

CITY COUNCIL #25-76

July 15, 1976.

A Special Meeting of Council was held this evening when the following members were present - His Worship Mayor G. Parisien, Aldermen M. Holden, J. Pescod, A. Lebano, K. Bough, G. Cameron, F. Guindon, L. Keen, B. Lynch, R. Pearson, G. Samson, A. LeBlanc and R. Aubry.

The purpose of the meeting was to give an opportunity to private individuals and organizations to voice their opinion of the recently instituted One-way Street System.

Mayor Parisien suggested certain ground rules to ensure that the meeting proceeds in an orderly manner. One spokesman from any organization or group, or private individuals would be allowed to speak only once, first stating their names and whom they represented. Council members may seek clarification on any points raised. No action motions should be made but rather members of Council should prepare any motions for discussion at the next regular meeting of Council, which would include Mr. Knight's report dated July 13, 1976.

It was moved by Alderman Lynch, seconded by Alderman Aubry, that the above rules be followed. Carried.

Mayor Parisien commented that statements have been made that this is Mr. Knight's one-way street system when in fact Mr. Knight has merely updated and, at Council's request, implemented the system which had its beginnings in 1965.

Messrs. Hamilton and Knight read their reports dated July 15, 1976 and July 13, 1976, respectively, which will be presented to Council at its next regular meeting.

Mayor Parisien was advised today by the Chief of Police that the system is working very well and that the Police Department is in favour of the system.

Mr. G. Robertson, Transit Manager, was called upon for his comments and stated that of all departments affected by the system, the Transit was affected the most. From his point of view the system as planned is working extremely well and to the benefit of the Transit Department and its patrons.

Mr. Tom Hewton, with the firm of Damas and Smith, was involved with the Traffic Operation Study in 1974. The study determined that there was a traffic problem and that its source lay in narrow streets. To solve it required more pavement width by -

1. eliminating all parking on streets (economically feasible but not popular), or
2. widening existing streets (too expensive), or
3. converting existing streets into one-way system (offered immediate solution to the problem at moderate cost).

At one time Pitt and Sydney Streets were considered as north and south one-way pair. Since Pitt led directly to the central business area with a proposed mall within certain blocks, Sydney and Augustus were recommended as a one-way pair with Pitt as two-way up to a point. This was more economically feasible than extending Sydney and Augustus northerly.

Mr. Hewton added that 17 municipalities have adopted the one-way system which met with some opposition initially. However, within a matter of months the opposition had disappeared completely. Only one municipality has since reverted part of its system to two-way. His general conclusion is that the system has an initial effect on business however, after a time business often increases.

Mr. John Trew of the Ministry of Transportation and Communications next voiced his views on the system. The Provincial Government funded the study to the tune of 75%. He stated that traffic measures should always be taken for the good of the community and should be implemented with that thought in mind. In his opinion the system offers considerable advantages -

1. carries a greater capacity of traffic
2. as the system settles down speeding will level off
3. reduction in accidents, especially head-on collisions
4. the pedestrian benefits since there are fewer pedestrian accidents.

Mr. Trew counselled Council to be cautious, to try and eliminate the few problems encountered rather than eliminate the system altogether.

Mr. Ellery Maloney acted as spokesman for a number of merchants on Pitt between Fifth and Thirteenth. A petition dated June 16th signed by 55 of the 57 merchants in the area, all concerned about a decrease in their business. He added that they are not protesting against the one-way system in general, only that part of Pitt Street between Fifth and Thirteenth Sts. In his opinion, unless we revert to two-way on Pitt we are driving the shoppers away from the downtown area and they consider themselves part of the downtown.

Mrs. Debra Ouderkirk operates Mac's Milk on Sixth Street. She stated that the company did not want to grant them the franchise for the outlet when it was learned that the one-way system was coming into effect. It is her understanding that the outlet near Thirteenth has had a decrease in business of approximately 45% since the system came into effect. Mrs. Ouderkirk complained of the difficulty for a pedestrian to cross on a one-way street and also the noise from speeding cars on Sydney Street.

Mr. Paul Duffy spoke on behalf of senior citizens. He asked that something be done at the intersections of Fifth and Pitt and Second and Pitt for the safe crossing of pedestrians. He felt that the "walk" signals did not stay on long enough.

Mr. Knight explained the new "walk" signal. The white silhouette of walking man indicates that pedestrians can leave the curb; the flashing hand allows pedestrians to walk from curb to curb; the solid hand indicates no pedestrian crossing.

