Submission – David Grant

Personal information
Full name: David Grant
Email address:
Phone:
Job title:
Organization:
Address:
City: Winnipeg
Province or territory: Manitoba
Postal code:

Delegation information
Committee: Council
Committee - council: Opposed to the recommendations
Committee - other: N/A
Agenda item (number and title): Governance committee item #1

Service inquiry: Register as a Delegation, Submit Comments in writing
Participation preference: Via Zoom
Comments in writing: It has been said that as soon as a person is elected, their primary job is to prepare for re-election. Some take this very seriously. Virtue signaling and related photo ops are part of this strategy. Some simply try to do a good job, hoping that this will lead to re-election. Those folks have no need for photo ops and cringe-worthy virtue signaling. Winnipeg residents should be proud that such self promotion is so rare at the civic level, when compared with some government Ministers.
A person's Election prospects can be reduced when embarrassing news items are raised by the competition or by the media. This peril is a natural and essential part of democracy. It has oft been said that any effort to keep the public uninformed on election-related issues is a strike against democracy. It is natural for any elected person to want to reduce the effect of bad news on their next campaign. Some folks see the "integrity" changes proposed today as supporting everyone's goal of breezing through a campaign, largely unchallenged.
There are examples of this sort of threat to democracy outside of Winnipeg. We all saw how effective the federal gov was when it began openly bribing Canadian news companies in its first term. It was made clear (to those sharing the $600million per year) that this money depended on each company being "trusted" by the government. In the months leading up to the next election, the gov was not bothered with negative news coverage. It was proven that the gov could trust the companies, to which it was sending millions. In the months before the 2021 Federal General Election, the federal gov introduced a new program, to provide new, special one-time funding to just about every small media outlet in Canada. No one knows what strings were attached to this new money. Some suspect that this new money came with an obligation to suppress any negative comment on the Party in power, as the $600m/year clearly did.
It was Winnipeg City Council that initially approved the processes involving the Integrity Commissioner. It is obviously within Council's power to restrict and even to cancel those processes. On the other hand, some suggest that you do not have the moral authority to quietly reduce the effectiveness of your Integrity process. Some suggest that this move should have involved significant public consultation, and a healthy debate on the merits and harms which may result. There is some age-old advice which says that just because you CAN do something, doesn't mean you should.

The ethical problem arises when one considers that any scandal that is discovered in the year or so before a civic election, may never be known to the public once you make these changes. If the situation is actually investigated, and eventually published, it would be long after the election. In any democracy, it is essential that voters be fully informed on the issues and the candidates. Even for an individual Councilor, who has no skeletons in their closet, it is wrong to lay out a plan like this, whose sole purpose is to hide facts from voters.

It has been said that in Canada we have a set of multi-level dictatorships, where democracy reigns but one day every 4 years. Nearly every decision is made for us, not by us. In other lands, more major decisions are made by the vote of the people. If these changes take effect, that one day will be tainted. In effect we will go back to the days before there was an internal city process for investigation of ethical matters.

I suggest that you change in the direction that benefits transparency and honesty. Please eliminate the black-out period on Integrity-related information. Please do not make it longer.

File: