A preliminary comment on many of the delegations who presented today. They are celebrating the 100th anniversary of the Winnipeg General Strike. This year is also the 150th anniversary of the 1869 revolutionary, democratic and Métis-led Red River Resistance government of Louis Riel. I hope this City Council has something in the budget to mark that important anniversary, also.

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I am speaking in behalf of children and their families, who you are making sad by demolishing the Norwood Pool at a cost of $150,000.

People from across the City can and do use this free facility, often by walking from the core area where such facilities are unknown.

I am speaking to you today to ask you reconsider. The pool is not broken, it merely needs upkeep or a one-time expense to lower the cost of annual maintenance.

I was impressed by the contribution of Robert Gooding at the Parks committee last month who related the astounding properties of certain concrete used to build trans-Atlantic troop ships in the First World War. An affordable technical solution is certainly available.

Secondly, by postponing demolition you will save $150,000 in this year's budget.

When the administration promised a report on the options, people did not expect they would not be asked for solutions. The process leading to demolition was and is top-down, not rooted in the community.

I am sure that if the community of pool users was given a chance to come up with options to reduce annual costs and to develop an alternative model for keeping the pool open by finding larger organizations who would make regular use of the pool, such as Indigenous organizations, churches and communities currently not as well serviced with a similar facility, if pool users were given a chance, the chance would not be lost.

A pool is as valuable as a library, promoting health and friendship in the broader community.

Destroying a pool is like burning books, but by other means.

The Mayor and EPC have made a solid case that the Manitoba government underfunded and is underfunding roads and infrastructure.

There is no fat to cut, you are deciding what bone to amputate.

But every time a City councillor relates how the City has the one "tool" of property taxes, it lets the provincial government off the hook.

Regrettably, members of the Parks committee made such statements when endorsing the proposal to demolish the pool.

I have no doubt members of this City Council and people generally have a political will to challenge the anti-Winnipeg attitude of the Pallister government.

But it should be directed in a more pointed direction, certainly not to demand higher sales taxes or any form of regressive consumption or property tax. There was a purpose in Mayor Bowman floating the idea of a 9% property tax hike to highlight the provincial shortfall, but less reason for the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives to propose a 7.3% property tax hike in its alternative 2018 budget as a policy demand.

People in this City need guaranteed funding from the province in the form of a grant derived from progressive income taxes, taxes that are based on the ability to pay.

The City grant can also derive from an inheritance tax; i.e., a tax on unearned wealth, a tax that would go a long way to solve government deficits provincially and in your budget with very little effort and no real harm to any citizen of this province.

It is not beyond the power of this City Council to adopt a coherent and comprehensive position in this direction and not give a green light to Premier Pallister and his anti-Winnipeg stance by limiting the debate to unpopular and unfair choices.

Rather than reduce the standards and actual facilities of better served communities to those with the worst or no facilities, this City Council ought to have the goal to raise recreation facilities to the standard of better-served communities.

Sixty years ago, St. Boniface City Council had the broad vision to build public swimming pools, now treasured by people across the City. Our economy in Manitoba has at least doubled in productivity in the last half century, so it is not a true or believable argument that we cannot afford to build new or renew recreation facilities. It is a matter of standing up for Winnipeg in the right way, in a realistic way.

The so-called need for cheap government and austerity is a sham used to keep taxes low for those able to pay, that is the wealthy and the corporations.

In summary, I am asking the EPC to turn this matter over to the community to consider the options as provided by the administration and to seek other options.

I am asking that you save $150,000 this year to allow this to happen.

Please consider this a moment to do nothing and give the community of people who use the Norwood Pool a chance. There is no need for haste, but there is a need to correct the flawed process that led to this point in the first place.

People in Winnipeg need a city to live in, not endure.

You have a choice to make children happy, or not. Make them happy.