Alderman LeBlanc stated that he had received complaints in connection with the pedestrian crossing at McConnell and Montreal Road.

Mr. W. Wilson stated that he does not disagree with one-way streets but does disagree with our system as it stands now. His main opposition is the intersection of Fifth and Pitt. He also suggested a stop sign at Sixth and Sydney to slow down the traffic.

Mr. J.S. Johnston, 231 Sydney St., spoke in favour of the one-way system. He felt it was too early to decide whether or not the system was working.

Mr. Doug Gordon, Fifth St. W., stated he was not against the one-way system but the speeding along Fifth St. He felt that if a stop sign was erected at York it would slow the traffic down somewhat.

Mr. Jim Freeman complained of the length of time to get to and from a place of business on Sixth St. since the inception of the one-way system. He expressed opposition to the intersection of Fifth and Pitt.

It was pointed out to Mr. Freeman that the volume of traffic in the downtown core should be reduced once Water Street is open.

Victor Vallee, cyclist, pedestrian and driver, is not against the one-way system. However, he does feel that the situation at Fifth and Pitt is terrible. There are two parallel streets going one-way south but in his opinion Augustus Street will not be used because of all the stop signs. He thinks the system is good, however, Pitt St. should be two ways or one way all the way to Water. If some of the stops were eliminated on Augustus then Pitt could be two-way. He could see no purpose for Pitt being one-way between Ninth and Thirteenth since the pavement has been widened and there is no parking on either side of Pitt between Ninth and Eleventh.

Mr. Oscar Cashion who teaches driver education feels that one-way streets is part of growing up as a City. Although he agrees with some of the comments made, consideration should be given to the benefits to the community as a whole and not the individual. He also feels that an educational program on the system would be beneficial. In his opinion, the intersection of Fifth and Pitt is objectionable and Thirteenth and Sydney should also be reconsidered.

Mr. G. Assaly spoke as a citizen and merchant. He stated he was not against the system but did not like being told it could not be improved. If the problems are so obvious, they should not be allowed to remain for another 6 months or a year.

Mr. Gerald Lauzon, Birmingham St., expressed his objection to the situation at Fifth and Pitt. If the mall on Pitt is not to materialize, he would like to see Pitt St. one-way all the way to Water.

Wes Libbey expressed opposition to Pitt being one way between Fifth and Thirteenth and felt that York instead should be one-way south from Eleventh. For the duration of construction on Montreal Road and Water he felt that parking should be eliminated on Second between Sydney and Augustus. He also felt that the lights at Pitt and Second should be changed to allow pedestrian crossing east-west and north-south simultaneously.

Mr. Maurice Snider, Eleventh St., favoured two-way traffic all the way on Pitt. He suggested opening some of the streets from the mills to eliminate congestion on Second.

Mr. Kevin Gault representing the Downtown Businessmen's Association presented a report on a survey of downtown businesses compiled as of July 5, 1976. He stated that the Association supports everything that has been said and requests that Council consider all suggestions made this evening.

Mr. Clem Charrette stated he is 99.9% in favour of the system and congratulated Council on the action taken. If experience proves the system needs improvement, then by all means change it.

Mrs. Theresa Johnson who lives on Amelia between Seventh and Eighth complained of the difficulty of getting out of and into the area since the introduction of the one-way system. It was suggested that the residents in that area petition Council to extend Seventh and revert Amelia to two-way between Seventh and Ninth.

Mr. Cal Preddie feels there is no cause to question the benefits of the one-way system. He doubts that business is suffering merely because of the one-way system. No matter what changes are made it will cause someone to suffer.

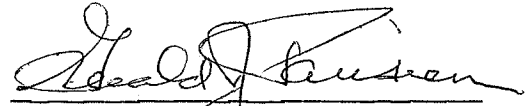
Mr. Leo Givogue feels that it is now easier to get downtown and back out again since the introduction of the one-way system. He does feel, however, that more educational programs are required, and that the lack of parking could be the cause of some of the problems downtown. He stated he is in favour of the system.

Since no one else expressed a desire to speak, Mayor Parisien advised that Council would take time to consider all comments made before making any changes, if any.

Sidewalk Reconstruction - Montreal Road

Moved by Alderman Guindon, seconded by Alderman LeBlanc, that the report of J.B.C. Meikle dated July 13, 1976 be received and adopted and that a copy be sent by registered mail to Mr. R. Brunet. Carried.


Clerk


Mayor