Lotteries and be building on this land hopefully this year. And when you look at where this land is, there's no better way to start rebuilding, or helping to rebuild and revitalize these communities than to bring some home ownership into the areas. The areas, as they get sort of worn down a bit they tend to become more of rental properties, a transient population. By bringing ownership into these places we are improving this community, so I believe that by doing this today as opposed to having it go through the whole process of getting it back in front of us, that we will hopefully enable this to happen this year.

Mr. Speaker: You've heard the…all in favour? Contrary? Carried. And that's pertaining to 311 Ross Avenue. Thank you. Motions none. Well we've dealt with that. Consideration of By-laws, none. Question Period. Any questions of Downtown Development? Seeing there's no questions. We'll commence with the Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development Report of January the 6th of 2009. Councillor Fielding.

REPORT OF THE STANDING POLICY COMMITTEE ON PROPERTY AND DEVELOPMENT DATED JANUARY 6, 2009

Councillor Fielding: Thank you Mr. Speaker. I'd like to move the report and move adoption of Council Agenda 1 through 9.

Mr. Speaker: All in favour? Contrary? Carried.

Mr. Speaker: Report "A" of January 6th of 2009, Councillor Fielding.

REPORT "A" OF THE STANDING POLICY COMMITTEE ON PROPERTY AND DEVELOPMENT DATED JANUARY 6, 2009

Councillor Fielding: This is Report "A" you're saying Councillor? I'd like to declare a potential conflict of interest for myself so I'd like to recluse myself.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, you will excuse yourself from the Chambers and I believe Councillor Swandel you will be moving that motion?

Councillor Swandel: I will be dealing with this Mr. Speaker. I will move the report and adoption of Consent Agenda Item 1.

Mr. Speaker: All in favour? Contrary? Carried.

STANDING POLICY COMMITTEE ON PROPERTY AND DEVELOPMENT CONSIDERATION OF BY-LAWS

Councillor Swandel: Mr. Speaker I will move that By-law No. 5/2009 be read a first time.

Mr. Speaker: All in favour? Contrary? Carried.

Clerk: By-law No. 5/2009

Councillor Swandel: That's only been read a first time, right? Okay I'll further move, Mr. Speaker, that the following By-laws be read a first time. By-law No. 1/2009, By-law No. 3/2009, By-law No. 4/2009, and By-law No. 8/2009.

Mr. Speaker: All in favour? Contrary? Carried.

Clerk: By-law No. 1/2009, By-law No. 3/2009, By-law No. 4/2009, and By-law No. 8/2009

Councillor Swandel: Mr. Speaker, I'll move that By-laws No. 1/2009, 3/2009, 4/2009, and 8/20091 be read a second time.

Mr. Speaker: All in favour? Contrary? Carried.

Clerk: By-laws No. 1/2009, 3/2009, 4/2009, and 8/2009.

Councillor Swandel: Mr. Speaker, I will move that the rule be suspended and By-laws No. 1/2009, 3/2009, 4/2009, and 8/2009 be read a third time and that same be passed and ordered to be signed and sealed.

Mr. Speaker: All in favour? Contrary? Carried. Question Period. Councillor Fielding, you can come back into the Chambers now. There will be questions. Any questions of Property and Development? None? Standing Policy Committee on Protection and Community Services Report of January 12 of 2009, Councillor Steeves.

REPORT OF THE STANDING POLICY COMMITTEE ON PROTECTION AND COMMUNITY SERVICES DATED JANUARY 12, 2009

Councillor Steeves: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Item Number 2 is laid over by EPC to February 11, 2009. With respect to Item Number 1 of January 12, 2009, this was…an extension was asked for by Administration for another 60 days. That's come all the way back up to Council to grant that extension. So by virtue of that I'm asking that be approved by Council. I'll be moving that.

Mr. Speaker: All in favour? Contrary? Carried. Councillor Swandel?

City Clerk: Motions right? Motion 5. Motion 5.

Mr. Speaker: Motion 5, yes. I'm sorry. All in favour? Contrary? Carried.

