STANDING POLICY COMMITTEE ON PROTECTION

AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

QUESTION PERIOD

Minute No. 195
Councillor Swandel referred to television cameras in high crime areas used to gather evidence if a crime was committed and questioned if there had been any recommendations to have the cameras monitored in high crime areas on a regular basis.

Councillor Steeves advised that they were waiting for a report back to look at an assessment of how effective the cameras have been from a crime suppression and a prosecution standpoint. He added that the report would look at how often any evidence gathered, any data gathered, had been used in prosecutions at the Provincial Court and the Court of Queen's Bench, and how often the Crown Attorney's office access the information and for what purposes.
Councillor Steeves concluded that what would be more difficult to discern from the report was if the cameras make people feel safer and, as such, do people then conglomerate around certain areas more.

Councillor Swandel requested the Chair to put on record his feelings on whether or not the cameras should be monitored on a regular basis to ensure that there was greater safety and a greater sense of safety brought to the citizens.

Councillor Steeves responded that in the original report, with public consultation, categorically a majority of people were comfortable with the idea of the cameras existing for retrieval if something bad happened but were not comfortable with somebody sitting behind a desk watching on a live TV feed. He suggested that people were getting a little more comfortable with the idea of being recorded publicly but would wait to see what the reports says.

Councillor Swandel questioned if there was any polling that would be done to see where public opinion was as far as the use of closed-caption television cameras in high crime areas to ensure public safety.

Councillor Steeves acknowledged that he would like to see, as part of the report process back, some sort of measurement as to how people feel the program was working and part of that measurement would be do determine if people liked the program. He added that as to resources, it would have to be determined if they should be watching the cameras or be out on the streets.

Councillor Fielding noted that Central Park was identified initially as a bit of an issue but there was probably no one in that square during the 9 months to a year that it was under construction and asked if the Winnipeg Police during their analysis could somehow factor that in; to which Councillor Steeves agreed to do so.