

CITY COUNCIL NO. 12-73

June 4, 1973.
7:00 p.m.

Meeting with Civic Complex Committee

A Special Meeting of City Council was held this evening with the following members present: His Worship Mayor E. C. Lumley, Aldermen G. Leger, A. LeBlanc, G. Samson, D. Webster, D. Fawthrop, F. Guindon, G. Cameron, K. Bough, A. Lebano, J. Pescod and M. Holden.

Excused from Meeting - Moved by Alderman Bough, seconded by Alderman Cameron that Alderman A. Clement be excused from attendance at this evening's meeting. Carried.

Also in attendance were Messrs. L. Keen Sr., C. T. Guilbeault, A. Martin, E. LeBlanc, E. Bellefeuille, L. Lalonde, R. Bourgon, S. Miller and M. S. Thompson and R. Laplante, representatives of the firm of Dominik, Thompson, Laframboise and Mallette.

Alderman LeBlanc introduced Mr. C. T. Guilbeault as Chairman and Messrs. R. Bourgon, S. Miller and E. Bellefeuille as members of the Building Sub-Committee and Mr. B. Martin as Chairman and Messrs. L. Keen, E. LeBlanc and L. Lalonde as members of the Finance Sub-Committee. Mr. Oliver, who was not present this evening, is also a member of this committee.

At the last Council meeting, Alderman LeBlanc presented each member with a feasibility report on the Civic Complex and, at this time, asked Mr. Martin to give a resume of said report.

In submitting the report, Mr. Martin stated that the Committee felt Council would receive it with a note of skepticism due to the cost of four million dollars. The Committee, he pointed out, was somewhat reluctant to proceed, however, it soon became apparent that the expenditure of funds was not for a recreational facility but an absolute necessity if the City is going to progress. The Committee felt that the City must be prepared to make such an investment if we expect industries to locate here. Companies today, he noted, are always looking at the facilities available in a municipality before deciding whether to locate. With this in mind, Mr. Martin related, the Committee then considered and prepared this report in the following manner - (1) why did the Mayor and Council decide to have a Civic Complex; (2) given the problem of analysing whether or not such a project is needed, how did the Committee organize itself into attacking the problem; (3) looking at the building itself from an aesthetic point of view; (4) given that the building is built, what would this facility do to spearhead the development of the downtown area; and how the building becomes a necessity if we hope to encourage industry to locate within the City and (5) financing of it and how we arrived at our conclusion.

Mr. Guilbeault emphasized the rise in costs from 2½ million in 1967 to a cost of 4 million at this time. The site and land development around the building itself is also included in this figure. Mr. Guilbeault went on to relate that, in 1967, the Optimist Club presented a brief to Council for a major sports complex to be developed over the years.

In early 1968, another brief was presented to and accepted by Council and, at this time, Council was asked to designate some lands as a recreational area. The Optimist Club then hired a consulting firm and a feasibility study was prepared.

In early 1970, the Club presented a major plan of the area and entered into an agreement with the City that the Club would continue with the project under a certain set of standards as recommended by the Parks and Recreation Committee. In 1971, some ground work was carried out by the Optimist Club. In 1972, the canal lands became available for development and Council formed a Canal Lands Development Committee. Shortly after, the Kinsmen Club donated an amount of \$50,000 towards a recreational centre for the City. The Mayor then appointed a Civic Complex Committee to prepare a feasibility study. As a result, a report was prepared listing guidelines, proposed site, estimate of costs and a listing of functions the Committee felt this building could accommodate. In recommending building on the canal lands, the Committee felt that this would help improve the downtown core area with the resulting overall development of the City. Further, with such a high cost, the Committee believes that the building must be erected in the downtown area in order to justify such an expenditure. While the Optimist Club site and the canal lands were given detailed study, the Committee, Mr. Martin noted, was receptive to considering any other area that Council might wish. In order to determine the public's reaction to the building of such a structure, Seaway Marketing Services carried out a telephone survey. Speaking of financing, Mr. Martin questioned as to whether

the City could really afford not to build the complex at this time because increasing cost of construction has shown the rate of increase is faster than the rate you can borrow money at. Government grants will have to be applied for. Two methods of raising money considered by the Committee were obtaining pledges by the citizens or increased taxes. After analysing this question, the Committee felt that, if pledges were obtained, a part of the cost would still have to be raised by taxation and people might object to being asked to contribute in both ways. Therefore, the Committee believes that the most equitable way of raising the money is by increased taxation.

At this point, the Committee and Council studied, in detail, the report as submitted this evening. It was noted that piling would be necessary at both sites with the estimated cost being the same in either area. The acoustics system would be of sufficient quality so that plays and musicals could be staged in the building. Walls would be portable so that a large area would be immediately available when required and ~~dividers~~ put up to be converted into smaller rooms when needed. Library facilities could be made available depending on the wishes of Council. However, Mr. Guilbeault cautioned against trying to accommodate too many uses in one building.

Mr. Thompson stated that the contract could be carried out under the Project Management System whereby certain phases of the building would be constructed while subsequent phases are being designed. Otherwise, the full tender could be awarded, however, this would delay commencing construction for approximately seven months. The fee for constructing under the Project

Management System would be 11 percent as against 6½ percent. However, Mr. Adams noted that the additional engineering costs would be offset by savings in time and construction costs.

With respect to donations by service clubs, Mr. Guilbeault, as a representative of one club, felt that this undertaking was much too large for resources of any club and any work carried out by a service club must be identified with that club in order that the public might be aware of its projects, however, one area might be developed by a specific club or a number of clubs might work together to develop a larger area.

Speaking on the telephone survey, Mr. Martin advised members of Council that a telephone questionnaire, mailing of circulars to the citizens or personal visits to the homes were considered and it was believed that the best results would be obtained by the telephone survey. This method has proven that there is an 95 percent accuracy in obtaining the opinion of the citizens at large.

Moved by Alderman LeBlanc, seconded by Alderman Lebano that the feasibility report, as presented by the Civic Complex Committee dated May 3, 1973, be accepted with further study to be initiated by Council. Carried.

Alderman LeBlanc thanked the Committee for the presentation of the report with the Mayor extending appreciation on behalf of Council for the very comprehensive and detailed study and also thanked the members of the Committee for attending this evening meeting to answer any questions asked by Council.

Adjournment - On motion of Alderman LeBlanc, seconded by Alderman Guindon, Council adjourned into Committee of the Whole at 9:30 p.m.

J. M. Boyer
Clerk

R. Guindon
Mayor