STANDING POLICY COMMITTEE ON PROTECTION AND COMMUNITY SERVICES MOTIONS

Motion No. 5
Moved by Councillor Vandal
Seconded by Councillor Smith

WHEREAS the current "Doing Business in Winnipeg" by-law has adversely affected non-profit organizations who need licenses to organize public auctions for charity;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the issue of issuing licenses for non-profit organizations holding charity auctions be referred to the Standing Policy Committee on Protection and Community services for further information and analysis.

City Clerk: No, no. Automatic referral.

Mr. Speaker: Is that a referral?

City Clerk: Automatic referral.

Mr. Speaker: Automatic Referral. Councillor Swandel you're getting me confused here. Automatic referral, that's what it is. Okay. Motions, motions.

Clerk: No By-laws. Question Period.

Mr. Speaker: Questions. Yes, we did that. That's done. Question period. Councillor Swandel. Wyatt. Councillor Swandel.

STANDING POLICY COMMITTEE ON PROTECTION AND COMMUNITY SERVICES QUESTION PERIOD

Councillor Swandel: Thank you Mr. Speaker. Councillor Steeves, for a couple of years now we've been waiting information to come back as far as recreation facilities. I believe we were looking at June of 2008 which was put off to November of 2008, put off to December and now put off again. This Plan 2025 coming out of G.C.W.C.C. and the community centres, I, you know as the, sharing part of South St. Vital with you as an area, we both have Dakota Community Centre in our wards which have a junior hockey team there. I think it's the only junior hockey team on that side of the river in Winnipeg. They have been finding it difficult to maintain their presence there because of the community centre needing to use ice for its younger children's programs. We've delayed that, trying to get something happening there to increase the ice capacity in that area. As a result I think we've lost the opportunity to realize some good value in

the sale of a piece of land that's attached to the community centre which was the proceeds were to go towards funding expansion of that community centre. I'm wondering if you can give us some indication of when we may see this report 2025 come forward so we can begin to spend on much needed upgrades and improvements to our community recreation facilities.

Mr. Speaker: Councillor Steeves.

Councillor Steeves: Thanks for the question. The answer is soon, I hope. It's been tough and I understand there's been meetings lately, and I know that they've had high level meetings sort of looking at, I guess, finalizing this report. Councillor is completely correct. It has been very, very difficult getting to this stage, and I think people understand what's going on out there. We're trying to…we've entrusted, I guess, G.C.W.C.C. with the responsibility of trying to work out a set of priorities sort of within the community committee boundaries, using the community centres obviously, as the interested stakeholders who are trying to, I guess, set those priorities. The challenge of course is that the priorities, as probably set by the community centres themselves, may or may not, who knows, match up with sort of the political priorities of either people around this table potentially or people of other levels of government, and my prediction, although I don't know this for sure, my prediction is that once we have on the table kind of the sets of priorities for the different areas of the city, there may then need to be some, I guess, reconciliation with different political priorities that exist for people around this table and different members of different levels of government. We've seen examples in the past of members of other levels of government with the support of very high members of other levels of government coming forward and talking about specific projects in certain areas of the City that, during election times, seem to be worthy of certain attention, and I don't know if at the end of the day these are going to be the pick for priorities or not, and are these issues tough to work through? Yes they have been very, very tough to work through is my inclination and I believe the Councillor is completely right in that I believe it's been a longer process getting there than we might have hoped. I am hopeful though that within the next thirty to sixty days we could have something on the table at least for discussion, and whether or not it will be something that we can accept kind of (inaudible), I can't say right now, Mr. Speaker, but it has been a very, very difficult process and I think any one of us who works with community centres understands how tough these things can be trying to reconcile the competing needs of all community centres into a set of priorities that not only they agree to, but that we eventually are going to agree to, too. So, a tough process, that's where we're at, hoping to have something to move forward on in the very near future, at least for some sincere and direct discussion focus.

Mr. Speaker: Your second question.

Councillor Swandel: Thank you Mr. Speaker, I appreciate those comments Councillor Steeves. Given that the Federal budget will include spending, specifically one category for recreation facilities and in addition just in general, infrastructure spending, we can always include recreation facilities, do you not agree that we need this information extremely quickly, especially if we can put some of our recreation projects forward for 2009 and 2010, the accelerated schedule?

