Minutes - Executive Policy Committee - March 12, 2003

REPORTS

Minute No. 132 Additional Funding for Take Pride Winnipeg!
File ER-1.5 (Vol. 9)

EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE DECISION:

The Executive Policy Committee referred the matter to the Special Meeting of the Committee scheduled for March 12, 2003, at 1:30 p.m.

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DECISION MAKING HISTORY:

Moved by Deputy Mayor Thomas,

That the matter be referred to the Special Meeting of the Committee scheduled for March 12, 2003, at 1:30 p.m.

Carried

STANDING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On November 26, 2002, the Standing Committee on Fiscal Issues referred this matter to the 2003 Current Estimate budget deliberations.

November 6, 2002

Mr. Bob Gannon
Chief Financial Officer
City of Winnipeg
510 Main Street
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3B 1B9

Dear Mr. Gannon;

One of the agenda items at the last Board of Directors meeting of Take Pride Winnipeg! was the issue of funding . The organization has been getting support from foundations, corporations and the Province of Manitoba over the past couple of years, in addition to its ongoing support from the City of Winnipeg and BFI Canada. But with tipping fees still low, BFI's support dropped dramatically, and there was no sign of an increase in their funding of $15,000 per annum until this past month. BFI gave Take Pride Winnipeg! 15,000 garbage bags for the Fall, Pick Me Up litter cleanup event, which was held on October 4. There were 100 schools and almost 24,000 students that participated to help clean up the city.

Take Pride Winnipeg! would like to ask if the City of Winnipeg could increase its funding of the organization by $50,000, up from $200,000 to $250,000 on annual basis for the next five years.

When I joined as Executive Director of Take Pride Winnipeg! in September, 1997, the organization was in some disarray. Together with the Board of Directors, we reshaped Take Pride Winnipeg with a new mission statement and vision. The three main programs that were in place prior to September, 1997 have been greatly expanded over the years.

- Spring cleanup
- Graffiti removal
- Murals

As well, Take Pride Winnipeg! has tripled its programs and services since then, concentrating on education and pride.

- Mentor Program
- Pride Club and newsletter
- Louie the Lion
- Teens Pro Winnipeg
- Fall, Pick Me Up
- Winnipeg in Bloom
- Winnipeg in Lights
-

The organization is looking to add another new program in 2003 – Take Pride in Reading for kindergarten to grade three students during I Love To Read month in February, with high school students, staff and special guests reading stories about litter control and pride to the young students.

Take Pride Winnipeg is affiliated with Keep America Beautiful, and we attend a yearly conference to learn about new programs and products and to share ideas with each other. We are contemplating bringing together all similar organizations from across Canada to Winnipeg for a conference in 2003 or 2004, so that we can share ideas with them. Not only would this conference bring in some revenues for the City and Take Pride, but it would allow us to showcase the city to many of the other cities across the nation.

Enclosed with this letter is a brief overview of our programs. I firmly believe that Take Pride Winnipeg! is a great asset to the City of Winnipeg, and hope that the City can find a way to increase our funding by $50,000 a year for the next five years. We look to expand our current programs and to bring on new programs that will help to enhance the overall cleanliness and beauty of the city, and raise the level of pride in all citizens of the city.

Take Pride Winnipeg! will continue to look for other financial partners to help offset costs. There are some companies that feel that because we get funding from the City we should not have to get outside funding. But many others help us each year, either with cash or in-kind. Our newest sponsor is McDonald's, which is partnering with us to supply and prepare all of the food at our 2003 kick off breakfast for May I Help for over 2,000 children.

Please let me know what steps I have to take to try to get this increase into the 2003 budget process. You may contact me at 956-7590, or I will try to phone you in the next week to discuss this with you further. Thank you very much for your help in this matter.

Sincerely,

Tom Ethans
Executive Director
Take Pride Winnipeg Inc.

PROGRAMS THAT WERE IN PLACE PRIOR TO SEPTEMBER 1997

SPRING LITTER REMOVAL

Take Pride Winnipeg has been involved in spring cleanup campaigns since its inception. They have always been successful, but the program was revamped to include more youth. The program is now called "May I Help" and the organization has found some great partners, including the City of Winnipeg (through the CAO Secretariat), Keep America Beautiful, Winnipeg Enterprises, Johnston Group, and Manitoba Product Stewardship Corporation, among others. Take Pride Winnipeg and the City also receive very positive media coverage from the Winnipeg Free Press, CJOB and the A-Channel.

The kick-off breakfast has grown from 100 in 1998, 300 in 1999, 900 in 2000, 1,800 in 2001 and over 2,300 people (mostly students) in 2002. Mayor Murray, councillors, the CAO Secretariat and City employees got involved with this year's campaign. Over 31,500 people volunteered to pick up litter and paint over graffiti around the city.

As well this year, Take Pride partnered with the Manitoba Children's Museum to have a contest for schools to design and make a litter art sculpture. The results were spectacular and expectations are that this contest will continue for many years to come.

