STANDING POLICY COMMITTEE ON

PROTECTION AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

QUESTION PERIOD

Minute No. 54
Councillor Sharma noted that there had been 35 homicides in Winnipeg this year, well over the total for last year, and questioned what was being done to address this very serious issue.

Councillor Havixbeck acknowledged the seriousness of the matter and stated that a number of people had written her, as Chair, and expressed their concern about safety within Winnipeg. She confirmed that there had been 35 homicides and last year's number was around 21. In noting that she and the Mayor had met with the Chief of Police and that the Chief was preparing a strategy for release, she stated that it was her hope to see a reduction of 10 to 30 percent because the current levels were completely unacceptable. The strategy would incorporate community involvement and going back to being more engaged with citizens and having citizens being more vigilant for these serious types of crimes and should address some of the concerns raised.

Councillor Vandal inquired if there was any information about the new Police Advisory Board or the Police Commission that the Province of Manitoba had legislated a couple of years ago. Councillor Havixbeck stated that she was not aware of when the board would be in place and agreed to follow-up and report back.

Councillor Vandal questioned the status of banning snowmobiles within the City and asked for an overview of where the process was at.

Councillor Havixbeck stated there had been a verbal update from the Director of Public Works and the Chief of Police at the last Standing Policy Committee on Protection and Community Services meeting about a telephone survey that was conducted throughout Winnipeg in early November wherein 451 citizens were contacted. The results of the survey proved that over 60 percent were supportive of a ban in the City and were in agreement with what was being proposed. The Chief of Police provided information that enforcement would be beginning so there would be no more travelling on city routes including ditches, roads, trails and any City property. The issue of enforcement on private property was left with the Chief of Police and an administrative report would be forthcoming.

Councillor Steen inquired if there was any news on crime prevention and any new programs coming forward. Councillor Havixbeck noted that she and the Mayor recently met with the Chief of Police and talked about a crime prevention strategy that would likely include a number of highlights about how crime could be reduced throughout the City.

Standing Policy Committee on Protection and Community Services – Question Period (continued):

Councillor Eadie asked for clarification in regards to enforcement about snowmobiles on private property, what was still outstanding and would not be put in the by-law, noting that there were certain areas that you were not allowed to snowmobile now, but Police were not going to enforce the law until Council amended it. Councillor Eadie suggested that the City does not have jurisdiction over private farm property, but that 44 percent of the people surveyed believed that snowmobiles should be banned immediately in all areas within the city limits.

Councillor Havixbeck confirmed that 44 percent said they were in support of a ban, 15 percent said they would like to see a phased in approach, which was essentially in support of a ban, and about 35 percent said no to ban, and noted that the media had been reporting 60 percent of those surveyed had been supportive.

Councillor Eadie questioned why the Winnipeg Police Service strategic plan was not being released to the Standing Policy Committee on Protection and Community Services. Councillor Havixbeck responded that she did not have an answer to that but believed the Chief of Police had initiated the strategic plan and was going to release it independently.

Councillor Eadie asked if the Chair knew anything about a new action initiative regarding safety that was raised at their Community Committee meeting and asked if more information could be provided. Councillor Havixbeck agreed to find out more from the Councillor and discuss the matter further at the Standing Policy committee level.