EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE

QUESTION PERIOD

Minute No. 113
Councillor Gerbasi requested clarification on a statement Councillor Swandel made to a delegation at a recent Executive Policy Committee meeting that the money coming from the 20-cent increase in transit fares was not necessarily going to Rapid Transit, but to transit improvements.

His Worship Mayor Katz stated that as a result of moving up the Rapid Transit project completion from 2031 to 2016, there was a motion put forward and it was his understanding that those monies are going to pay for the completion of the Southwest Corridor. He noted that the disconnect may be that the entire burden of completing the Southwest Transit Corridor was not falling on the transit user.

Councillor Gerbasi cited that since Council approved the transit fare increase, there was word that there was going to be discussion with the Province, and if the Province were to come through with some other way to fund the project, that the City would not have to put the burden on the transit user and that the money could come from some other source. Councillor Gerbasi asked if His Worship could update Council as to how those meetings were going, what kind of discussions have there been and what kind of efforts were being made to divert the transit fare increase.

His Worship advised that this was something that's been put off for six months . . . it takes place in June and that gives the Province the opportunity to see if there are other ways to proceed. At this particular point in time, His Worship advised that he has not had any suggestions come forward from the Province, but stated that he would bring it up with the Premier in the future.

Councillor Gerbasi cited another thing raised at the EPC meeting was a 2% sales tax discussion that apparently happened between the Mayor and the Premier and questioned if the Mayor did in fact go to the Premier and propose a 2% sales tax.

His Worship advised that there have been ongoing discussions with the A.M.M. and the Provincial Government regarding getting a share of existing sales tax. He further advised that he wasn't at any meeting specifically requesting such a thing from the Province or the Premier.

Executive Policy Committee – Question Period (continued)

Councillor Mayes referred to the new football stadium being built across the river from the St. Vital Ward and noted that at the last Riel Community Committee meeting, there was a Stadium Advisory Committee created through the work of Councillor Swandel. He stated that no one from St. Vital was actually on the committee and the traffic and the parking, and certainly noise issues were going to come across the river, so he would like to see some St. Vital representation on the Committee.

In addition, Councillor Mayes referenced the matter of a foot bridge being put across to the U of M to help with pedestrian traffic. He noted he has had no indication from the Clerk's office that there was any imminent plan for a foot bridge and wondered if His Worship could speak to those issues.

His Worship advised that he has not had personally, any dialogue regarding either a foot bridge or a gondola and did not believe that he's heard from any other Councillor or any department that's been discussing this. His Worship stated that there was going to be sound/noise that people in certain areas were going to hear and noted that part of the design of the Investors Group Field would address some of this issue. His Worship further stated that the University of Manitoba was very cognizant of the noise and wanted to make sure they can do everything to minimize any inconvenience to residents.

Councillor Orlikow requested an update on how negotiations were going regarding the new Building Canada Fund.

His Worship noted that the Plessis Road project had been approved which took a significant amount of money from the Building Canada funds. He further noted that the City did send a list of projects to both the Federal and Provincial Government, and that this was a situation where you have to get all three to agree because it was funded one-third, one-third, one-third among the 3 levels of government.

Councillor Eadie referenced the 20-cent bus fare increase and questioned how many people ride transit who were the working poor with no social safety net to fall back on.

His Worship stated he could not identify the number, but noted the City was very cognizant that there were people who fall into that category which was why the City provides $33.5 million in social assistance to the Province of Manitoba to help address those issues.

Councillor Eadie questioned if that would be the money that was negotiated when all Winnipeg social services went to the Province, and if so, stated that it does not cover people who were working poor because they were not on social assistance, to which His Worship replied in the affirmative.