Minutes – Executive Policy Committee – January 18, 2012

Minute No. 127
Report – Governance Committee of Council – January 12, 2012

Item No. 1 Council Wards

EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

The Executive Policy Committee did not concur in the recommendation of the Governance Committee of Council and recommends to Council:

1. That the existing 15 Council Wards be maintained and a Wards Boundaries Commission be undertaken to establish a more equitable distribution of population for report back in time for the next General Election.

2. That the Proper Officers of the City be authorized do all things necessary to implement the intent of the foregoing.

Minutes – Executive Policy Committee – January 18, 2012

Report – Governance Committee of Council – January 12, 2012

DECISION MAKING HISTORY:

Moved by Councillor Vandal,

That the recommendation of the Governance Committee of Council not be concurred in, and that the existing 15 Council Wards be maintained and a Wards Boundaries Commission be undertaken to establish a more equitable distribution of population for report back in time for the next General Election, and forwarded to Council.

Carried

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On January 12, 2012, the Governance Committee of Council concurred in the recommendation of the Winnipeg Public Service and submitted the matter to the Executive Policy Committee and Council.

On October 11, 2011, the Governance Committee of Council referred the item back to the City Clerk for report and recommendation at the January 2012 meeting of the Governance Committee of Council.

EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On September 21, 2011, the Executive Policy Committee referred back the June 13, 2011 recommendation of the Governance Committee of Council for further review and report back in 60 days.

On June 15, 2011, the Executive Policy Committee laid the matter over for up to 60 days.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On June 13, 2011, the Governance Committee of Council passed the following motion, namely:

WHEREAS Winnipeg City Council Wards continue to increase in terms of population, with the average Council Ward population now at 41,713;

AND WHEREAS the three largest Winnipeg City Council Wards in terms of population size, St. Norbert, St. Boniface and St. Vital, each have populations of almost 50,000;

AND WHEREAS by comparison, the 31 Provincial Ridings within the City of Winnipeg average 20,433 in terms of population;

Report – Governance Committee of Council – January 12, 2012

DECISION MAKING HISTORY (continued):

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION (continued):

AND WHEREAS City Councillors provide the most direct service to constituents of any of the three levels of government;

AND WHEREAS the increasing population of City Council Wards makes it difficult for City Councillors to communicate effectively with their constituents as well as provide the service that constituents require;

AND WHEREAS the 2009 Winnipeg Wards Boundaries Commission - Final Report recommended that City Council should increase the size of City Council by two additional wards at least 18 months prior to the date of the 2014 General Civic Election, which would trigger a new Wards Boundaries Review to reshape City Council Wards for the 2014 General Civic Election;

AND WHEREAS *The City of Winnipeg Charter* provides City Council with the authority to increase the size by two positions;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that City Council increase the number of Council Wards as provided for in *The City of Winnipeg Charter* by 2 wards to 17;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the public service do all things necessary to implement this direction including the creation of a by-law and the undertaking of a Public Hearing;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Clerk be directed to undertake a Wards Boundaries Commission complete review following third reading of the by-law to configure the 17 wards; with the new number and configuration of City Council Wards taking effect for the 2014 General Civic Election.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

ISSUE: **Number of Council Wards**

Critical Path: **Governance Committee – Executive Policy Committee - Council**

AUTHORIZATION

Author	Department Head	CFO	CAO
M. Lemoine	R. Kachur		

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Province of Manitoba be requested to change section 17(1) of *The City of Winnipeg Charter* to allow Council to increase the number of Council Wards in increments of 1 rather than 2, as follows:

   Changing number of wards
   17(1) Council may by by-law increase the number of wards specified in section 10 to ~~an odd~~ a number greater than 15

   with such change being made prior to December 31, 2012 to allow Council the opportunity to review the number of Council Wards for the 2014 General Election.

REASON FOR THE REPORT

The City of Winnipeg Charter is Provincial legislation. All changes to *The Charter* must be made by the Legislature.

HISTORY

The current City of Winnipeg electoral structure came into being on January 1, 1972 and was made up of a 51 member Council, comprised of a Mayor and 50 Ward Councillors. The number of Council wards was reduced from 50 to 29 in 1977, and further reduced to the current number of 15 Council Wards in 1992.

The current Council Ward Boundaries were established by the 2009 Wards Boundaries Commission. As well as establishing the ward boundaries, the 2009 Commission made two recommendations:

> 1) That City Council undertake a major review of neighbourhoods prior to the end of 2012 which would provide input for the next Wards Boundaries Commission. A Wards Boundaries review should then be initiated by Council at least 18 months prior to the 2014 general election and should utilize the 2011 census data for its work. The study should include an examination of expected future growth in the City and its likely location.
>
> 2) That, failing a comprehensive review as described in recommendation 1, City Council increase the size of City Council by 2 additional wards at least 18 months prior to the date of the 2014 general election. Such a decision by Council would trigger a new Wards Boundaries Commission, which would be able to utilize the 2011 census data for its work.

Recommendation #1 was made as the 2009 Commission felt that it required more data on the smaller neighbourhood groupings within the wards and that having such data would facilitate analysis and allow for greater distribution of population among the 15 wards, thereby reducing the disparity in the various ward populations.

Recommendation #2 was made as the 2009 Commission realized that detailed neighbourhood data may be both difficult and expensive for the City to gather, especially in the short term. An alternative would be to create 2 additional wards, which would allow future Commissions greater flexibility in how to arrange boundaries. This was seen as a viable solution as the 5 largest wards (Fort Rouge – East Fort Garry, River Heights – Fort Garry, St. Boniface, St. Norbert and St. Vital) are all contiguous (see Appendix A) and located in the South – Eastern parts of the City, and distributing this population northward to the smaller wards could result in radical shifts from existing ward boundaries.

Both recommendations call for a new Commission to take place prior to 2014 as the Commission felt that it did wish to do more in terms of reorganization / redistribution of population, but needed either more data or more flexibility in terms of the number of wards to do so.

The Commission recommended that Council add two additional Council Wards as this is currently what is allowed under *The City of Winnipeg Charter*. Section 17(1) of *The Charter* allows Council to increase the number of wards to any odd number greater than 15.

The same result of allowing greater flexibility to future Wards Boundaries Commissions could be obtained by adding 1 Council Ward. The same benefits of adding 2 wards would be obtained by adding 1 ward, at half the increased cost of additional government that would accompany adding two Council wards.

Adding one (1) Council Ward would enable the elimination of the disparity in Council Ward sizes (currently the largest Council ward has almost 20,000 more citizens that the smallest ward) without a radical restructuring of current ward boundaries. This smoothing of Ward populations would allow more equitable service delivery to all citizens from their elected officials regardless of where they reside within the City of Winnipeg.

Section 17(2) of The City of Winnipeg Charter requires that any change in the number of wards must be made at least 18 months prior to an election in order to be in effect at that election. As such, in order for any changes in the number of Wards to take effect for the next General Civic Election in October 2014, it is recommended that the Province be requested to make changes to the City of Winnipeg Charter prior to December 31, 2012.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no Financial Implications with this report in as much as only a change in legislation is requested. Any financial impact would occur were Council to exercise it's authority under the legislation.

CONSULTATION

In preparing this Report there was consultation with:

n/a

SUBMITTED BY

Department: City Clerk's Department
Prepared by: M. Lemoine
Date: December 9, 2011
File No.

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Appendix A – Existing Wards Boundaries

