Minute No. 459
Report – Standing Policy Committee on Water, Waste and Environment – May 1, 2023

Item No. 4 Requesting Amendments to Phosphorus Compliance in Phase Three of the North End Sewage Treatment Plant Upgrade

COUNCIL DECISION:

Council concurred in the recommendation of the Standing Policy Committee on Water, Waste and Environment and adopted the following:

1. That the Council Motion of April 27, 2023, be received as information.

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DECISION MAKING HISTORY:

Moved by Councillor Mayes,
That the recommendation of the Standing Policy Committee on Water, Waste and Environment be adopted.

Carried

Councillor Mayes asked to be recorded as having voted against the item in accordance with Rule 47(7) of the Procedure Bylaw.

EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On May 16, 2023, the Executive Policy Committee concurred in the recommendation of the Standing Policy Committee on Water, Waste and Environment and submitted the matter to Council.

Councillor Allard, St. Boniface Ward, submitted a communication in support of the matter.

Alexis Kanu, Executive Director, Lake Winnipeg Foundation, submitted a communication with respect to the matter.

STANDING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On May 1, 2023, the Standing Policy Committee on Water, Waste and Environment recommended to the Executive Policy Committee and Council:

1. That the Council Motion of April 27, 2023, be received as information.

COUNCIL DECISION:

On April 27, 2023, Council ruled automatic referral of the following motion to the Standing Policy Committee on Water, Waste and Environment:

Moved by Councillor Allard,
Seconded by Councillor Gilroy,

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DECISION MAKING HISTORY (continued):

COUNCIL DECISION (continued):

WHEREAS in 2003 the Manitoba Clean Environment Commission report on Lake Winnipeg nutrients stated that is was "building on scientific knowledge";

AND WHEREAS both the 2003 report and the 2009 review of that report called for the City of Winnipeg to undertake nitrogen removal as part of its nutrient removal requirements, a requirement reflected in Provincial licence which remains in force;

AND WHEREAS in order to meet the requirements for nitrogen removal, the cost estimate for Phase 3 of the North End Sewage Treatment Plant Upgrade was estimated at $828 million as of 2020;

AND WHEREAS building on more recent scientific knowledge than that cited in the 2003 report seriously questions the utility and cost-effectiveness of removing nitrogen;

AND WHEREAS the City and the Province recently announced a task force led by elected officials to expedite completion of work at the North End Sewage Treatment Plant;

AND WHEREAS information pertaining to nitrogen removal was published by IISD Experimental Lakes Area Inc. in a 2017 article titled "Biological Nitrogen Fixation Prevents the Response of a Eutrophic Lake to Reduced Loading of Nitrogen: Evidence from a 46-Year Whole-Lake Experiment" (attached as Appendix A);

AND WHEREAS in a letter dated April 26, 2023 (attached as Appendix B), the Lake Winnipeg Foundation has offered support for this initiative;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

1. That prior to funding commitments being made for Phase 3 of the North End Sewage Treatment Plant Upgrade, Council request the Provincial Task Force to undertake the following:

    A. Amend the licence to require phosphorus compliance in Phase 3: and

    B. Complete a review of current scientific knowledge to determine whether it is desirable to proceed with the nitrogen removal components for Phase 3 of the project.

2. That the Proper Officers of the City be authorized to do all things necessary to implement the intent of the foregoing.