Mr. Speaker: Councillor Steeves.

Councillor Steeves: Absolutely agree. Two things, though, that bear mentioning. The first is, the process, once we do have G.C.W.C.C.'s recommendations, if I can call them that, if we do get a set of recommendations from G.C.W.C.C., it will move fast or slow depending upon Council's willingness to accept those in all likelihood. So to a certain extent, the ball may then be in our court. If there is any delay, it may well be because we as a group can't collectively agree on whether or not we accept these or don't. I'll just make those comments, and I don't know where that's going to land at all. The second thing of course is with respect to

any Federal funding that moves towards recreational funding, I'll make the same comment I make with respect to infrastructure. In my respectful opinion, the program will be a lot less useful if it is specific application-based programs that requires us as a City to then apply either with or without the consent of our Provincial partners and/or our Federal partners. The same problem exists in recreational facilities in all likelihood that exists with respect to infrastructure, in that there is no…it is very, very difficult to defend a lot of the application-based programming that has come out of the Federal Government over the course of the last ten years, be it MRIF or CSIF or the Building Canada Fund. The truth is for municipalities they don't work that well because they depend on applications being submitted, all priorities being lined up between different levels of government. The Mayor mentioned a better model, the gas tax model where the money simply flows, and I know we're talking about recreational facilities here, but if any program for recreational facilities was going to ever be proposed or to come down, we would much prefer that it is simply money that we could plug into existing priorities. I mean, ostensibly we're talking about organizing Federal Government priorities, local MP's, MLA priorities, local MLA's, City Council priorities, City Councillors, and even community centre priorities. Can you imagine Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Speaker: Your final question Councillor Swandel.

Councillor Swandel: Thank you Mr. Speaker. I'm glad Councillor Steeves went through what he did because we really established this process to sort of stop the political parochialization of dollars, and to hear that there's concerns about that, certainly troubling. Given that we created this process to avoid politicial parochialization and given that it would appear certainly in the Riel district that there is some political game playing being done to meet some election promises, if this comes back or it's not ready to move in a timely fashion so we can take advantage of dollars that are available, now would the Chair support bringing the process back into Council and letting it be our political process then as opposed to having the other levels of government control the politics of it?

Mr. Speaker: Councillor Steeves.

Councillor Steeves: I certainly see it even though we've empowered G.C.W.C.C. to do this process; I still see it as our responsibility and our process that we've let out to a third party to do on our behalf. I still see a level of ultimate control existing around this table, but I know what the Councillor is getting at. I completely agree. The challenge, and I'm trying to partially read his mind but I think I know exactly what he's thinking, the challenge is sometimes, there exists certain opportunities out there that may be opportunities to augment and support and build upon the existing process. We have to, I think, have that flexibility and if the Councillor is saying am I open to avenues to give us that flexibility? I am. Absolutely I am, because I don't want this thing to get hog tied into a process where we can't move.

Mr. Speaker: Councillor Wyatt your first question.

Councillor Wyatt: Thank you Mr. Speaker. Through you to the Chair. In light of the recent comments made by the Chief of Police publicly about guns and specifically handguns, proliferating in our City today and clearly, as many of the critics of the Federal legislation ten years ago pointed out that the Federal gun control legislation is complete failure with the law abiding citizens making it difficult for them to acquire firearms, but the criminals having no difficulty of course acquiring firearms, and the proliferation of handguns, largely tied to the drug trade that's going on in our City, what steps Mr. Speaker, are going to be taken to deal with this huge problem.

Mr. Speaker: Councillor Steeves.

