EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE

QUESTION PERIOD

Minute No. 318
Councillor Gerbasi referenced a $53,000 study that talked about the conversion of the BRT corridor currently being built, to LRT. Councillor Gerbasi questioned if the study had been completed and if all members of Council would see it.

His Worship Mayor Katz advised that the HVR study was a look at the business case for LRT and that it wasn't a convertibility study. His Worship stated that convertibility review was done by Dillion with S.D.G. as a sub consultant and advised that the cost for the S.D.G. study was approximately $44,000.

Councillor Gerbasi noted that Council had just voted to do another study and questioned if those two issues might be related.

His Worship stated that the business case had nothing to do with what Council had been discussing for the last 45 minutes. He noted that it was a business case study to verify what the true costs are for BRT per kilometer verses LRT per kilometer.

Councillor Gerbasi questioned if His Worship was saying that they are not studying the conversion of the southwest corridor and essentially leaving the southwest corridor then at Jubilee and Pembina?

His Worship replied that was not what he was saying. He stated that it was incumbent on Council to make sure they spend the taxpayer's dollar wisely and verify the numbers. He stated that that if those numbers prove to be accurate, then Council should be looking at conversion if possible, as well.

Councillor Vandal asked if His Worship could re-read the email on the $53,000 study that was done by the City of Winnipeg on light rail transit.

His Worship replied that it was a $44,000 study by H.D.R. looking at a case for LRT. It had nothing to do with a convertibility study. He noted the convertibility review was done for Dillon with S.D.G. as a sub-consultant. The cost for the S.D.G study was approximately $44,000. His Worship advised that the summary was sent from the CAO and believed it came from Dave Wardrop.

Councillor Vandal questioned would it not be prudent to review the existing studies that had been done by the City. He noted that he was a member of the Standing Policy Committee on Infrastructure Renewal and Public Works and that this was new to him.

Executive Policy Committee – Question Period (continued):

His Worship replied that they were not doing a study, but were going to find out what the real numbers / costs were.

Councillor Wyatt noted that on May 12th, the Assessment and Taxation Department will be sending out this year's tax notices to everyone in the City. He stated that this being a reassessment year with changes in assessment and a zero percent tax freeze, he wanted to ensure information was provided in terms of exactly what was taking place. He further noted that there might be a lot of confusion as to why taxes could go up or down.

His Worship replied that he would undertake to make sure that the department does everything humanly possible to ensure everyone understands the process as best as possible and make any clarifications as necessary.

Councillor Wyatt referred to some information he had given to the Mayor regarding Canada Mortgage and Housing loans being provided at a very low interest rate for development infrastructure geared to housing. Councillor Wyatt asked if the Mayor had a chance to pursue the matter and see if the City would borrow money at a much discounted rate to invest back into some residential streets in the next two years.

His Worship stated that he had contacted the Deputy C.A.O. who was already aware of it and was already having discussions with the Federal Government on those programs.

Councillor Wyatt noted he had also raised with the Mayor the issue of red tape and the concern that red tape is getting worse in terms of the public hearing process where it takes months for an application to be heard at a public hearing, and asked for an update on the matter.

His Worship advised that he intends to meet with the director of the department and see if the issues can be addressed.

Councillor Gerbasi stated she was not clear about the LRT studies that had already been done as she saw in a Free Press report that there was a $53,000 study about convertibility of LRT. Councillor Gerbasi stated that now she has heard there were two studies, one about the case for LRT and one about the convertibility of LRT; and questioned how much money had already been spent on studying this issue and would the Mayor release those studies for all members of Council to see.

His Worship replied he was not aware to date of a $53,000 study and would take the question under advisement and committed to finding out more information on any studies done to date.

Councillor Gerbasi referred to the condominium conversion motion that was referred back and questioned if the Mayor would be prepared to look at the issue of the lack of affordable rental apartment accommodation which is affecting a lot of her constituents.

Executive Policy Committee – Question Period (continued):

His Worship advised that when the motion arrived at EPC, he would take a very long look at it and address the concerns and what options may or may not be available.

Councillor Vandal asked if His Worship would share with Council, the H.D.R. study if it has been done, as well as the Dillon conversion study; to which His Worship replied in the affirmative.

Councillor Vandal questioned if within the $1.1 million transportation study, the City could have accommodated the $100,000 LRT conversion study that had just been approved.

His Worship stated that the transportation study underway was something the City has never had and was long overdue.

Councillor Vandal again questioned why the City needed to spend another $100,000 on a transportation study when there was a $1 million study on transportation currently being done.

His Worship advised that what the City was doing was to verify the prices to provide light rail transit like almost every other major city, with the expectation that the costs would be $50 million at-grade and $70 million above grade.

Councillor Swandel wanted to ensure that the Mayor was still committed to doing the study asked for in Council today; to which His Worship replied in the affirmative.

Councillor Swandel requested the Mayor to read the second last resolve of his light rail rapid transit motion with respect to the funding source of the $100,000; to which His Worship complied and noted the capital account was the Transportation Authority Study account.