Take Pride Winnipeg! completed a litter index of the city prior to its spring cleanup program in as well as after the event, and the results showed that overall Winnipeg improved from 2.03 to 1.46 (1.0 being no litter, 4 being extremely littered).

A very interesting statistic of Take Pride Winnipeg comes from the organization's annual Report Form for Keep America Beautiful (we are affiliated with this organization). From June 1, 2001 – June 30, 2002, we had a value of $502,400 in volunteer hours, $82,500 in value of donated goods and $498,500 in the value of cost avoidance for a total dollar value of benefits of $1,083,500. The organization has certainly helped to not only keep the City of Winnipeg clean and beautiful, but to greatly reduce the amount of money that the City would have to spend to get the same results.

Overall, May I Help is a great benefit to the City of Winnipeg, as these volunteers help to pick up litter, which after the snow melts is at its worst level for the year, and they also help to paint over graffiti. The cost savings to the City are tremendous from this one program alone.

GRAFFITI REMOVAL

Take Pride Winnipeg! started hiring summer students to help remove graffiti from around the city in the summer of 1997. The Board of Directors realized that this was a growing problem and Take Pride became one of the founding partners of the T.A.G. Team (Together Against Graffiti) along with the City of Winnipeg and the Winnipeg Police Service.

Since 1998, Take Pride Winnipeg! has hired crews to help remove graffiti and has worked very closely with Bob Okabe of the City. In February, 2002 Take Pride Winnipeg! partnered with the City of Winnipeg, Downtown BIZ and Exchange BIZ to hire a full time anti-graffiti removal coordinator. Removal of graffiti can now be year round rather than just seasonal, which makes it easier to stay on top of the situation better.

The amount of money spent on graffiti removal needs to be addressed. The problem is on an increase in the city, with the highest level of graffiti tags since prior to the Pan-Am Games. Graffiti vandals are becoming more brazen, now targeting the front of buildings and even historic buildings. As well, some have taken to etching into glass (which can only be removed by replacing the glass) and to pasting graffiti-type posters around the city. Taking the graffiti off is expensive, catching the vandals is difficult and doling out proper punishment for this crime is almost non-existent. There must be a more coordinated effort to provide immediate removal as one deterrent, but also start an education program for business and home owners to teach them how to protect their property from vandals.

Take Pride Winnipeg! is part of task force meeting to finalize a proposal on graffiti that will be given to both the Province and the City by month end. As well, a new Graffiti Hurts video is going to be produced in the spring, using Winnipeg sports teams, to help inform students about the graffiti problem.

Take Pride Winnipeg! is also looking into new graffiti removal techniques, and has been in contact with a U.S. lab that has successfully used lasers for graffiti removal in the lab, and is hoping to build a prototype in the next year or two. Take Pride has requested that Winnipeg be considered as a test city for this revolutionary new technology.

MURALS

Take Pride Winnipeg! commissioned artists from 1991-1997 to paint about twenty murals (mainly on underpasses around the city). The organization saw the importance of the mural program and revamped it in 1998.

The Mural Program has been very successful over the past four years. Business owners phone on an almost daily basis to ask about getting a mural on their properties. The Mural Program is designed to:

1. Paint murals showing Winnipeg's past, present, future and its multiculturalism, as well as nature/landscapes
2. Beautify a neighbourhood with color and vibrancy
3. Cover over and prevent graffiti (most graffiti vandals respect the artwork)
4. Help to employ local artists
5. Promote the arts to young people (who often help with mural painting)

From 1998 to the present, Take Pride Winnipeg! has commissioned over 120 new murals on the walls of businesses, schools, churches, and on fences and bridges. Take Pride Winnipeg! has hired 24 local artists over the past five years to paint these murals and has used students from over ten schools to help the artists. The quality of the murals has increased every year and in 2002 some of the biggest and best murals to date were commissioned and completed. The Winnipeg Sun ran a two page spread in the Nov. 3rd edition of the paper about murals in the city.



Higgins and Main (completed in October, 2002)

This is a great example of the tremendous quality of workmanship that goes into a mural. The owner of the building is now reconsidering selling the property because of the beautiful mural. The Mural Program will continue to grow over the next few years, with fifteen new murals already requested fro 2003.

NEW PROGRAMS SINCE 1998

MENTOR PROGRAM

In the spring of 1998, Take Pride Winnipeg! designed and tested an educational program for grades four and five students. The program was divided into five, one hour classes to be taught on litter control, graffiti control, the environment and pride. In the final class the students were to participate in a litter cleanup in their school yard. The key to the success of the program was that it was to be taught by high school students. Students from Glenlawn Collegiate taught the program at six elementary schools in May, 1998. The results were better than expected and the program was expanded to include all schools in Winnipeg in 1999. A full time educational coordinator was hired in 1999.
Since then the Mentor Program has grown - in 2002 around 200 high school students from over 20 high schools taught the program to over 2,700 elementary students in 125 elementary classrooms in over 40 schools.

