

**Kyrstie Green (WPCL) & Councillor Michael Janz
Ace Coffee**

26 Feb 2024

3.30PM-4:00PM

Questions

In our ongoing effort to keep Windsor Park residents informed, we had the opportunity to speak with Councillor Michael Janz regarding some of the pressing concerns raised by our community members. Here's a summary of our discussion:

Parking and Traffic Issues - Sue & Chris Neufeld:

Question 1: What is the current plan or strategy in place to address the parking and traffic concerns within Windsor Park?

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Question 2: How do you intend to balance the needs of residents with the potential influx of university traffic and visitors?

Question 3: Are there any ongoing discussions or considerations regarding implementing local traffic-only zones to alleviate the issues mentioned by residents?

Question 4: How do you plan to address safety concerns related to changes in parking restrictions, particularly in light of examples like Saskatchewan Drive?

Question 5: Are there any plans to involve the community in decision-making processes regarding parking policies and traffic management initiatives?

Climate Change and Sustainable Development - Isobel Grundy:

Question 1: What are the current policies or guidelines in place regarding sustainability and climate considerations for new residential developments in Edmonton?

Question 2: How receptive is the city council to implementing stricter requirements, such as EV plug-ins, stringent insulation standards, and renewable energy usage, in new construction projects?

Question 3: Are there any ongoing initiatives or discussions within the council to address the environmental impact of urban development, including the preservation of mature trees?

Question 4: How do you plan to balance the need for sustainable development with the economic considerations and interests of developers?

Question 5: What avenues are available for community members to advocate for stronger environmental protections and sustainable practices in residential development projects?

Removal of Boundary Lines - Elaine Solez:

Question 1: Can you provide insights into the rationale behind the decision to remove boundary lines on nodes and corridors in the district plans?

Question 2: How was community input considered in the decision-making process regarding the removal of boundary lines?

Question 3: What alternatives or compromises are being explored to address the concerns raised by residents while aligning with the broader goals of the district plans?

Question 4: How do you plan to ensure ongoing collaboration between residents, local government, and urban planning committees to address concerns and promote sustainable development?

Question 5: Can you address residents' concerns about the perceived inconsistency between district plans and city plans, particularly regarding specificity and alignment?

Hawrelak Park Steps - Lynn Wolff

Closing Remarks:

We appreciate Councillor Janz taking the time to address these important community concerns. As Windsor Park residents, it's crucial that we continue to engage with our local government to ensure our voices are heard and our neighborhood thrives. Stay tuned for updates and further opportunities for community involvement.

Summary of Conversation

On 24th Feb, our VP met with Cllr Janz to talk about issues related to parking, traffic, sustainability, development and other community concerns from neighbours in the Windsor Park neighbourhood. Important points covered included parking and traffic challenges near the UofA campus, the city's growth and sustainable transportation goals, issues around green building standards and climate change policies being restricted by provincial regulations, the Hawrelak steps, mosquito control and homelessness in our City.

Residents should continue to document parking/ traffic and other complaints and issues with 311 calls and emails/ calls to his office and should continue to report crimes and suspicious persons to the non-emergency police line.

Text from Interview:

Kyrstie: Michael, nice to meet you. I've made a little summary of the questions I've received from our neighbours, and the first about parking and traffic issues in Windsor Park. What is the current plan or strategy in place to address parking and traffic concerns within Windsor Park?

Cllr Janz: Yeah, so it's a big one. I mean, as we were talking about earlier, the Windsor Park is a very desirable neighbourhood, very close to the U of A, and we have a lot of traffic challenges, both with people coming and going to the U of A, students, staff and families, but then also the folks who are coming from downtown and going elsewhere. So, the problems at Windsor Park are really the problems of the whole core of our city as we grow, and as we grow to be a city of two million people. In the last two years alone, Edmonton has grown by 70 ,000 people, so we are growing dramatically, and one of my goals is that that cannot mean 70,000 new cars. We need to offer people alternatives, and, you know, we've actually seen a 20% ridership in bus growth, year over year, so we're seeing more people riding the bus, we're making more investments in active transportation. We've got people walking, wheeling, biking, etc. That is the only way we will solve traffic problems. The problem is we can't widen the roads, and it's ultimately about moving people out of cars and giving them choices and getting them to live differently.

