Agenda – Executive Policy Committee – December 6, 2017

REPORTS

Item No. 2 Proposal for Creation of the Winnipeg Green Energy Organization (WPG-GEO)

COUNCIL DECISION:

On November 15, 2017, Council ruled automatic referral of the following motion to the Executive Policy Committee:

Moved by Councillor Wyatt,
Seconded by Councillor Eadie,

WHEREAS Manitoba has weather conditions very favourable to the generation and production of power from Solar energy;

AND WHEREAS Winnipeg and Manitoba should work to be on the cutting edge of new technologies and innovation when it comes to Energy production, as this has been the history of Manitoba, with Winnipeg Hydro, Manitoba Hydro, and private sector innovation, such as New Flyer's Electric Bus program;

AND WHEREAS the Province of Manitoba recently set up a Crown Corporation that encourages the adaption of new Solar Energy and energy efficiencies;

AND WHEREAS the Province of Manitoba recently announced its new 'A Made in Manitoba Climate and Green Plan', that includes "carbon pricing that fosters emissions reduction, keeps investment capital here and stimulates new innovation in clean energy, business and jobs", and "measures to reduce emissions from commercial buildings through building codes and other measures putting government operations and infrastructure on a path to carbon-neutrality", including the use of Carbon Credits for Carbon Trading;

AND WHEREAS the City of Winnipeg is committed to a Community Climate Change Policy through the development of its own Climate Change Action Plan vision, targets and actions;

AND WHEREAS the reliance on the burning of non-renewable carbon energy for industries, commercial buildings, vehicles, and homes is not sustainable;

AND WHEREAS the City has the potential to benefit from the move toward electric vehicles, as it has one of the largest fleet operations, and therefore should position itself to benefit directly from the new solar energy technology;

AND WHEREAS the City of Winnipeg already owns property, buildings, and lands throughout the city, and outside the City, that could be identified for the location and installation of Solar Cell Power technology and arrays, including solar farms, allowing for initial solar cell infrastructure capital costs to be amortized and thus provide for a greater return on investment;

AND WHEREAS the many City owned landfills and brownfield sites are underutilized spaces and therefore ideal locations for Solar Farms and/or Solar Arrays;

AND WHEREAS the City of Winnipeg, which is constantly looking for new sources of revenues and to diversify its sources of income, has a financial opportunity, via a proactive solar cell installation program, to potentially sell hydroelectricity back into the electricity grid, as well as benefiting from any Carbon Credits, Carbon Trading and Offsets;

AND WHEREAS the existing Solar Cell and Power market in Manitoba is relatively small today, and thus offers the City of Winnipeg an opportunity to be on the ground floor of supplying and generating solar powered energy, as a producer from its own lands and buildings, and for and with private homes and businesses, as well as other levels of governments and/or their agencies;

AND WHEREAS the City, via a separate, arm's length Not-For-Profit Corporation, has the financial means to immediate facilitate large scale and small scale projects that cannot be facilitated presently through the private sector;

AND WHEREAS the City, via a separate, arm's length Not-For-Profit Corporation, could purchase solar powered technology via long term borrowing and in bulk orders, thus further driving the benefits of solar technology to our local market, as well as being more adaptable and flexible to market needs and conditions;

AND WHEREAS since 2014, the City of Winnipeg is presently seeing a $200,000 a year savings in hydroelectric costs, thanks to the conversion of the existing traditional overhead street light infrastructure to the new LED technology, and that this has now accumulated to a total annual savings going forward of $800,000/year in and by 2017, with a projected forecast of similar savings in the future years;

AND WHEREAS these savings are presently being used to balance the annual operating budget of the City of Winnipeg instead of being productively re-purposed to provide for greater carbon reduction via our climate change action plan, including reducing the City's exposure to carbon pricing;

AND WHEREAS the City is well positioned to market and sell and service solar powered technologies to private homes and business, targeting neighbourhood and business districts via its existing Local Levy Improvement District Bylaws and Procedures;

AND WHEREAS the opportunity may exist for the City, due to its control of development and development agreements, to facilitate and directly provide Solar Technology to new developments of private homes and businesses throughout the City of Winnipeg;

AND WHEREAS Manitoba Hydro is projecting and requesting annual increases of as much of 8%/year which shall drive and increase the benefits of Solar energy production and the importance of generating energy from off the grid sources, such as solar power, that can then can be sold back into the Hydro grid;

AND WHEREAS when it comes to utilizing, promoting, building, and facilitating solar powered technologies and the corresponding energy production and benefits, the City of Winnipeg and Province of Manitoba has presently fallen behind other jurisdictions in Canada;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City of Winnipeg create an Arm's Length Not-For-Profit Corporation, called the Winnipeg Green Energy Organization (from hereon in, known as WPG-GEO) Corporation, which shall be tasked with the generation and production of solar powered electricity to sell back into the Hydro grid, via a mandate to actively facilitate, promote, construct, market and operate, the following:

A) Solar Powered Farms and Solar Cell Arrays on City Facilities and City Lands, both inside and outside the City of Winnipeg;

B) Advance the promotion and conduct the direct sale of all solar powered projects and technologies to City departments, agencies, other governments and government agencies, private homes and private business, both inside and outside Winnipeg;

C) Promote and educate the benefits of Solar Power, including, and via its own business model, by offering incentives to all of its customers and customer markets, both public and private;

D) Set annual and multi-year targets and corresponding strategies to aggressively increase the share of the solar powered market inside Manitoba;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that WPG-GEO shall be provided a budget $200,000 a year, starting in 2018, and compounding by $200,000 in every year thereafter, which shall be sustained and sourced from the savings projected by the reduction in Hydroelectric costs associated with the conversion of Overhead Street Lighting to the LED technology, and shall be provided an annual operating budget of a minimum of $1 million within the 5 years from said source of funding;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that all City of Winnipeg future Carbon Credits and Carbon offsets, sourced from the coming Provincial and/or Federal Carbon Tax Program, shall be earmarked to WPG-GEO, to facilitate their business plan and its program, with any potential operating surpluses from the said corporation not being taken by City Council until year 10 (ten) of its operation, and;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that WPG-GEO shall be required to produce annual audited financial statements to Winnipeg City Council, via EPC, with semi-annual business reports; as well as a Business Plan required at its outset and every 2 years thereafter, for its first 10 years of operation;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a report back to Council on all of the forgoing occur within 60 days;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Public Service to all things necessary to implement the intent of the foregoing.