Minutes – Executive Policy Committee – January 11, 2017

REPORTS

Item No. 8 Frontage Levy – Impact on Religious and Not-For-Profit Cemeteries

EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

The Executive Policy Committee concurred in the Council Motion of December 14, 2016, as amended, and recommended to Council:

1. That the Winnipeg Public Service review the impact of the 'Frontage Levy' on the future operations and viability of religious and not for profit' Cemeteries, and that representatives of all these cemeteries be consulted.

2. That the Winnipeg Public Service report back to Council by July 30, 2017 on the financial implications to the City's budget.

3. That the Proper Officers of the City be authorized to do all things necessary to implement the intent of the foregoing.

DECISION MAKING HISTORY:

Moved by Councillor Gilroy,

That the Council Motion of December 14, 2016 be concurred in and forwarded to Council.

With the permission of Councillor Gilroy, Councillor Gillingham amended the motion by adding the following:

That the words "and recommended changes to Winnipeg by-laws to remove frontage levies on religious and not for profit cemeteries" be deleted at the end of the Council Motion.

Carried

The Executive Policy Committee received submissions with respect to the matter from the following:

- Jim Baker, Executive Director, Historic Elmwood Cemetery, submitted a communication dated January 9, 2017
- Margaret Steele, Manager, St. James Cemetery, submitted a communication dated January 10, 2017
- Ian Staniloff, Executive Director, Shaarey Zedek, submitted a communication dated January 10, 2017
- Councillor Eadie, Mynarski Ward, submitted a communication dated January 10, 2017
- Councillor Sharma, Old Kildonan Ward, submitted a communication dated January 10, 2017.

COUNCIL DECISION:

On December 14, 2016, Council ruled automatic referral of the following motion to the Executive Policy Committee:

Moved by Councillor Eadie,
Seconded by Councillor Schreyer,

WHEREAS religious and not for profit cemeteries are exempt from paying property taxes;

AND WHEREAS religious and Non-Profit cemeteries have been adversely impacted by the 41% increase in the 'Frontage Levy' imposed on their large properties, located throughout Winnipeg, in the 2016 & 2017 budget;

DECISION MAKING HISTORY (continued):

COUNCIL DECISION (continued):

AND WHEREAS some of these Cemeteries have also been re-assessed by the Public Service and 'Flankage' as been added to their calculation of the 'Frontage Levy' which has added to their tax related payment problems;

AND WHEREAS cemetery representatives have specifically requested that an 'Administrative Committee' be established and tasked with reviewing this matter together with all 'Religious and Non-Profit Cemeteries' and then report to EPC with recommendations and;

AND WHEREAS cemetery representatives note that long term increases in this 'Frontage Levy', without relief to all cemeteries, could result in some or all of them facing the possibility of ceasing operations sometime in the future, due to the high levels of taxation;

AND WHEREAS these Cemeteries may face only one option under current circumstance and that is to "turn the keys over" to the City of Winnipeg which will impact future City of Winnipeg operating costs;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Council direct the Winnipeg Public Service to review the impact of the 'Frontage Levy' on the future operations and viability of religious & not for profit' Cemeteries, and that representatives of all these cemeteries be consulted;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Winnipeg Public Service report back to Council by July 30, 2017 on the financial implications to the City's budget and recommended changes to Winnipeg by-laws to remove frontage levies on religious and not for profit cemeteries.