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(Hansard)**

Thursday 11 April 2013

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Jeudi 11 avril 2013

**Standing Committee on
Justice Policy**

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE POLICY

COMITÉ PERMANENT DE LA JUSTICE

Thursday 11 April 2013

Jeudi 11 avril 2013

The committee met at 0830 in room 151.

MEMBERS' PRIVILEGES

The Chair (Mr. Shafiq Qadri): Chers collègues, j'appelle à l'ordre cette réunion de notre comité de la justice.

As you know, we're here to consider energy infrastructure hearings. I gratefully acknowledge our interim Clerk, Tonia Grannum, and I would invite the committee to welcome her.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Hoo, hoo, hoo.

The Chair (Mr. Shafiq Qadri): Perhaps in a somewhat more restrained fashion, Mr. Fedeli. In any case, we appreciate your enthusiasm.

CONCERNED HOMEOWNERS FOR INTELLIGENT POWER

The Chair (Mr. Shafiq Qadri): We invite the witness to please come forward: Mr. Stephen Thompson, political advocate for Concerned Homeowners for Intelligent Power, and invite you to be sworn in.

Mr. Bob Delaney: Chair, just before we get under way, may I ask whether or not the requested documents from witness Bruce Sharp have been submitted at this time?

The Chair (Mr. Shafiq Qadri): Have documents from witness Bruce Sharp, I believe an NDP-summoned energy expert—

The Clerk Pro Tem (Ms. Tonia Grannum): Not yet.

Mr. Bob Delaney: May I request that the Chair, through the Clerk, send Mr. Sharp a reminder to table the documents that he offered to provide?

The Chair (Mr. Shafiq Qadri): Sure, and that would be, as you know, the second reminder.

With that, Mr. Thompson, I invite you to please be sworn in.

The Clerk Pro Tem (Ms. Tonia Grannum): Do you solemnly swear that the evidence you shall give to this committee touching on the subject of the present inquiry shall be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

Mr. Stephen Thompson: I do.

The Chair (Mr. Shafiq Qadri): We'll start with the government side: Ms. Albanese, 20 minutes.

Mrs. Laura Albanese: Thank you, Chair, and thank you for being with us here, Mr. Thompson.

I think it's been clear that your organization strongly opposed this plant because it was too close to homes and health care facilities and had a negative impact on the environment; that's my understanding. So I'm wondering if you could elaborate on that and also tell us a little bit about what in your mind would have been the cost to the community if the plant had gone ahead.

Mr. Stephen Thompson: How do you want me to start, and where do you want me to start?

Mrs. Laura Albanese: I did say why I think your organization was opposed. Do you want to elaborate on that and what it meant to the community?

Mr. Stephen Thompson: But you understood my role with regard to CHIP, Laura? Do you understand what I was responsible for?

Mrs. Laura Albanese: Yes.

Mr. Stephen Thompson: So I was responsible for the political advocate. I was the one that got in touch with—

Mrs. Laura Albanese: So you would know this very well.

Mr. Stephen Thompson: —politicians and members of Parliament and city council members, the mayor. So, as far as the cost to the residents, I don't know what the cost was going to be; I couldn't determine that. I know that the health impact, in the proximity to residential homes and to a hospital, in my opinion would have been a negative aspect. I think it would have been a deterrent to the value of property both in and around the surrounding area.

From what I understand, the city of Mississauga owned land just to the south of the subject property, and they were planning and the proposal is to provide soccer fields, lacrosse fields, baseball diamonds; and having a gas-fired generating station within 100 yards of a sports facility, in my opinion, would have been a deterrent also. You know, there's lots of costs involved in every aspect of that, Laura.

Mrs. Laura Albanese: Should we say, then, that the cost would have been a poor quality of life for life?

Mr. Stephen Thompson: Well, it's a poor quality no matter which way you look at it. I've been reading through a lot of the transcripts, and what people have been saying, including our own illustrious mayor—and I get a little perturbed at the fact that people are concerned about a power plant being put on Loreland Avenue, and then there was the plant that was supposedly supposed to go in Oakville or the one on Winston Churchill south of

Royal Windsor in Mississauga. This has been going on since 1999 in the city of Mississauga. I got involved in this, Laura, only because of the fact that there was a company called EPCOR that wanted to build a power plant on the corner of Haines and Middlegate, and it just happened to be that my grandfather used to own the property. With that, the residents of Applewood Acres—a number of them phoned me up and asked me to get involved. That was back in 2003. Obviously, I've been doing this a lot longer than most of the people who've been coming to the committee, except for people like Boyd Upper and Rob Burton, who were involved in the 1999 decision when the city of Mississauga had Sithe Corp. come in and propose to put two plants in Mississauga, one on Winston Churchill south of Royal Windsor in Mississauga and the other on Goreway up in Brampton.

Mrs. Laura Albanese: But in your opinion, you would agree that the government made the right decision to relocate the power plant?

Mr. Stephen Thompson: Absolutely.

Mrs. Laura Albanese: So it's clear that through CHIP you represented a large number of residents opposing the siting of the plant.

Mr. Stephen Thompson: Yes.

Mrs. Laura Albanese: Could you put a number on the size of the opposition?

Mr. Stephen Thompson: How do you put a number on the size of an opposition?

Mrs. Laura Albanese: Was it the majority of residents, would you say?

Mr. Stephen Thompson: Okay, Laura; the problem is that there's no communication with anybody. I find that going through listening to people and talking to people, especially politicians, there's ministries in this government—no matter if it's the Conservatives, the NDP, the Liberals, the Green Party or whoever it is, nobody wants to communicate with each other. They sit in their little silos, and the Ministry of Energy doesn't talk to the Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Health doesn't talk to the Ministry of the Environment, and everybody goes around and does their own little thing.

There's no communication also when you go out and you start talking to the public. We knew nothing about this. The only way that we found out about it was that EPCOR actually reached out to the community and said, "We're planning on doing this." We had no communication with Eastern Power. There was no documentation with regard to Eastern Power. It was a struggle trying to get information from Eastern Power.

Laura, I can sit here for hours and discuss what was right and what was wrong. The community outreach after we started getting involved—we had no help from the media whatsoever. You had one of our committee members here, Greg Rohn, and it seems like we were being portrayed as NIMBYists. It was all about NIMBY. I met a lot of people through what was going on. I actually met Mr. Tabuns down on Queen Street at a community centre when the government was planning on putting a

gas-fired generating station down in the port lands down in Toronto.

We reached out to a lot of communities and I spent a lot of time going and talking to a lot of people. Over time I think it was—Laura, I would say in the thousands.

Mrs. Laura Albanese: Now, you may know that part of this committee's mandate is to review all factors that led to the cancellation. Those factors include promises by all three political parties during the 2011 election. I'm not sure, but I would believe that you've been watching this issue closely over the past year.

The opposition, you may know, has consistently blamed the government for the costs associated with the relocation of the plant and at the same time not taking, let's say, any responsibility for the fact that they also committed to the people of Mississauga to cancel the plant during the election. Regardless of who won the election, the people of your community were assured by all three parties that if they were elected they would stop or move the plant. Do you believe that the other parties should also have some responsibility to their campaign commitments?

Mr. Stephen Thompson: You know, sitting here, Laura, it's a little disappointing, because I have an energy critic who is not here who is a member of Parliament for the Conservatives. It's unfortunate that Mr. Yakabuski isn't here to defend himself because we had a meeting with Mr. Yakabuski out in Mississauga, who didn't have a problem with the power plant.

We had a rally where more than 1,400 people showed up. That was the first rally. The second rally that we held, at Le Treport in Mississauga, we invited all parties. It didn't matter if you were Green, NDP, Conservative. We got nothing—zero help from the opposition. The NDP: They reached out a little bit. But at the end of the day, the only politician that really stood in our minds as doing something was Charles Sousa.

0840

You know, we asked for Laurel Broten's help when she was the Minister of the Environment. We got enormous help from Donna. We asked for help from Mr. Smitherman. When he was Minister of Health we had a meeting with him. We had a meeting with Mr. Gerretsen. So, at the end of the day, Laura, I don't think that at any point in time the Conservatives came to the table and said, "You know what? We're going to help you guys out. We think this is a wrong decision."

It's unfortunate it comes down to the fact that it's a cost factor instead of a health factor and a right-decision factor. People make mistakes in life, and it's unfortunate that we as citizens are not aware of what goes on behind closed doors down here in Queen's Park, but when it comes time for making the right decision, I think that the decision to close the plant and to move it to another location was right. But there are a lot of other factors that are part of that, Laura, in the sense that: Why was the proponent even picked?

You know, back in 2001 the deputy minister of the province had a meeting and a conference down at Toron-

to Convention Centre discussing how that this plan was going to be put into place and how it was going to be proposed, who the proponents were, their financial backing, if they've ever built a plant before. So there are other decisions that should have been associated with that decision.

We were in a situation where we had to go to a library and photocopy thousands and thousands of documents because the proponent only had to do a limited amount of things, and they did it to that standard. We were out with the understanding from the Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry of Energy and the OPA that they were supposed to have a monthly meeting with all the residents. It was only after we started pressuring them that they had that meeting. All of a sudden, they have one meeting; they invited maybe 30 people and hundreds of them showed up; couldn't fit in the room. It got all chaotic. The police were called. There was nothing going wrong with it; we weren't pounding on the desk, screaming and yelling; it was very civilized in the way that we approached everything.

Mrs. Laura Albanese: So finally, in the middle of the 2011 election, Tim Hudak sent your organization a letter, which you quoted in a press release on September 27 of that same year. Mr. Hudak told CHIP, "We will not build this power plant if we are asked to form government." Would you agree that, while it took them, I guess, a very long time to get to that point, the PC finally committed to CHIP and that a Tim Hudak government would have cancelled the plant?

