

## City Watch Meeting

### Social Planning Council of Winnipeg (432 Ellice Avenue)

January 16<sup>th</sup>, 2020, 10 am – 11:30 am

**Attendees:** Kate Kehler, Josh Brandon, Melissa Dvorak, Melissa Bowman Wilson, Wendy, Marianne Cerilli (via phone), Oke Ojekudo (note taker)

#### Notes - Updates on City Budget Matters:

- **Millennium Library:** EPC is putting forward a motion to spend about \$260,000 to refurbish the front space of the library to create a community hub during next EPC meeting on Jan 21, which they hope different agencies can take turns to manage with no mention of additional finances to these organizations for this role. \$236,000 is estimated capital cost and \$25,000 is estimated running cost per year (speculative)
  - Winnipeg's downtown safety strategy outlined in a recently released Manitoba Police Commission report (<https://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?item=46441&posted=2019-12-03>) would be based on a model developed in Minneapolis. There, the library plays an important role in community safety.
  - Security guards union is very supportive of social justice approaches and provision of training for security guards in cultural awareness, harm reduction, mental health crisis intervention etc. They are currently not paid living wage (average income is around \$12/hr). Recommended that the community show support for getting security more training and higher salary for the dangerous work that they do.
  - Also, security guards are not usually brought to the table whenever these security issues are being discussed and they should be. Marianne is working with a team looking into providing Outreach Maps to serve as resources security can share with people they encounter as their role can start to shift more to harm reduction than security.
- There is also a Retailers' conference being organized on Jan 31 to discuss recent theft issues in stores. Kate Kehler (Social Planning Council) plans to attend and is lobbying for more community voices to attend so there is a more progressive approach to solutions as opposed to the criminal justice approach, which is currently the central theme of the Retailers' meeting.
- Downtown Alliance Project has put in a funding request with \$180,000 ask.
- CUPE 500 is circulating a petition which contains a list of some of the proposed cuts available on their website. This is not the comprehensive list, as it is missing some components like transit, but it is a very good resource. ([https://cupe500.nationbuilder.com/the\\_cuts](https://cupe500.nationbuilder.com/the_cuts))
  - This list shows some cuts that are uncalled for like cutting budget for street lights, meanwhile some vanity projects like Assiniboine Garden are getting awarded funds.
- **City Budget:** Millennium for all is organizing a large group with a series of ideas on city budget cuts with messaging about "is this our Winnipeg" with maps that show what the cuts will mean for city and what diminishing resources will result in over the next 4 years, as well as other messaging around the central topic – "budget for all".

- Working groups have discussed some options like putting together packages for councillors, based on helpful reports like CCPA's alternative provincial budget, including a list of things they don't want to be funded and putting the money into things that we want to be funded, just like the tree campaign that asks for some money from road budget be diverted to trees.
- There is concern that the city may take advantage to cut certain services that were already pre-negotiated in good faith like police salary and pension but we can channel our ask to target overtime hours i.e. reduce the conditions that lead to overtime requirement or the 'city subsidized' hiring of police as private security by corporations like superstore, who only pay for the time spent but not the pension or benefits covered by city, in that way they get subsidized.
- Participants raised concerns about a City of Winnipeg request for proposal for a consultant to create a transit security plan that would give inspectors more authority.
- **Larger community group is meeting on Wednesday, Jan 22 at 7pm in the University of Winnipeg, room 1C16A.** Everyone is welcome to open future meeting invitations to City watch group meetings to anyone interested as these are open meetings.
- An idea still on the table is gathering resident associations to request to meet and discuss with their ward councillors and create messaging around the outcome, including whether or not the discussion happened and the take-away from each of these meetings. Plans are yet to be finalized and need to be taken back to the larger group to agree on name, messaging and how to support resident associations as a community.
- If anyone receives any information that the budget will be released earlier than the planned date, please let us know as quickly as possible so we can be prepared.
- Community needs to push back on rhetoric that this has been the level of funding provided in the past as the fact that many vital services have been underfunded in the past is not reason to underfund vital services presently.
- Josh Brandon (SPCW) will help coordinate to see if there are issues where no one from the community is speaking on at EPC meeting and help nudge the relevant contacts to provide the missing voices. Josh will also circulate link to EPC agenda and minutes of upcoming meeting when it becomes available.
- Community also needs to push back with messaging against the city's excuse that social services is outside their role because it is actually spelt out in their purposes/mandate

Homelessness & cold weather strategy: There doesn't seem to be any cold weather strategy by the city this year, which used to exist in the past but seems to have been one of the services cut. Only a few community groups are doing some organizing around that. There should be a time or temperature level when city services like libraries are kept open 24/7 so people can feel free to drop in and warm up at any time, as well as emergency preparedness team from the province. Josh will look into this some more and if there is anyone else interested in working on this area, please contact Josh Brandon (jbrandon@spcw.mb.ca)