Kyrstie: And how do you intend to balance the needs of residents within Windsor Park and with this increase of university traffic or visitors to the University and Hospital area>

Cllr Janz: It's a mix of education, enforcement and alternatives. It's also making sure a lot of folks, I noticed, I don't know, I live in Garneau and every September I see the new students arriving here in Garneau and you see them looking, they don't know where to park. Some of it is education, letting them know that you have to go to the university car park or simply that you can't park in a particular place. Also, ticketing the folks who are continued repeat offenders, who disrespect neighbors, driveways or spaces.

Kyrstie: Okay, are there any ongoing discussions or considerations regarding implementing local traffic only zones to alleviate some of the issues that are being felt or the concerns that residents might have?

Cllr Janz: Not that I'm aware of, no. There's not many of those in the city of Edmonton. It sometimes says "local traffic only" but that's almost impossible to enforce too. And especially when folks may be driving through Windsor Park or going along Saskatchewan Drive, maybe they are just wanting to see the view or maybe they're wanting to go jogging or hiking. There's a lot of mountain bikes as well, too. But for the most part, most of the concerns that my office receives are related to the U of A and folks just honestly needing to be moved on to campus. Paying for parking is just part of life.

Kyrstie: Do you see that in Windsor Park then? Paid parking?

Cllr Janz: I would see more on campus. The people are trying to park on Windsor Park because they don't want to pay on campus. We're seeing more in two hour zones.

Kyrstie: how do you plan to address safety concerns related to changes in parking restrictions particularly in the light of examples like Saskatchewan Drive?

Cllr Janz: There's been a couple of instances where I've been pushing for parts like lighted cross-walks so that people can cross safely. I'm not sure if that's what they're referring to. It could be. T

Kyrstie: The next question is related to climate change and sustainable development.

Cllr Janz: Can I go back to that one just for one second? So the one thing I'd say is like if you have a concern it's really important to document it with 311 because they have a triage of all the intersections where they have complaints and all the crossings they have complaints. So people are saying there's an issue at like 116th Street, you need to know that because then that can be factored into their triage, right? And so really urging residents to document, email my office, call 311, do that report. I can track solutions for it all.

Kyrstie: So, climate change and sustainable development. Isabelle is asking about policies and guidelines regarding sustainability and climate considerations for new residential developments and how receptive the city might be to stricter requirements for things like EV plugins or installation standards, renewable energy usage in construction projects, that sort of thing.

Cllr Janz: So I would love all of those things. The problem is it's not in the city's control. Much of it is in the perpetual building code and what we're dealing with right now is there's like five levels of energy efficiency and right now the government is set to be at level one and then we'll be slowly moving up to two, three, four and five would be like the full net zero. So we as a city we can't say you have to have a heat pump, you have to have net zero. The province took the city's power away.

Kyrstie: How are you then able to plan the need to go for sustainable development with the interests of the developers? The economic considerations against the interests of the developers?

Cllr Janz: It's sort of kind of out of our hands. That being said, we can still educate people. For example, tell them "do you know that when you're building a new home and you spend an extra say \$5 ,000 or \$10 ,000 at the beginning and put it in insulation, it's way cheaper and you'll pay that back in your energy bills in months?".

Kyrstie: So you've already talked about the ways that community members can advocate for stronger environmental protections. That would be just to keep writing the letters to the right people.

Cllr Janz: Yeah, it's the provincial ministers. We're really angry that they took away these powers. We're actually talking about it tomorrow at City Council. It's at our Urban Planning Committee where we're expressing our frustrations.

Kyrstie: Brilliant. Okay, so we'd like some information and some clarification about the removal of the boundary lines in the city plan and the district plan and the differences between them. Can you provide insights into the rationale behind the decision to remove boundary lines

on nodes and corridors in the district plans? We are very concerned about the perceived inconsistencies between the district plans and the city plans, particularly regarding the specificity and alignment. I guess were asking for insights behind the decisions to remove those boundary lines on nodes and corridors in the district plans.

