

**CANADIAN UNION OF PUBLIC EMPLOYEES
LOCAL 500**

SPEAKING NOTES SUBMITTED TO:

**STANDING POLICY COMMITTEE ON
PROTECTION & COMMUNITY SERVICES**

RE: POLICE ADVISORY BOARD REPORT



JULY 11th, 2007

CUPE LOCAL 500 SPEAKING NOTES submitted to Standing Policy Committee on Protection and Community Services – July 11th, 2007
RE: POLICE ADVISORY BOARD REPORT

Mr. Speaker, Your Worship, Councillors, thank-you for the opportunity to speak to this issue.

We would first like to state the discussion tonight is not directed at the members of the Police Service, who everyday try to do their job to the best of their ability on behalf of the citizens of Winnipeg. Our comments are directed to the system they presently work under and how the citizens they serve feel disenfranchised from the Police Service.

Why would CUPE Local 500 speak to this issue? Firstly, we are citizens too. Secondly, we work closely with our fellow citizens and share their concerns about a system that is at many times unresponsive to specific community needs within the City of Winnipeg.

CUPE Local 500 believes in citizen involvement. We have promoted this concept and will continue to advocate for participant democracy. Since Civic Government is the closest level of government to citizens, we believe citizens should have structures to participate in their local government on an on-going basis and not just every 4 years at the ballot box.

The Community Option that has been presented to the Standing Policy Committee on Protection and Community Services, revolves around a Police Advisory Board which could take on a primary responsibility for citizen input into their Police Department and the policing services delivered in our community. In particular, a Police Advisory Board would

seem to assure on-going public input into a key area of concern in most City of Winnipeg neighbourhoods; which is public safety.

However, in our opinion the model proposed will likely fail within a short period of time because it is strictly advisory.

Citizens want real input to effect necessary change in how Police Services are delivered to the City of Winnipeg. We believe such a structure does not take advantage of its citizens for the greater good and the public interest. We believe strongly a Police Commission involving citizens in decision making roles would benefit the City for the following reasons:

1. Citizens need and should be involved into on-going civic democracy. It is about having public debate and trying to gain consensus on how police services should be delivered to Winnipeg citizens. A Police Commission would have a direct link and focal point as a community structure for such citizen participation. We believe citizens should have direct and meaningful involvement into the type of Civic services they pay for through municipal taxes.
2. A Police Commission will facilitate an educational process for Winnipeg citizens and for the Police Service. This is a two-way dynamic badly needed in our community. As a Community Development Worker, I have seen many ad hoc attempts to create understanding between citizen groups and the Police Service with at times very frustrating results. A Police Commission would help to resolve this issue over time.

3. A truly community based Police Commission will have many spin-offs such as: building public confidence in the civic political process and a greater appreciation of the men and women who provide all of us daily police services. It will also facilitate in building bridges into specific communities (i.e. Aboriginal, African, etc).

We already have the citizen infrastructure to make this happen with Neighbourhood Associations, Community Safety Committees and Biz Associations. There is a vast array of talented, hard working citizens in these groups who should be given the opportunity to be nominated and if chosen actively participate in the decision making of a Police Commission.

We also must not forget to include on the Police Commission, representatives of the rank and file members of the Police Service because their input would be invaluable.

4. We also believe the Police Commission will be a buffer for various political issues and entities and also for the Police Department.

Local 500 is on record with the Standing Policy Committee on Protection and Community Services regarding participant democracy, when we proposed a citizen parks board. So, we agree wholeheartedly with a community proposed Police Commission and are here in support of our fellow citizens.

Thank-you!

Speaking notes submitted by:

Gary Swanson
CUPE Local 500
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cc: Central Council

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