Minutes – Executive Policy Committee – May 18, 2011

REPORTS

Minute No. 271 Online Green Education/Incentive Program – "Hit the Green Button"

EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

The Executive Policy Committee concurred in the recommendation of the Winnipeg Public Service, that the Winnipeg Public Service consider applying an online "network/game" approach as part of implementing future Council-approved environmental initiatives such as waste management / diversion or climate change mitigation.

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DECISION MAKING HISTORY:

Moved by Councillor Havixbeck,

That the recommendation of the Winnipeg Public Service be concurred in.

Carried

EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On March 16, 2011, the Executive Policy Committee laid the matter over for up to 60 days.

On December 8, 2010, the Executive Policy Committee recommended that the following recommendation of the Mayor's Environmental Advisory Committee, found under the subheading "Recommendations Made to the Mayor", be referred to the City of Winnipeg Public Service for review and report back to the appropriate committee of Council in 90 days:

- 3. Mayor's Environmental Advisory Committee (MEAC) Strategic Plan

  That MEAC approve the Green Club initiative – "HittheGreenButton.ca" – for submission in the MEAC Quarterly Report.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Title: **Online Green Education/Incentive Program – "Hit the Green Button"**

Critical Path: **Executive Policy Committee**

AUTHORIZATION

Author	Department Head	CFO	CAO
P. Regan	D. Joshi	N/A	P Sheegl A/CAO

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Public Service consider applying an online "network/game" approach as part of implementing future Council-approved environmental initiatives such as waste management/diversion or climate change mitigation.

REASON FOR THE REPORT

- At its December 8, 2010 meeting, Executive Policy Committee recommended that a recommendation of the Mayor's Environmental Advisory Committee be referred to the City of Winnipeg Public Service for review and report back to the appropriate committee of Council in 90 days: That the Public Service explore "The creation of an interactive online tool that combines aspects of social networking, skill building and a "points" reward program that:
    - Is extremely easy to use
    - Targets children, teenagers and adults separately, but equally, and *according to their typical area of interest*
    - Encourages information sharing amongst family members
    - Makes the translation simply and intuitively from individual action to collective results
    - Links children's desire to save the environment to actions that their parents can take on their behalf
    - Is positive in tone and look
    - Focuses on the simple steps that individuals and families can take to reduce their ecological footprint
    - Integrates new and ongoing city environmental initiatives
    - Creates healthy competition amongst families striving to reduce their ecological footprint

- Is hosted at winnipeg.ca under an interesting domain name (suggestion "winnipeg.ca/HitTheGreenButton")
- Allows households to choose to implement various "upgrades", log them and see updated results of tangible benefits like time or money saved, pollution reduction, etc.
- Contributes valuable data back to the Winnipeg Public service on community-wide GHG reduction activities
- Automatically generates metrics that are communicated graphically back to the user
- Is supported by a marketing plan that considers new media forums and technology types, alongside web banners, logos, and teaser ads, which could be used by various city departments looking to get young people interested in the environmental aspects of their work
- IMPORTANT: offers exciting rewards appropriate to each demographic, concentrating on rewards that can either be offered at minimal to no cost by the City of Winnipeg; prizes for kids and teens could included swimming pool passes, gift certificates to programming through the leisure guides, skateboards, - for parents it could include one-time rebates on gas/water bills, family bus passes, Moose tickets, Fort Whyte Alive passes, dinner at the Amici's or the Oval room, etc."

IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS

Environmental Implications

- Online tools, and especially social networking tools, provide a relatively low-cost engagement option that can reach a broad audience.
- Education and engagement relating to environmental or sustainable dialogue and individual behaviors is a strategy used to achieve many municipal sustainability goals including water and energy conservation, waste reduction, protection/enhancement of natural areas and greenhouse gas reductions. Many of these goals require individuals to make individual choices – personal decisions that cannot be regulated or incentivized through conventional municipal tools such as user fees, tax credits, etc.
- The "Hit the Green Button" program concept could be adapted to efficiently and effectively contribute to future specific Council-directed sustainability goals and objectives.

Financial & Human Resource Implications

- There are no financial or human resource implications associated with the recommendations of this report.
- The development and management of online engagement tools and especially the provision of incentives to use the tools is not within the traditional service-provision mandate of municipalities. Most municipalities, including the City of Winnipeg, do not currently have the financial, technical or human resources to pursue such online tools.
- Because of the technical expertise required and because of the proposed provision of incentives, a partner would best accomplish the development of an online network/game tool.
- Creative approaches involving corporate sponsorship may enable an online green network/game to become financially self-sufficient over time. For example, tools such as Act Bolder (www.actbolder.com) challenge users to complete a "green challenge" (such as washing clothes using cold water) in exchange for a sponsor-supplied incentive (such as a

coupon for free “green” washing detergent). Such an approach has environmental, social, and local economic development benefits.

Policy Implications

- There are no policy implications associated with the recommendations of this report.
- The City of Winnipeg currently engages in education/awareness/engagement regarding environmental initiatives through its Winnipeg.ca web page. A partnership model is already applied in some areas (e.g. organic lawn care information, coordination with “Friends of” type stewardship groups) and would be a suitable approach for a potential online network/game.
- The use of an online network/game related to achieving specific Council-directed environmental objectives (and where deemed to be an efficient/effective tool) would not represent a substantial policy change.
- The Public Service is continuously scanning for and seeking out innovative tools that can contribute to planning objectives; the online network/game approach (including the specific ideas suggested by the Mayor’s Environmental Advisory Committee) can be added to the “toolbox”.

HISTORY

- Green engagement was identified as a priority by the Mayor’s Environmental Advisory Committee in their October 2009 strategic planning session.
- The Committee’s recommendation is supported by a program proposal (Attachment “A”).

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Financial Impact Statement **Date:** April 14, 2011

Project Name:

Online Green Education/Incentive Program – "Hit the Green Button"

COMMENTS:

The recommendations contained in this report include:

1. That the Public Service consider applying an online "network/game" approach as part of implementing future Council-approved environmental initiatives, such as waste management/diversion or climate change mitigation.

There are no financial implications associated with this recommendation.

"Original Signed By"
Mike McGinn, CA
Manager of Finance

CONSULTATION

In preparing this report there was consultation with:

Water and Waste Department
Mayor's Environmental Advisory Committee

SUBMITTED BY

Planning, Property and Development
Planning and Land Use
Prepared by: Ian Hall, Environmental Coordinator
Date: April 26, 2011
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Attachments:

Attachment "A": MEAC Hit the Green Button Proposal

Adobe Acrobat Document