

EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE

QUESTION PERIOD

Minute No. 400

In reference to Jets tickets being given to six Councillors, Councillor Smith asked His Worship Mayor Katz if he did that to strengthen support for his agenda at Council meetings and asked what criteria was used to make the decision to reward those Councillors.

His Worship replied that on a regular basis he would send out notifications to all Councillors when tickets were available. He stated that some Councillors had come forward and taken them, whether they were Jets tickets or concerts tickets. His Worship concluded by stating that there were no favours of any kind and some of the Councillors who received tickets had probably voted against a lot of things he put forward.

Councillor Smith asked what was the total cost to Winnipeg taxpayers for gifts of Winnipeg Jets tickets to the six City Councillors. His Worship replied that there was zero cost and stated that they were his personal tickets.

Councillor Smith asked the Mayor to explain what he meant by personal tickets to which His Worship replied that personal means you put your name on a list, you get season tickets and pay for the tickets out of your pocket.

Councillor Smith asked what other gifts to Councillors were made using funds from the Mayor's Office budget. His Worship replied that he was not aware of any gifts that were made.

In reference to a walk about in the North End, Councillor Eadie asked the Mayor what his general impression was about the economic development that was starting up there and inquired about any future plans.

His Worship stated that he spent a very fruitful two and a half hours with Councillor Eadie; noting that they took a short bus ride, traveled through parts of the north end of Winnipeg, Councillor Eadie's constituency; visited some commercial enterprises and spoke to some groups. He noted that they got some very positive feedback, saw some very good things and some that needs work. The Mayor indicated that he was very impressed with some of the work programs that were created, noted that former gang members were getting the opportunity to be trained. He advised that they spoke to women's groups in the area, got some feedback about a new Police Chief and stated that one thing that seemed to resonate was that they want a good relationship between the Police and the entire neighbourhood so that all would feel comfortable sharing their thoughts and, most importantly, not just feel safe but be safe. His Worship concluded by thanking Councillor Eadie for the idea and suggested that they should be doing much more of that.

Executive Policy Committee – Question Period (continued):

Councillor Eadie questioned what the Mayor's impression was of the Neechi Commons building that would hopefully open in September; where some people used to own it many years ago. His Worship noted that he had the opportunity to tour through the construction site and, due to the work that he saw; it was looking very different from days gone by. He noted that they were still experiencing some challenges and were looking for some startup capital and wanted to raise monies to pay down the debt. He concluded that in his opinion it looked like something very good was happening.

Councillor Eadie noted there were two different ways of doing tax incremental financing; one where they receive a grant and another type where they can utilize whatever incremental tax they have to spend on whatever they think was appropriate, and questioned if the Mayor thought that either one of those models might help bring them along.

His Worship indicated that there had been discussion with the Department on incremental taxes and whatever the increase was, there would be an opportunity to give them back money over a period of time depending on what improvements were made. He said it appeared that they were spending a significant amount of money but the Department did not think there would be a large increase in the taxes and concluded that he needed further explanation.

Councillor Mayes questioned if the City had any involvement in the International Year of Cooperatives and asked what role, if any, the City had at an event coming up at the Forks in September.

His Worship stated that he knows of the Co-op movement, was not aware of any specific plans, and agreed to investigate further.

In reference to a motion that was moved in 2008 and referred to the C.A.O., Councillor Mayes asked for an update on where things stand on the idea of a potential ban on plastic bags. His Worship stated that he would take that under advisement and find out.