

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF CITY COUNCIL HELD ON TUESDAY, JUNE 24, 2008 AT 7:30 PM IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC ADMINISTRATION BUILDING, BRANDON, MANITOBA

PRESENT: Mayor D. Burgess in the Chair, Councillor V. Barletta, Councillor E. Black, Councillor M. Blight, Councillor M. Campbell, Councillor K. Fitzpatrick, Councillor J. Harwood, Councillor D. Jessiman, Councillor J. McCrae, Councillor D. Paterson, Councillor G. Rice, Youth Member Stephen Montague

ABSENT: Nil

ADOPTION OF AGENDA:

McCrae-Harwood

693 That the Agenda for the Special Meeting of City Council to be held Tuesday, June 24, 2008 be amended by adding under the Order of Delegations, presentations by Kevin Swark of Genesis Hospitality, and Ron Cumming of the Chamber of Commerce with respect to the proposed Accommodation Tax By-law, and that the Agenda, as amended, be adopted. CARRIED.

HEARING OF DELEGATIONS:

(A) PATTY GRIFFITH, BRANDON FIRST - PROPOSED ACCOMMODATION TAX BY-LAW

Patty Griffith, on behalf of Brandon First, appeared before City Council with regards to the proposed levy on short term accommodation. She stated that Brandon First was concerned that the imposition of the proposed tax would have a negative impact on their operations as many hoteliers who currently make up a large portion of Brandon First stakeholders, would not be interested in paying for a membership in the organization in addition to the tax levy. She added that a decrease in membership fees would also put Brandon First's funding from other organizations such as Travel Manitoba in jeopardy.

Ms. Griffith requested that the City of Brandon reconsider the current schedule for second and third readings of the proposed by-law to allow organizations that have a vested interest and experience with the industries impacted, to be part of structuring a mutually beneficial plan that would result in community wide success.

Harwood-Paterson

694 That the presentation by Patty Griffith, on behalf of Brandon First with respect to the proposed Accommodation Tax By-law be received. CARRIED.

(B) HEIDI HOWARTH, TRAILS WEST INN - PROPOSED ACCOMMODATION TAX BY-LAW

Heidi Howarth, Trails West Inn, appeared before City Council in opposition to the proposed Accommodation Tax By-law. She questioned why the City was following Winnipeg's lead when the industry circumstances were very different. Ms. Howarth noted that a majority of the hotel visitors in Brandon were from Manitoba and felt that it was unfair to place an additional tax on those customers.

McCrae-Rice

695 That the presentation by Heidi Howarth of the Trails West Inn with respect to the proposed Accommodation Tax By-law be received. CARRIED.

(C) DAVID CARRIERE, KEYSTONE MOTOR INN - PROPOSED ACCOMMODATION TAX BY-LAW

David Carriere, representing the Westman Accommodation Group (WAG), appeared before City Council with respect to the proposed wording of the Accommodation Tax By-law. He questioned why the industry and stakeholders had not been consulted with respect to the by-law and requested in-depth consultation with WAG and industry representatives before the by-law was given any further readings. Mr. Carriere suggested that several changes were necessary to the by-law to ensure clarity regarding exactly what the funds will be used for and how they will be administered. He concluded by noting that the new tax will not increase a tourist economy and implored Council not to proceed with the by-law.

Harwood-Barletta

696 That the presentation by David Carriere, on behalf of the Westman Accommodation Group, with respect to the proposed Accommodation Tax By-law be received. CARRIED.

(D) DARLENE JANSSEN, COMFORT INN - PROPOSED ACCOMMODATION TAX BY-LAW

Darlene Janssen, Comfort Inn, appeared before City Council in opposition to the proposed Accommodation Tax By-law. As a member of Brandon First, she expressed concerns with the impact the proposed by-law would have on the organization's sustainability. Ms. Janssen also outlined concerns with the current wording of the by-law and proposed several changes to same.

McCrae-Harwood

697 That the presentation by Darlene Janssen of the Comfort Inn with respect to the proposed Accommodation Tax By-law be received. CARRIED.

