EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE

QUESTION PERIOD

Minute No. 595
Councillor Gerbasi made reference to the first phase of bus rapid transit being built and asked if His Worship could advise of his intention in terms of funding support for the next phase.

His Worship Mayor Katz noted that Stage 1 was from the downtown to Jubilee and that construction was ongoing and progressing at a proper rate. He stated that after that was done, Stage 2 would be completed and would go from Jubilee to the University, which would play an important role in connecting the University of Winnipeg to the University of Manitoba. His Worship advised that it was he who went to the Province to get commitment on BRT. He stated that there was still work to do with the Federal Government. His Worship cited that he intends to keep working with the Province as well as the Federal Government to get access to more funding to complete Stage 2.

Councillor Gerbasi, noting that Council was just going into the Capital Budget process, questioned if it was likely to see something for the next phases of BRT in the Capital Budget.

His Worship stated that Capital Budget discussions were ongoing and that he was also speaking to the Federal Government about potential programs for rapid transit and that there could be some very positive opportunities down the road.

Councillor Browaty advised that earlier in October, all members of Council received a copy of a letter sent from the Mayor to Greg Selinger, Steve Ashton and to the Ministry of Conservation regarding the license requirements to remove nitrogen from the effluent of the water treatment plants. He noted that there was now a new premier in place and questioned if His Worship had received a response to his question from now Premier Selinger.

His Worship stated that it's become extremely apparent that this could be a waste of money, and that the City has the backing of 63 scientists who feel this would be a waste of money and could also cause significant damage. He also noted however that the Clean Environmental Commission had mandated the City to undertake this. His Worship recalled that he addressed the letter to Minister Stan Struthers and made all the candidates for Premier aware of it. He noted that he had met with Premier Selinger and that the new Premier was open minded and had asked the City to send him all the data that we had, so he and his staff could go through it and hopefully the end result would be that this would not be needed. He cautioned to keep in mind that it was the Clean Environment Commission that had mandated this, not specifically the Province.

Executive Policy Committee - Question Period (continued):

Councillor Browaty asked if His Worship would share the document from the University of Manitoba regarding the project and also questioned how far along things were in terms of tendering / doing the work required by the CEC, what costs were to this point, and if there was any consideration to delaying any further spending and development on the nitrogen removal component of the water plant upgrades while these discussions were still ongoing.

His Worship stated he would make sure everybody received a copy of the University of Manitoba document and took the remainder of Councillor Browaty's question under advisement.

Councillor Vandal questioned the status of a motion he moved last year regarding the construction of a new firehall in the southeast part of St. Boniface to serve Southdale, Sage Creek, Royalwood and Island Lakes.

His Worship advised that they were looking at a fire station in that part of the City, as well as a few other areas of the City and that a report was currently flowing through the system.

Councillor Steeves referenced the matter of nitrogen removal and the earlier comment of His Worship that this was a recommendation from the Clean Environment Commission and not necessarily something done by the Province of Manitoba. Councillor Steeves stated that his understanding was that the removal was a requirement under the license issued by the Provincial Government and requested clarification.

His Worship advised that what he was referring to was that the Province was basically listening to what the Clean Environment Commission was saying. His Worship advised he would be happy to follow up on the matter for the Councillor.

Councillor Steeves noted he wanted to make sure His Worship wasn't being too easy on the Province, to which His Worship replied that it has always been his purpose to be very fair with the Province.

Councillor Thomas made reference to the at-risk programs in her area and noted some concerns. She stated that the Chalmers program was a year round program operating five days a week and included an after school club that went quite late into the evening. Councillor Thomas stated she had been told that the resources were switched over to another summer program which was now closed. She cited her concern that at-risk programming should be continuing year round and asked if His Worship was aware of what was taking place in the community as a replacement.

His Worship stated that he was not aware specifically of all the details of the issue the Councillor had raised, but that he would be happy to bring it up with the Director of Community Services.