Michael: I guess this is the tension we're holding. So, we want to have a city plan that guides development, but at the end of the day, there's a bit of art and a bit of science in that. If you have an owner who has a spot and they say, "I want to build a new street market" like they did in Ritchie with Ritchie Four Corners, that spot there ended up catalyzing a lot of other areas that it became. Suddenly that put Ritchie on the map and a lot of other areas were coming in because of that. They wanted to be around there the same way. We know the U of A is a magnet and a lot of people want to live around the U of A and in that area. So we know that there's always interest in the U of A. I think what we're trying to find out is how do you give a sense of predictability and reliability to community while anticipating that at any point you as a homeowner have the right to rezone your home and change it into a duplex or something, right? We're trying to find those balances of, how do you grow as a city while still respecting the needs of local residents? If we're too strict, if we're just saying only this street then that's not necessarily helpful either. So I think this is the tension we're talking about around the nodes and corridors. I think the feeling was that removing the lines was that the lines were, they just like city clients said, two and a half or five blocks or whatever. But then that didn't necessarily make sense in all places.

Kyrstie: So how was community input was considered in the decision -making process regarding the removal of those boundary lines?

Cllr Janz: So those boundary lines were were a draft from the administration that came forward. Over 80 ,000 Edmontonians were engaged in the creation of city clients. And then the administration brought these district clients in and said, "here's what we think they should look lik"e. And then everyone was like, "well, that's not helpful either, that's not clear". If youre asking why doesn't the city just. mandate that that site is developed now? But ultimately if you own that site you can't do that unless the developer has the money. I talked to another director -

they own one of the holes and they said yeah we want to build it but our the interest rates just went up & our construction prices, and we we can't do anything right now. Another one - there was a partnership and then a divorce and now now they're splitting it up in court. So we the citizens want to see action on that site right now, but it's very challenging.

Kyrstie: What alternatives or compromises are being explored to address the concerns raised by residents while aligning the broader goals?

Cllr Janz: It hasn't come to the council table yet so I don't have an answer for that.

Kyrstie: How do you plan to ensure ongoing collaboration between residents, local government and planning committees to address concerns and promote sustainable development to address these concerns and to promote sustainable development?

Cllr Janz: By constantly trying to reach out and connect to as many community leagues as possible, talking to other groups as well too, talking to students, staff groups, talking to new staff, coming to the U of A, trying to just keep doing engagement. I'm trying to engage through going to different events, hosting different events, and trying to get Windsor Park residents, not just to think about development within Windsor Park, but development across the whole city. One of the issues I'm passionate about is we have to stop urban sprawl. We have to stop consuming farmland and all these other pieces. So helping to get neighbors to realize that they have skin in the game, not just in development decisions around the university, but the whole city that all of our grandchildren are going to be flat broke if we keep building all the way around the airport.

Kyrstie: So another WP resident asks "what is the city doing about mosquitos?"

Cllr Janz: So we are spending over close to \$700 ,000 on spring mosquitoes inside city limits. What we're not doing is flying a helicopter out in spring ponds outside of city limits. Chances are that the mosquito was born within a hundred meters of your house, it probably came from your own

backyard or from your neighbors yard. So what we're doing is trying to make sure everyone is very diligent about bodies of water in their own yard and space. Do you have a fountain? Do you have a pond? Mosquitoes are a nuisance for sure, but spraying toxic chemicals that are probably carcinogenic and probably leading to all sorts of neurodegenerative diseases is also not the way to go here. The number one thing with mosquitoes is, it's mostly related to rainwater.

Kyrstie: Windsor Park residents are very keen to know what's happening with the Hawrelak Park staircase. What can you tell us? We have really missed those stairs.

Cllr Janz: I believe the staircase is going back in this spring and I believe it's going in early. (That said, I need to just get that in writing for you). But they're moving well on it. I was not happy with the whole Hawrelak project, but it looks like it's going to be done on time (at the moment). Actually, there's been some videos - they've had drones going over it. You should check them out!

Closing time at ACE Coffee means the interview is now being conducted outside the cafe at -18C. Time to wrap it up. Quick.

Kyrstie: Well, thanks so much for meeting me on this cold, snowy day. We really appreciate you taking the time to address these important concerns. As Windsor Park residents, it's crucial we continue to engage with you and all our local government representatives to make sure our voices are heard and that our neighbourhood continues to thrive.

Cllr Janz: Great! See you in Windsor Park.

At least, I think thats what he said (our faces were pretty frozen by this point.

End.