(E) DAN ROBERTSON, KEYSTONE CENTRE - PROPOSED ACCOMMODATION TAX BY-LAW

Dan Robertson, on behalf of the Keystone Centre, appeared before City Council in support of the proposed Accommodation Tax By-law. He noted that the Keystone Centre hosted many culture, recreation and sporting events and would potentially stand to benefit from the proposed tax. Mr. Robertson requested the section of the by-law dealing with the use of the funds collected be expanded. He concluded by noting that although the absence of an accommodation tax may be seen as a competitive advantage, the potential event incentives and quality promotional programs could create an even greater economic advantage for Brandon.

Jessiman-Blight

698 That the presentation by Dan Robertson on behalf of the Keystone Centre with respect to the proposed Accommodation Tax By-law be received. CARRIED.

(F) DAVE BROOKS, DAYS INN - PROPOSED ACCOMMODATION TAX BY-LAW

Dave Brooks, Days Inn appeared before City Council to express his views regarding the implementation of the proposed Accommodation Tax By-law. He noted that the tax placed an unfair burden on the accommodation industry while other related industries received the benefit. Mr. Brooks requested that if new taxation was necessary, City Council should consider a fairer taxation that taxes the users of the events and all businesses that benefit from event. He encouraged City Council to review each amendment outlined in the WAG document to ensure appropriate administration and implementation of the proposed by-law.

McCrae-Paterson

699 That the presentation by Dave Brooks of the Days Inn with respect to the proposed Accommodation Tax By-law be received. CARRIED.

(G) CHARLENE HARRIS, CANAD INNS - PROPOSED ACCOMMODATION TAX BY-LAW

Charlene Harris, on behalf of Herb LeGrange of the Canad Inns, appeared before City Council in opposition to the proposed Accommodation Tax By-law. She raised concerns with companies and conventions booking large blocks of rooms who may feel the additional cost of the proposed tax would be enough incentive to move meetings and conventions to other locations and put Brandon at a competitive disadvantage.

Jessiman-McCrae

700 That the presentation by Charlene Harris on behalf of Charlene Harris of the Canad Inns with respect to the proposed Accommodation Tax By-law be received. CARRIED.

(H) JERRY WEIR, MANITOBA HOTEL ASSOCIATION - PROPOSED ACCOMMODATION TAX BY-LAW

Jerry Weir, Executive Director of the Manitoba Hotel Association, appeared before City Council to provide information with respect to the proposed Accommodation Tax By-law. Mr. Weir provided information on the implementation of room taxes across Canada, and noted that many different models were used to collect, implement and administer the funds collected. He concluded by stating that changes to the current by-law were necessary to ensure the most efficient use of the funds collected.

McCrae-Blight

701 That the presentation by Jerry Weir on behalf of the Manitoba Hotel Association with respect to the proposed Accommodation Tax By-law be received. CARRIED.

(I) KEVIN SWARK, GENESIS HOSPITALITY - PROPOSED ACCOMMODATION TAX BY-LAW

Kevin Swark, on behalf of Genesis Hospitality, appeared before City Council in opposition to the proposed Accommodation Tax By-law. He advised that a majority of his guests came from Manitoba whereby he expressed his concern with this new tax on Manitobans. He cited examples from Winnipeg whereby their accommodation tax had a negative impact on the industry. Mr. Swark expressed concern with several areas of the by-law relating to how the funds collected were to be spent and encouraged members of City Council not to proceed any further with the proposed by-law.

Blight-Harwood

702 That the presentation by Kevin Swark of Genesis Hospitality with respect to the proposed Accommodation Tax By-law be received. CARRIED.

(J) RON CUMMING, BRANDON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE - PROPOSED ACCOMMODATION TAX BY-LAW

Ron Cumming, President of the Brandon Chamber of Commerce appeared before City Council with respect to the proposed Accommodation Tax By-law. He stated that the imposition of a new tax on a specific service was not an effective strategy for fiscal responsibility of the City. He further noted that if Council did intend to proceed with the imposition of the new tax, changes to the by-law were required to clarify how the funds would be administered and dispersed to ensure accountability for the proper spending of this money.

Paterson-Jessiman

703 That the presentation by Ron Cumming on behalf of the Brandon Chamber of Commerce with respect to the proposed Accommodation Tax By-law be received. CARRIED.

ADJOURN:

Blight-Rice

That the meeting do now adjourn (10:28 p.m.) CARRIED.

MAYOR

CITY CLERK