STANDING POLICY COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

QUESTION PERIOD

Minute No. 405
In regards to the Responsible Winnipeg ad campaign, Councillor Havixbeck inquired about justification of spending $90,000 of taxpayer's money.

Councillor Wyatt replied that the campaign allowed citizens who were not following the issue to be involved and engaged, further noting that a message was needed to be communicated, and the discussion it created was very healthy.

Councillor Havixbeck asked if the Chair would support a full accounting of that money spent on the ad campaign. Councillor Wyatt replied that he believed the expense was worthwhile, and further noted that it was an expense from the Mayor's Office, which was no different from expenses from Ward Allowances for the Councillors.

In noting that the CentreVenture Board annual financial statement for 2012 showed a loss of $937,000, Councillor Hvaixbeck inquired how the Chair expects to sustain these losses that the CentreVenture seems to have incurred. Councillor Wyatt replied that this was the first he had heard of the issue and would be pleased to look into it and provide a detailed response for Councillor Havixbeck.

In noting that Responsible Winnipeg was a City of Winnipeg initiative, Councillor Smith inquired why there was no mention of it on the City website, to which Councillor Wyatt replied that this was something that was caught and addressed, since the campaign was meant to get the information out as quickly as possible.

Councillor Swandel inquired if the Chair could get a return on investment perspective for CentreVenture, noting that despite any operating losses, CentreVenture provided great value to the downtown.

Councillor Wyatt responded that Council has made downtown re-development a priority and that it a priority a number of years ago to make downtown a priority in terms of re-development and renewal, further noting that CentreVenture had done some amazing things and that the amount of resources on an annual basis was quite minimal in terms of the actual return.

Councillor Swandel inquired if the Chair was aware that by the end of this summer, the City would see between six and eight cranes working on new developments in downtown Winnipeg, to which Councillor Wyatt stated that he was not aware.