Councillor Steeves: The problem with handguns, I take it as the exact issue that's being asked by the Councillor, and he is completely correct in terms of the amount of handguns that we are seeing I

think in this City. There's a lot of great news stories coming out of the police service it seems lately, but one of the issues has been, as drug trade has increased in this City, particularly certain types of drugs beginning with crack and then sort of morphing into crystal meth amphetamine. One of the unhappy side-effects has been the use of firearms and the existence of firearms. The answer given as direct as possible that I can in terms of what has been done is of course, I would suggest, the gang strategy that I think is working in this City. I'm not going to deny that it's a problem but I think Chief McCaskill and his team over there have done a great job in terms of specific arrests in instances and we all know that there's seizures and we all know that there's infiltrations that go on and obviously there's some wins and there is some losses. I would site that program and any specifics, I would invite obviously the Councillor to sit down and meet with Administration and sometimes Administration is in a position to share more details about some of these things in sort of a face-to-face meeting where they have those confidences. I'm not sure. I do know that some cities in the past year, year and a half, have suggested the prospect of the banning of handguns within their City, and those motions have been floated by specific Councils. I can tell you there is no plans currently by either myself or the Committee to look into that specifically, nor is there any plans for us to delve into the issue of the gun registration as it currently exists. I trust, I tried to do my best to answer the question.

Mr. Speaker: Your second question Councillor.

Councillor Wyatt: Thank you. No it is a difficult issue and I appreciate the Councillor's response and I agree with the Councillor of the work being done by the Winnipeg Public Service is tremendous. Have there been though, any discussions? Clearly I'm not aware of any handgun manufacturers here in Winnipeg. Handguns are coming in across borders Mr. Speaker, from other jurisdictions. What steps have been taken to discuss with the Provincial Government and Federal Government to end the smuggling, because that's how they're coming in, the smuggling of guns into our jurisdiction and into our City, to stop it before it gets across the borders.

Mr. Speaker: Councillor Steeves.

Councillor Steeves: As a police service, we've generally, tremendously augmented the inner jurisdictional co-operation, in fact, between police services, the RCMP over the course of the last few years. I think, frankly beginning with our former police chief, Chief Ewatski who was head of the National Chiefs Association, I apologize, I forgot the acronym, one of his big focuses was the interconnection of police services and how they work together, and obviously, the City of Winnipeg Police Service has no territorial specific jurisdiction across borders. What we do have though, is the power to liaise with other police services, custom and excise who have those sorts of powers. I can tell you that there has been a real focus on trying to build those connections. In fact, just in the last year, the members of the Committee received a report and a discussion from our Police Administration on those connections, how they're working, how they're trying to augment them and improve them on a regular basis. Guns coming into Winnipeg from outside locations, obviously, a very, very difficult problem to try to stop and to try to deal with. Rightly or wrongly, it would seem to me that the tact that the Winnipeg Police Service is trying to take, and I think it's right headed, is to try to increase communication and the liaison and the direct connection they have with the RCMP and other police services across Canada.

Mr. Speaker: Your final question Councillor Wyatt.

Councillor Wyatt: Would the Chair agree that the Provincial Government and Federal Government, in light of the fact that clearly what's, experts are indicating drugs are going south of the border and guns are coming back as well as other drugs, that the Provincial and Federal Governments are dropping the ball with regards to preventing firearms from

coming into our Province and into our City?

Mr. Speaker: Councillor Steeves. You can still answer. Councillor Steeves.

Councillor Steeves: Well, I don't know if I'm ready, I actually don't know if I'm ready to sort of levy that criticism directly at any other level of government. What I will do is this Mr. Speaker. I will undertake to follow up on the specific issue of guns coming in, inter-provincially and internationally, probably specifically from the United States. I apologize. I just don't have enough direct information on that particular statistic to sort of level, levee that, level that accusation against other levels of government, even though I'd kind of like to.

Mr. Speaker: No further questions? I would just like to say thank you, we have some people in the gallery with…led by Donald Benham. This is the process we go through each Council meeting under the Charter that's given to us by the Province of Manitoba, and also to the people that are watching us by television. Shaw supplies the televised Council meetings each and every time. And if anyone may have a concern as you're watching the procedures that we go through Council, don't hesitate to phone the Clerk's office or any one of your representatives for any changes. Councillor Thomas moves adjournment? All in favour? Contrary? Carried. Roll call.

ROLL CALL

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, Councillor Lazarenko, His Worship, Mayor Katz, Councillors Browaty, Clement, Fielding, Gerbasi, Nordman, O'Shaughnessy, Pagtakhan, Smith, Steeves, Swandel, Thomas, Vandal and Wyatt.

Council adjourned at 11:26 a.m.