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Delegation information
Committee: Executive Policy Committee
Committee - council: N/A
Committee - other: N/A
Agenda item (number and title): EPC 3, 11, 26. IRPW 2, 5. GOVERNANCE #1

Service inquiry: Register as a Delegation, Submit Comments in writing
Participation preference: Via Zoom
Comments in writing: EPC 3 311 WAIT Since funding and staffing has been deliberately cut by Council, who is surprised that waiting times are up? Since you asked staff to check with other jurisdictions, how many of those have cut funding and staffing, and have not seen waiting get worse? Since you offer email service, do your staff switch from phone to email service? In a normal office situation, email responses can be handled during lulls in live phone traffic. Do your people already do this? Council has decided to fund many very expensive boutique projects. Will you replace the funding taken away in recent years? If you want to boast about city hall being 'transparent' you need a fully funded 311 service.

EPC 11 Flashing ambers in DSZs. You should all be alarmed by the number of years that Winnipeg has actively resisted following the safety lead of the rest of the world. Most folks understand that properly informing drivers would drive ticket income toward zero. Anyone who believes in the safety of DSZs would be appalled to learn of the delay. Most folks know that an unaware driver presents a greater risk than one fully informed. That these donated lights have been so actively delayed and prevented, and for so many years, tells the world that Winnipeg is only interested in fines. Of course real safety experts knew before the DCZ bylaw that cars traveling on empty roads at 45 kph had never been a real danger to students. The fact that enforcement is never done when students are outside the school, and the years of delay of these lights, both drive home the message that DCZs are only about revenue.

EPC 26 WCC CODE This agenda item signals good things regarding equity. If this is truly the basis of how City Hall operates, why does no one listen when obvious abuses of human rights are raised at meetings of council and its committees? Does such silence constitute a violation of Council's Code of Conduct?

IRPW 2 SNOW & ICE clearing policy. We routinely hear loud lobbying for better clearing of sidewalks by certain powerful members of Council. We expect that. Why do we force people to walk along icy rutted streets, with no sidewalks, that can go months without being plowed, and which serve as the only route to and from hundreds of homes? Why do you not have a safety-based process for setting plow priorities? Not every sidewalk and street can be plowed first. Making folks struggle over snow on a sidewalk is not as dangerous as struggling on an icy, rutted street, AMONG cars and trucks, when there is no sidewalk. When a downtown sidewalk is plowed on day 2, and a busy street with folks on foot goes unplowed for weeks after that same snowfall, there is lethal, preventable danger. Having to trudge through many cm of fresh snow is hard work, but not as dangerous as walking on a lumpy icy road, inches from 2 way traffic on a narrow collector street.

IRPW 5 CROSSWALK AMBERS and DON'T WALK signs at crosswalks. Red signals for those on foot have been in use across Winnipeg, and around the world for a century. Until you do this here, those on foot will have no reminder. Many will not safely use these crossings. You have promised to install eye-level flashing amber lights for cars. In the same steel box, you can install the analogous warning lights for those crossing. It is becoming clear that unless an important member of council is behind a safety improvement, it will be ignored.

GOV 1 INTEGRITY REPORT We have a carefully designed REGISTRY. With respect, may I suggest that it is largely Ornamental? It is better than what existed many years ago. When I moved to Winnipeg, I got some mysterious calls from folks wanting to meet with me. Later, I realized that a person with my name was important in the back rooms of city hall. Those mystery calls could have been from lobbyists.
Cliches on being results oriented: If you have only a hammer, you look only for nails as you cannot fix loose bolts. If you want to avoid a cyber attack, you need the advice of an expert in the latest cyber-crime exploits, not a lawyer. A secure election depends on a rule set which closes every possible means of cheating. Malevolence has shown itself to be ingenious, so the rules need regular review. If you want to avoid lawsuits, you might want the advice of a lawyer. It does not always work.

If we want a rule set to prevent crooked influence of our elected officials, it should identify and prevent all known means by which such influence has ever been applied in the past, anywhere. I do not believe we have that here, yet.
Transparency is an important part of assuring the public that everything is being done above board. Transparency has been promised by politicians at all levels, even as more of what they do is hidden from public view. There are many honest reasons that an official might choose opacity, but once things are hidden, crime can sneak in undetected.
Where do we find the best governance? The US has many rules, but the bottom line is that undue influence robs US taxpayers of billions of dollars every year. Public-interest groups in the US can follow carefully recorded money trails, usually into re-election coffers. Bribery has largely been stamped out.
It is clear that senior Canadian governments are very vulnerable to the harms of undue influence.
Manitoba has a voluntary registry. Some suggest that it is just an ornament. There are countless decisions made that benefit obscure and specialist causes, but for which no note is made in the registry.
If my neighbour can apply influence with no public record of her actions, then we must be concerned that criminals could do the same.
For more than a decade, governments have been trying to prevent the elected from using private emails to do their business. When most follow such rules, a politician who does an end run around such a rule, may be suspected of criminality. The ease, with which law enforcement can narrow their focus to rule breakers, acts as a very strong deterrent to crime.

When we look at the EU, we find opinions from many hundreds of the best minds in elected life. They are a rich resource. Their parliament voted 99% in favor of a mandatory registry of lobbyists, but not until last year. They were very late to the table, in terms of ethics rules and transparency.
More important is the fact that one member of the EP wanted to close some obvious loopholes, and that most votes were against closing them. A solid program can still be built on their registry, by means of regulations. Such a program can make sure that all means of influence are published.
I know several Councilors. Everyone is a good person. These days that is not enough. Each of us must be seen to be free of any ethical shadow. More complete reporting helps. A rule set which makes undue influence nearly impossible would help more. This would begin with a mandatory lobbyist registry. I ask you to ask for an actual outline of how Winnipeg can achieve that goal.
As someone quipped a year ago, important things cannot be voluntary. Would property taxes work if they were voluntary? I think all of you know the answer to that one!
With respect, it seems that Council may have wanted to go there, but your 'staffer' talked you out of it, without listing the steps in detail, and without presenting a full cost-benefit analysis. On a related matter, the report fails to indicate how many informal contacts were made by those not Registered in each subject year. I am disappointed in what we have, but I am offering some words and ideas to support Council going forward. THANK YOU.
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