Minute No. 132
Report – Executive Policy Committee – January 11, 2017

Item No. 5 Frontage Levy – Impact on Religious and Not-For-Profit Cemeteries

COUNCIL DECISION:

Council concurred in the recommendation of the Executive Policy Committee and adopted the following:

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.

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DECISION MAKING HISTORY:

Moved by His Worship Mayor Bowman,
That the recommendation of the Executive Policy Committee be adopted.

Carried

EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On January 11, 2017, the Executive Policy Committee concurred in the Council Motion of December 14, 2016 with the following amendment, namely:

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

and submitted the matter to Council.

Further on January 11, 2017, 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.

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DECISION MAKING HISTORY (continued):

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;

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.