EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE

QUESTION PERIOD

Minute No. 626
Councillor Eadie referenced NICHI Commons, a project in his Ward which was working towards providing better food and business options on Main Street and questioned if the taxes they were currently paying on the property could be utilized for loan guarantees.

His Worship Mayor Katz replied that until all the details were known, it would be impossible for to say anything more than having the administration look into it and get back to Council if there were some potential solutions to the challenges the organization was facing.

Councillor Eadie made reference to the acquisition of the Merchants Hotel on Selkirk Avenue and questioned how His Worship was going to help contribute to the project.

His Worship replied that those involved with the project still have significant monies to raise. He noted there was a request from the architect, Dudley Thompson, for the vacant City-owned land right next to the project. His Worship stated he would be extremely supportive of the request, but that it would not be him making the decision, but rather all of Council.

Councillor Eadie asked His Worship to consider supplying some ideas of what he thinks might work on the main floor for attracting actual business.

His Worship noted that Selkirk Avenue needed more retail and that private enterprise was needed to go in there and fill the void so Selkirk Avenue had that mix again.

Councillor Wyatt noted that one of the biggest crises facing the City today was infrastructure and questioned what steps His Worship, in his role of intergovernmental affairs, would take forward on this issue to the Provincial Government.

His Worship advised that since 2002, the Provincial Government's contribution to the City's infrastructure as gone up by 58%. He noted that it sounds pretty good, but in cities like Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton and Regina, they've gone up $150%, 200%, 250%, 351% . . . and that's why the City is in trouble. His Worship requested Councillor Wyatt and the rest of Council to come up with some creative ideas to address this. Further, he hoped that the Provincial Government would come to the table, but was not convinced that this could be counted on.

Councillor Wyatt questioned if His Worship would undertake a clear and concise strategy to secure funding from the Province; to which His Worship replied in the affirmative.

Executive Policy Committee – Question Period (continued):

Councillor Wyatt noted that in the Mayor's first term, the Mayor spear-headed a city summit which created a lot of great ideas and questioned if His Worship would consider in 2013, a summit on the infrastructure crisis facing the city?

His Worship stated it was an idea he was open to and reiterated that it would be something that he would do in conjunction with the A.M.M. because the infrastructure problem was province-wide.

Councillor Pagtakhan requested the status of the list of projects on the Building Canada fund that was approved about a year and a half ago.

His Worship advised that the one project that has been endorsed to date by both the Federal and Provincial Government was the Plessis and Dugald Project, which was somewhere in the neighbourhood of $75 million.

Councillor Pagtakhan questioned what it would take to get the level of commitment from both the Provincial and Federal Governments for the remainder of the infrastructure projects on that Building Canada Fund list, and start construction in 2012?

His Worship replied that that would never happen because the list of projects for exceeds the amount of money that's available in the Building Canada Funds.

Councillor Pagtakhan referred to the upcoming budget in 2012 and questioned if His Worship was committed to doing community consultations throughout the City and when they would commence.

His Worship noted that in the past the Chairperson of the Standing Policy Committee on Finance had done community consultations and it was his understanding that that these would continue shortly.

Councillor Gerbasi referenced the Expression of Interest for all the city's public golf courses and noted that the City had agreed to do a private partnership with Crescent Drive Golf course to allow a spa in a public golf course. Councillor Gerbasi cited the Expression of Interest had gone out and was now having trouble explaining to residents why the City would sell off the course after a partnership had been made. Councillor Gerbasi questioned why the City would consider selling it off now that it's worth more as a viable golf course for the public.

His Worship stated that an Expression of Interest was to see what ideas may come forward for all the golf courses that the City owns and operates. He noted that lately, the golf business had not been doing so well and that right now there were probably more golf courses per capita than needed.

Executive Policy Committee – Question Period (continued):

Councillor Gerbasi questioned what she could tell people who are asking when the transit corridor will be finished and future Rapid Transit development.
His Worship noted that from Queen Elizabeth all the way to Jubilee will be completed in the very near future. He further noted that it crosses Pembina Highway and keeps on going. He further stated that he continued to work on getting funding for the second phase of the project.

Councillor Gerbasi questioned whether the Diamond Lane down would be adequate or whether further development would occur.

His Worship replied that you get down Jubilee and then continue down Pembina Highway using the Diamond Lanes. He also noted that a Transportation Master Plan was forthcoming and that he did believe in finishing what you start.

Councillor Smith stated that the Federal Government was allocating $28 million to celebrate the War of 1812 and questioned what the administration was doing in this regard; to which His Worship advised he would take the question under advisement.

Councillor Wyatt made reference to the Kapyong Barracks and the Treaty One First Nations and noted that Council was in favour of urban reserves. He cited that the treaty land entitlement process was clear and that they would have to do a municipal development service agreement with the City in terms of services to pay. Councillor Wyatt questioned if His Worship would be prepared to do that so that Kapyong Barracks could be renewed and developed for Aboriginal opportunities and end this conflict.

His Worship stated that the Kapyong Barracks story was a very sad and pathetic situation and that different governments in Ottawa have both made mistakes and this has dragged on and on. His Worship cited that the reality was that he was not in a position to tell the Federal Government what to do. His Worship shared that he had had discussions with some of the Chiefs that were involved to see if they could potentially find a resolution with all the insanity that was going on in the courts.

Councillor Wyatt questioned if His Worship would be prepared to again pull in the Federal Minister, the Premier and the leaders and find a way to resolve the situation.

His Worship replied that he has had discussions with the lead Minister, Minister Toews, on this topic and that he would do everything he could to see if this could be moved forward as quickly as possible.