The Mentor Program has many benefits for all involved. The elementary students think that the teenagers are cool and look up to them as role models. They subsequently are more interested in learning, and look forward to the class visits. The high school students gain valuable experience in leadership, presentations, time management and classroom management. The high school students also get volunteer hours, which works well with the mandate of many school divisions to have their students work x number of volunteer hours prior to their graduation. The elementary school teachers think this program is an excellent as it fits in very nicely with their lessons on environment, and there are components of the lessons that relate to the school curriculum.

Every year the Mentor Program is revamped by the Education Coordinator to keep the lessons fresh and current. A new video on the effects of graffiti is being produced with cooperation from the Education Department from the Province of Manitoba.

PRIDE CLUB/LOUIE THE LION

In 1998, Take Pride Winnipeg's mascot, Louie the Lion was born. Louie's goal is to have every student in Winnipeg join his "Pride Club" to help make Winnipeg a better place in which to live. Louie goes to visit schools at every opportunity, to get students excited about Winnipeg, about cleaning up, and about helping. Students do a Pledge Club pledge, and get to hug Louie or shake his hand. He is very welcome at all schools and is invited to many school picnics and functions throughout the year. Louie also goes to community events, spring cleanups, and other activities around the city. Many middle school and high school students volunteer to be Louie for Take Pride.

Take Pride Winnipeg! also publishes a newsletter for elementary schools three times a year. Over 50,000 copies of each issue are printed by City Press (at reduced rates or sometimes free). The newsletter contains information about ways to keep Winnipeg clean and beautiful, games, contests and news about upcoming events. It is well received by teachers, students and parents. Contests usually have a good number of entries.

TEENS PRO WINNIPEG CLUB

This is a new program designed in the spring of 2002 and tested at two middle schools in Winnipeg. The mission of this program is to give middle school students the opportunity to participate in a number of activities in the community that will give them a chance to do something positive for themselves, their school and the city. Activities range from raking leaves, shoveling snow, painting over graffiti, picking up litter to visiting senior centers and helping with the Christmas Cheer Board. Charleswood Junior High students helped paint over graffiti in May, 2002. Ecole River Heights students produced a show for seniors, with songs, dancing and more.

Take Pride Winnipeg! is expanding the program for this school year, looking at five middle schools participating. The students meet on a monthly basis to decide on an activity. In some cases, one classroom from the school will make up the Club, while in others the student council will organize the events. With the assistance of Take Pride Winnipeg! the activity is planned. Once they have finished, the Club will share their experiences with the rest of their school. Media outlets have already expressed an interest in following these types of positive stories.

TAKE PRIDE IN READING

In February, 2003, Take Pride Winnipeg! staff, directors and possibly some high school students (along with Louie the Lion) will go to elementary schools to begin a new program, Take Pride in Reading. As part of I Love to Read month, Take Pride will read books about the environment for Kindergarten to Grade 3 students. Books such as the Wartville Wizard, Patti Pitter She Hates Litter and others will be read. Afterwards, Louie the Lion will pay the students a visit.

Already three elementary schools have signed up for the program, and this was just from word of mouth. Expectations are that at least 35 elementary schools will sign up for the first year.

FALL, PICK ME UP

Keeping the City of Winnipeg clean and litter free is a constant struggle, and even when it looks litter-free, there is always an area that needs more cleaning. Doing a spring cleanup is tremendous, and having summer students picking up litter also helps, but the work doesn't stop there. In 1999, Take Pride Winnipeg! designed a one day event for schools to participate in a fall litter cleanup.

Now in its fourth year, the Fall, Pick Me Up event has consistently had 100 schools and around 24,000 students each year participating in picking up litter around their schools and in their neighbourhoods. While it is mainly elementary schools, middle and high school students also volunteer for this activity.

WINNIPEG IN BLOOM

In 1998, Take Pride Winnipeg! took over the leadership role for the Winnipeg in Bloom garden contest. The contest had been running for a number of years with around 150 entries per year, and was becoming somewhat stagnant. With the assistance of one of Take Pride's board members, Councillor Harvey Smith, media coverage from radio, television and newspaper helped to increase entries to over 300.

Take Pride gave the contest a new theme – "flower power" and changed the contest somewhat to a front yard beautification event. Entries have increased every year to over 500 in 2002.

As well, Take Pride, through all of its programs, was an integral part of the City's bid to win the national Communities in Bloom award. It won as the best city for its population category in 2001. The judge's handbook had over seven pages about Take Pride activities. In fact, Winnipeg was touted as the model for other cities to follow.

WINNIPEG IN LIGHTS

Following on the success of Winnipeg in Bloom, and trying to capture some of that enthusiasm for the winter months, Take Pride Winnipeg! designed a new contest in 1999, Winnipeg in Lights. It is a holiday light/sculpture contest for home and business owners to help brighten up city streets during December. The contest entries have increased each year from 125 in 1999 to over 300 in 2001.

In 2001, the first national Winter Lights Celebration contest was held, and Winnipeg won as the best city in the country for its population category, besting Ottawa and Toronto.