

**CANADIAN UNION OF PUBLIC EMPLOYEES
LOCAL 500**

SPEAKING NOTES SUBMITTED TO:

WINNIPEG CITY COUNCIL

RE: KELVIN COMMUNITY CENTRE



January 24th, 2007

City Council Presentation on Kelvin Community Centre

Thank-you Mr. Speaker, Your Worship, Councillors.

Thank- you for the opportunity to speak to the proposed closure of Kelvin Community Centre.

We are most concerned to see yet another central Community Centre possibly having its doors shut. Over the last number of years we have seen the continual struggle of inner city community centres. We have seen the closure of Boyd Park, Brooklands, we have seen clubs going under administration such as Norquay, Weston, and others amalgamating such Orioles, Clifton, and Isaac Brock.

This is continually happening in neighbourhoods who absolutely need these community facilities. These neighbourhoods need viable, civic supported community centres to provide key programs and services to their residents. This is essential to the well-being, health and safety of these neighbourhoods and is part of plan Winnipeg.

Are we as a city asking the right questions? Do we have the right model to support these clubs? Are we truly focusing civic resources to these communities? We question how we can take away a much needed asset without providing a real alternative.

For the larger part of my career with the City of Winnipeg, I have worked in the Central part of our city. I have seen

- the slow death of organized sport for children
- the continual reduction of recreation services for both children and adults
- the deterioration of community facilities
- the attrition of the civic workforce providing services to these communities

Kelvin is a microcosm what we are seeing in the City of Winnipeg today. There has been a shift towards a model of mega Community Recreation Centres. For many suburban neighbourhoods in Winnipeg this is the way to go. It provides economy of scale, there is more centralized delivery of programs, they have skilled volunteers, transportation is not an issue and most importantly it is sustainable because the disposable income available in these communities.

But we see almost the opposite in communities such as Kelvin. It is community made up of hard working people trying to ends meet on a daily basis, where personal time is limited, experience on volunteer boards is limited and the capacity of the community needs to be constantly built. It is a community that needs sustainable funding and sustainable services from the City. Taking their Community Centre away from them without viable alternatives is abandoning them. There has to be a better way!

We do know there is better way. We have examples in this City already. Norquay not so long ago was in the same situation as Kelvin. The Community Services Department invested the Community Development Branch into this Point Douglas community. Efforts were made to bring key community leaders together in Point Douglas and everyone worked towards the community operated centre. Today Norquay is back up and operating with the continuing support of the Community Services. Why is this not possible for Kelvin?

We suggest Council direct the Community Services Department to work with and support Kelvin residents to develop community driven programs and services in their neighbourhood. We also recommend Council ensure the Community Services Department has the internal resources to fulfill this mandate which the Department does not have at this time.

The residents of Kelvin are appealing to us as the greater community in Winnipeg to stand alongside and support them. We ask Council to help Kelvin residents help themselves and give them the opportunity to determine what their needs are in their own neighbourhood.

Thank-you Mr. Speaker!

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President
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