Minutes – Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development, Heritage and Downtown Development – May 27, 2019

REPORTS

Item No. 11 Cell Reception and Small Cell Technology Implementation

STANDING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

The Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development, Heritage and Downtown Development referred the recommendation of the Riel Community Committee to the Winnipeg Public Service for review and report back to the appropriate committee.

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DECISION MAKING HISTORY:

Moved by Councillor Rollins,

That the recommendation of the Riel Community Committee be referred to the Winnipeg Public Service for review and report back to the appropriate committee.

Carried

Councillor Klein asked to be recorded as having voted against the above motion, in accordance with Rule 47(7) of The Procedure By-law No. 50/2007.

COMMUNITY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On May 6, 2019, the Riel Community Committee passed the following motion:

WHEREAS the Federal government implemented a process for cell tower approval, whereby if a municipality provides a letter of concurrence to a proposed location, that site can be expedited through to Federal approval;

AND WHEREAS smartphone use has exploded in the 21st century, and with it consumer demand upon wireless infrastructure;

AND WHEREAS our current cell tower policy recommends against placing cell towers near residential homes, making it extremely challenging to expand wireless infrastructure in existing residential neighbourhoods where the demand is found;

AND WHEREAS some new developments, such as Sage Creek, have had a lack of cell reception for many years, and have had to wait for complex after the fact negotiations to take place to provide cell phone coverage years after residents first moved in;

AND WHEREAS ever increasing numbers of customers, data usage and changes in technology have reduced the potential range of these towers;

AND WHEREAS wireless phone use is now a ubiquitous part of modern life and arguably an essential service;

AND WHEREAS there are serious safety issues identified by our Firefighter Paramedic Department with respect to emergency services, both in the ability of residents to call for help, and the ability of emergency responders to transmit critical medical and other information;

AND WHEREAS Small Cell Technology creates multiple low range nodes throughout a given service area, without the need for a large and visually obstructive structure;

DECISION MAKING HISTORY (continued):

COMMUNITY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION (continued):

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development, Heritage and Downtown Development direct the Winnipeg Public Service to:

1. Create a process to consider cell reception as part of planning for new developments.

2. Investigate and report back on implementing and permitting Small Cell Technology in Winnipeg.