EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE

QUESTION PERIOD

Minute No. 517
Councillor Wyatt inquired about the status of the list of projects sent to the Province for their approval in regards to the $3.8 million in recreation funding that was announced in the budget this year that was originally for the water park, and was then divided up amongst the wards at $271,000 per ward. His Worship Mayor Katz replied that everything had been signed and sent over to the Provincial Government, and he would provide them a few days before making a follow-up phone call.

Councillor Wyatt then inquired about the Buhler Recreation Park, where $200,000 was announced to the Transcona Ward to invest into creating winter activity amenities at the Park, and asked if a follow-up letter to the Premier could be prepared, in the event the funds have to be moved, because of the opposition by the local M.L.A., to this and other worthy projects. His Worship Mayor Katz replied that no one from the Province has communicated directly with him, but would be interested in learning why the opposition existed and if the Province and the Councillor could agree on identifying another project, if the initial project was not going forward.

Councillor Wyatt questioned the Mayor if he was aware that Mr. Reid, M.L.A. for Radisson, was in opposition to the Buhler Recreation Park project, to which His Worship Mayor Katz replied that he now was aware.

Councillor Sharma asked for an update on the opening of the new restaurant at Kildonan Park, to which His Worship Mayor Katz replied that the goal for the opening of Peguis Pavilion was July 1, but was now projected for the first week of September.

Councillor Pagtakhan noted that the Arlington Bridge, which handles over 15,000 cars daily, was currently closed for repairs until the end of August and inquired if the Mayor believed that the Arlington Street Bridge was a key route for Winnipeggers. His Worship Mayor Katz replied that he believed that this was an important route, and that while the six week closure was inconvenient, it was to ensure safety and improve the bridge.

Councillor Pagtakhan agreed that there was much work that needed to be done on the bridge, and asked about an engineering report that talked about year 2020 being a critical year with respect to a decision or something happening at the Arlington Street Bridge such as a decommissioning, and asked the Mayor if he was committed to ensuring that monies were budgeted in the Capital Budget for the construction of a new Arlington Street Bridge. His Worship Mayor Katz replied that as this was an important route, money would have to be committed, with the challenge to be to indent a source of funds for this and other similar projects.

Executive Policy Committee – Question Period (continued):

Councillor Pagtakhan, noting that Council had recently passed the Regional Street Reserve initiative, asked if the Mayor was aware that Arlington Street, between Portage Avenue and Inkster, was classified by the City of Winnipeg as a Regional Street, to which His Worship Mayor Katz replied in the affirmative.

Noting the rail tragedy that had recently occurred in Lac-Megantic, Councillor Havixbeck asked the Mayor, given that Winnipeg was also a rail-based City with rail lines running throughout the City, what steps had been taken to mitigate the levels of risk, and if any discussions had occurred with any of the rail lines. His Worship Mayor Katz responded that the City's Emergency Prepared Coordinator, working with all City Departments and the Province was continually preparing and conducting mock exercises to ensure that the city was prepared to deal with such emergencies, should they occur.

Councillor Havixbeck asked if the Mayor supported an entertainer coming to our City who had been charged and convicted with serious crimes against women. His Worship Mayor Katz replied that he does not believe anyone on the floor of Council would support something like that, but by the same token, he believed that this was a decision the public would make by deciding to buy a ticket or not.

Councillor Havixbeck asked whether the Mayor knew if the Golf North proposal was received before the closing of the E. O. I. on golf services, and if the Mayor felt this was responsible tendering. His Worship Mayor Katz replied that there was a process that was followed, if there was a deadline that had been extended, the administration would have had a valid reason for doing so.

Councillor Gerbasi asked if the Mayor would be open to re-considering the decision to cancel the pedestrian and cycling strategy. His Worship Mayor Katz replied that an Active Transportation Strategy or policy had not been developed until he became Mayor, noting that $80 million has been invested in six years, and 150 kilometres of trails had expanded into almost 400. He further noted that options were looked at to get a study done, and the work would continue, but taxpayers' dollars are hoping to be spent wisely.

Councillor Gerbasi asked that if by cancelling the study, the Mayor did not consider City-wide cycling and pedestrian infrastructure to be as an important part of the transportation network, and an aspect of the infrastructure that was deserving of proper planning, designing and public input, to which His Worship Mayor Katz replied that Council had through their actions over the last 6 years had shown their commitment to Active Transportation.

Councillor Gerbasi asked if the remaining unspent funds from the cancelled Active Transportation Planning study would be spent on other walking and cycling projects. His Worship Mayor Katz replied that the idea was to spend on other capital projects and that the work on Active Transportation would continue.

Considering the recent flood in Calgary, Councillor Browaty asked if the Mayor would be prepared to offer Council a Seminar on what would be done if Winnipeg were to experience a similar event. His Worship Mayor Katz replied that he would be happy to call a Council Seminar to discuss the issue.

As a follow-up, Councillor Browaty asked if, during the seminar, the backup plan for the Emergency Operations Centre could be explained, as they were in the sub-basement of the Council Building, to which His Worship Mayor Katz replied in the affirmative.

Councillor Orlikow thanked the Mayor for his support regarding the trans-loading station that was planned for the corner of Lindsay and Grant Avenue and asked if a model for the stopping of the industrialization of the rail lines, especially within residential neighbourhoods, could be examined. His Worship Mayor Katz answered that both himself and the Councillor lobbied the Federal Government and members of parliament, but the suggestion was a good one. He noted that being realistic was important when dealing with moving rail lines, as it became a very costly scenario, further noting that dialogue would be continued and he would work with the Councillor towards finding solutions.