EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE

QUESTION PERIOD

Minute No. 685
In reference to the reallocation of monies in the tri-level funding agreement from rapid transit to community centres, Councillor Gerbasi asked what federal program would be used as a conduit for community centre funding inasmuch as the proposal does not qualify under the Canadian Strategic Infrastructure Program.

His Worship Mayor Katz replied that he believed that the funding of community centre improvements qualified and advised that he had communicated the City's intentions with Minister Alcock, who had assured him that the funds were available and would be forthcoming.

Councillor Gerbasi further questioned why Item 5 of the Report of the Executive Policy Committee, dated September 22, 2004, "Rapid Transit" was amended by replacing the words "Canada Strategic Infrastructure Program" with "Federal Infrastructure Programs" if funds were available from the Canada Strategic Infrastructure Program to which His Worship responded that the change was made simply to make the motion more general should other Federal funding be forthcoming.

Councillor Gerbasi requested clarification on whether the City would be receiving $17 million from the Canada Strategic Infrastructure program, to which His Worship reiterated that the City was not losing any money and indicated that he had been assured by Minister Alcock that the money would be available.

In reference to Item 2 of the Report of the Executive Policy Committee dated October 27, 2004, "2006 Grey Cup Bid Proposal", Councillor Steeves inquired why the item was amended by the Executive Policy Committee to remove the requirement of the delineation of the City of Winnipeg's money behind the Province of Manitoba's money.

His Worship noted that the original objective was that, in the event the money was called upon, provincial funding would be requested first and City funding would be second. His Worship also advised that that the City would still be protected in the same manner and the Chief Administrative Officer was dealing directly with the Winnipeg Football Club to ensure that the City's guarantee was safe.

In noting that His Worship appointed Councillor Lubosch as the Secretary of Urban and Environmental Strategies, Councilor Smith asked what Councillor Lubosch would be expected to do in that position and how it would work with the Civic Environmental Committee.

Executive Policy Committee – Question Period (continued)

His Worship replied that Councillor Lubosch would be expected to examine the environmental initiatives identified in the Mayor's action plan and, if appropriate, to bring them into effect.

Councillor Benham questioned the current status of Winnipeg's Urban Transportation showcase project; to which His Worship replied that the model was being downsized to approximately $11 million dollars and that there had been recent discussions with the province to determine if provincial funding would be available were the City to submit a new proposal.

Councillor Benham further questioned what argument the city would make for urban transportation showcase money when there was no longer an urban transportation alternative to showcase; to which His Worship replied that money was previously not allocated for the urban transportation showcase but, hopefully, both the City and Province could find funds to allocate.

In reference to the new $11 million dollar proposal, Councillor Benham inquired if the City would be paying a greater percentage of the costs than the previous one third to which His Worship replied absolutely not.

Councillor Angus inquired when the terms of reference for the newly created Ad Hoc Committees, such as the Red Tape Commission, would be established to which His Worship stated that they were presently being developed and should be available within approximately three weeks.

Councillor Angus inquired if direction had been given to establish the City's budget and questioned if a Council Seminar would be scheduled to which His Worship replied in the affirmative.

Councillor Gerbasi questioned what the projected time frame was to firm up the federal and provincial funding that Council had committed to spend on public use facilities.

His Worship noted that the administration was preparing an updated plan due to some changes that have occurred in the two years since the Public Use Facilities Study was commissioned and that he hoped to have that plan in effect and another seminar within four weeks. He also noted that he had met with the General Council of Winnipeg Community Centres, whose recommendations had been provided to all Members of Council and that there had been discussions with the provincial and federal governments with respect to funding.

Councillor Gerbasi further inquired if His Worship would ensure that 67 percent of the funding for the full implementation of the Public Use Facilities Study recommendation would be in place prior to proceeding with community centre improvements.

Executive Policy Committee – Question Period (continued)

His Worship replied that he would not proceed with spending money until the money was in place and would obtain reassurances and documentation from both levels of government that the money was secure before proceeding.

Councillor Gerbasi questioned if the requirement to ensure two thirds of the funding for any future recreation planning project be in place would apply to community centres or if it just applied to transit projects.

His Worship replied that he could not comment on the transit project but stated that if the money was in place for community centres, and that the project was approved by all three levels of government, then the project would proceed.

In reference to funding for the Canadian Museum for Human Rights, Councillor Benham inquired what His Worship would do to ensure that the City did not lose 70 million dollars of federal funding or the entire 270 million dollar project.

His Worship advised that he had conversed with Gail Asper, the project leader, who had indicated after meeting with the Prime Minister, that she believed that they would be successful in securing funding. He acknowledged the importance of this project, noting that the Aspers were cognizant of the financial commitment made by the City and the province but that they were still working on firming the commitment from the federal government.

Councillor Benham further inquired what assurances the Mayor had that the 100 million dollars of federal money pledged to this project would actually be contributed, to which His Worship replied that he had not seen documentation to confirm the actual amount of the federal funding.

Councillor Benham questioned why the Mayor had not met with the Premier, the Aspers and the President of the Treasury Board to ensure that this major human rights landmark was not lost to Winnipeg.

His Worship stated that all three levels of government were dialoguing with the Asper family and were optimistic that the federal government would come through on their commitment. He noted that some individuals would like the museum to be built somewhere in the east, but that as Winnipeg is the center of Canada, he felt it should be built in Winnipeg and that everybody would continue to do whatever they could to lobby for this to occur.

Councillor Gerbasi questioned when the public hearing date would be set for the Waverly West Plan Winnipeg amendment; to which His Worship advised that it would be imminent.

Councillor Gerbasi inquired if His Worship would ensure that the administrative reports would

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His Worship stated that he would not commit to a two-week situation but advised that once the document was ready to be released it would be posted to the City's website and available to all Members of Council and the public.

Councillor Benham questioned how the Mayor would protect the federal money for Winnipeg sewers inasmuch as it was rumoured that the money was not being provided pending actions by His Worship to revisit the funding deal, to which His Worship replied that he had done nothing in regards to the issue and that neither the Mayor, nor any member of the Executive Policy Committee, had given any direction to the contrary.

Councillor Benham further questioned if the federal money for sewer renewal would flow in this fiscal year or in 2005, to which His Worship replied that there had been no discussion to date as to when the money would flow, but indicated that it would be dealt with in the near future.