EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE

QUESTION PERIOD

Minute No. 155
In reference to the Community Infrastructure Investment Fund (CIIF), Councillor Mayes expressed concern over not being aware of commitments made by the City in regards to this program and asked what kind of report Council was going to get and if there would be a chance to review the priorities that have been laid out in these infrastructure applications to the Federal Government.

His Worship replied that when the CIIF program came into effect, Minister Glover's office had made the City aware of it and asked the City to submit their priorities. He added that a list was submitted and he would undertake to get a copy of that list to all Members of Council.

Councillor Mayes inquired if there would be an opportunity for Councillors to provide feedback and discuss whatever priorities had been identified by City staff.

His Worship Mayor Katz advised that this was not an unreasonable request, that he supported the idea of Councillors being involved and knowing what was going on in their wards and would be happy to discuss that and have dialogue between the Department and the Councillors. His Worship added that it was not known what had been approved and what the Federal Government planned to put money into, as the City was only advised of those decisions when they were made.

Councillor Mayes asked for clarification as to whether or not it was true that Winnipeg City Council said “no” to hosting the Canada Games in 2017; to which His Worship replied that it was not true, and although Brandon was not successful because their aquatic facility did not meet the Games’ requirements, correspondence was sent offering Winnipeg facilities to host the aquatic events, to which a response had not yet been received.

In reference to the decision finalized at the January 29, 2013 budget meeting to withdraw from the Poverty Reduction Council and the Peg City Indicators Programs as a partner, Councillor Gerbasi noted that the Peg City Indicators partnership was one of the enabling strategies of Sustainable Winnipeg that the City was going to participate in with the Province, the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, the United Way and other partners and questioned if it was true that the City of Winnipeg was no longer interested in partnering with other levels of government, the community and the private sector to develop a meaningful strategy to address homelessness and poverty. His Worship Mayor Katz answered that it was not true.

Executive Policy Committee – Question Period (continued):

Councillor Gerbasi noted that there had been some debate that Winnipeg had been providing too many grants and many were worried that this was the beginning of reducing the City's commitment to support non-profit museums, arts and community groups and questioned what the direction would be in the future.

Mayor Katz replied that the City contributed to many worthy organizations, doubted that that would stop. He further advised that it was important to look at the big picture and he hoped to set up a process to look at the overall grant process.

Councillor Gerbasi expressed concern that one of the enabling strategies of OurWinnipeg was completely reversed by the decision to cancel the Peg City Indicators funding and inquired how to explain to citizens to have faith in City plans such as OurWinnipeg.

His Worship stated that they had been talking for a long time about some of the root problems and that crime and poverty were always part of the equation. He added that it required everyone including the City of Winnipeg, the Province of Manitoba, the Government of Canada, the private sector and faith-based groups to address these issues. His Worship confirmed that the City of Winnipeg would always be part of the solution.

Councillor Orlikow asked about Veolia, our waste management partner, and if it was true that Veolia installed equipment at City water and waste treatment plants, and that they exclusively knew how to use it, and that City staff was not engaged in understanding how the equipment works. Mayor Katz suggested that this was a rumor and stated emphatically that Veolia was not a partner but had been retained to provide a service. His Worship stated that he would be surprised if there was any truth to the rumor, but advised that he would look into it.

Councillor Orlikow noted that the proposed Rapid Transit route presented to the Standing Policy Committee on Infrastructure Renewal and Public Works, would run parallel to Parker Avenue, go out to Waverley and then hitch back up to Bishop Grandin Boulevard. Councillor Orlikow advised that the report was 108 pages and residents were given a mere two days' notice to read through the proposal, and asked if the Mayor believed that was ample time for the community to be engaged to come and speak to the matter. His Worship Mayor Katz concurred that he felt this was not enough time.

Councillor Eadie noted that it was stated at the recent budget meeting that the City gave 38 million in grants, which exceeded any other Canadian big City's contribution. He noted many of the grants were to organizations such as the Winnipeg Convention Centre, the Winnipeg Jets, the Winnipeg Goldeyes, the Winnipeg Blue Bombers, and entities the City Winnipeg was instrumental in establishing such as the Winnipeg Art's Council, CentreVenture and the Assiniboine Park Conservancy. Councillor Eadie suggested these he does not see these as grants and questioned if these should really be considered such.

Executive Policy Committee – Question Period (continued):

His Worship replied that was debatable as to whether the examples cited were legal agreements or grants and advised that there were many different types of grants and different categories. He added that the City put a lot of money into grants and was doing the right thing but agreed there could be discussion at another time to decide what was and what was not, a grant.

Councillor Eadie questioned if the Mayor believed the City should support not-for-profit groups that were achieving good things in the neighborhoods by helping people take responsibility for their lives. His Worship replied in the affirmative and noted that the City supports many great organizations in the inner-city, who were helping families and children, as well as organizations throughout the entire City in every single ward.

Councillor Eadie asked if the Mayor attended a Council seminar regarding the Southwest Rapid Transit Corridor. His Worship Mayor Katz advised that the seminar was led by the Chief Operating Officer and confirmed that he was in attendance.

In reference to the Rapid Transit Corridor going south, Councillor Swandel asked who was in charge of the project, noted that he represented a great deal of the area affected by Rapid Transit, and would like to know if there was a better way of doing this because he felt the Councillors were not properly engaged in the process.

Mayor Katz advised that a committee was set up some time ago with a representative from the City of Winnipeg, the Province of Manitoba, and the University of Manitoba. The Committee had come up with potential routes and had an open house where they showed three options and, just recently, chose one.

Councillor Swandel questioned if the Mayor was aware that there was a lot of transit-oriented development going on in the Fort Rouge Yard site and asked why they would go out into another completely empty piece for the Rapid Transit Corridor.

His Worship acknowledged that Councillor Swandel had been vocal about using stretches of existing roads, and had made it known that he was not a big supporter of the proposal put forward. His Worship added that the group made a decision, had an open house, and received input from the public. He added that the recommendation would come forward to Council and eventually a vote would be taken and the process would move forward. His Worship concluded that the public would have the opportunity to review things and make their thoughts known.

Councillor Eadie asked if the Mayor was aware that the developer for the Fort Rouge Yards had been taking bids from the builders who would start building units there. His Worship responded that he was not the manager of the construction site, but he understood that the project was moving forward, and suggested that Councillor Eadie may wish to speak to the ward Councillor as she may know more.