Mr. Stephen Thompson: Let's be clear on this, Laura: In 1999 the Conservatives were in power. In 1999, if they had come back to power we were getting a power plant in Mississauga. Boyd Upper and Rob Burton fought against that plant. I was not aware of it. I wasn't told by city council. I wasn't told by our councillor. Our mayor had an idea that this was going on. Obviously, the Conservatives didn't have a problem, through the meetings that we had with Mr. Yakabuski—he didn't see a problem with the plant. He didn't see a problem with the location of the plant.

So there's sort of a contradiction going on here. We asked for help from the Conservatives. We wanted their opinion and their views, but all of a sudden, because, uh-oh, you know, they may be losing some seats—to us it didn't matter who was in Parliament. It didn't matter who the MPP was. It didn't matter who was sitting at that table. The fact of the matter is that we asked for help from everybody; it didn't matter who. You know, we didn't have a specific party; we just wanted help, and we got that help. We really did, and thank God that we did get the plant finally closed. But as far as I'm concerned, I don't think Mr. Hudak helped at all. We had one of our members, Greg Rohn, who was here, who actually approached him at a meeting and said to him, "Can you help us out?" and he ignored him. How do you ignore somebody when you're trying to get your candidate elected and he sits at an all-candidates meeting?

Mario Pascucci, the chair of the Catholic school board, stood up at that meeting and said to Geoff Janoscik, who

was the candidate running for the Conservatives, "Why did you not show up at the rally?" His answer was, "Well, my boss told me to go out and door-knock." And with that, Mario said, "You mean, Mr. Hudak told you to stay home and not go?" "No, my wife told me not to go." That was the kind of candour, sort of flippant attitude, that we were getting from the Conservatives.

So you know what? At the end of the day, Laura, I'm not saying that I'm happy with the decision of the power plant going to Mississauga. I'm not happy with the fact that there's a cost involved in it. I'm looking at all factors involved in this: right location, right proponent, right conditions. That's what I'm looking for, and that's what we were fighting for.

Mrs. Laura Albanese: One of the things that we are supposed to do in the committee is really to change—and Premier Wynne has specifically committed that there be more local decision-making in the siting of energy infrastructure. What role would you see your organizations, the ones like CHIP, play in a process like this, moving forward? What would be your recommendation?

Mr. Stephen Thompson: What's the recommendation of a committee like CHIP or an organization like CHIP?

Mrs. Laura Albanese: No. In the future—

Mr. Stephen Thompson: I don't think the organization—

Mrs. Laura Albanese: What I'm saying is, in siting of plants in the future, what role do you think that local organizations like CHIP should play?

Mr. Stephen Thompson: I don't think any role. I think the politicians who get elected should make the right decision. We elect people to do and make decisions based on the intelligent facts that are put in front of them. Okay?

Was it the right decision to put a power plant on Loreland Avenue? I don't remember having a blackout ever since they closed coal-fired generating stations. Lights are still on. The electricity's still running. Was it a right decision to pick that location? No. But for having a role in terms of—yes, you should have some sort of communication with the community. There has to be some outreach to them.

Mrs. Laura Albanese: Okay.

Mr. Stephen Thompson: We got a power plant in Mississauga because of two stupid words in a zoning bylaw: "power generation." Those words were changed only after the fact that the city of Mississauga realized, "Oh, you know what? They can build a power plant." The Vogts and Eastern Power, they did what they needed to do, but the city of Mississauga knew in 1999 when they had Sithe Corp. come to the city of Mississauga to build a power plant on Winston Churchill south of Royal Windsor. The zoning in that land was exactly the zoning on Loreland Avenue. So why did it take the city of Mississauga until 2006 to start looking at their overall plan of where power plants could actually go?

Our illustrious mayor came down here and sort of went on and on—I don't know if she confused you

people, but you know what? We had four proponents come to Mississauga to build power plants—sorry; three in Mississauga and one in Oakville. The one in Oakville won. Was it the right decision? No. Eastern Power had three locations in Mississauga. Unfortunately, Eastern Power didn't have the finances or the wherewithal to go ahead and proceed with that. We fought for years to make sure that your government understood, Laura, that they didn't have the financing.

So there's underlying issues that I'd like answers for. I'm a voter. I'm a taxpayer in the province of Ontario. At the end of the day, there's decisions that have been made that we never will—I don't know if the answers will ever come out. I'd like to know why Eastern Power was ever chosen and why we have JoAnne Butler and Amir Shalaby coming out to Mississauga and explaining to us that, "There's community outreach and we're trying to help out." Well, you know what? If the OPA decided and JoAnne went forward with some of the recommendations that we made—the main one is limiting distance to residential neighbourhoods. Laura, to be honest, I think this could have been nipped in the bud a long, long time ago. I don't know why it got to the point where it is now. It is. We have to live with it. Move forward.

You know, Hazel came down here and said, "Let's get on with business." We have a mayor in the city of Mississauga who came down to Queen's Park behind everybody's back, never communicated with the community, trying to cut a deal with Enersource/OPG to put a power plant back down at Lakeview. Why? This is our city, Hazel. It doesn't belong to you; it belongs to us. So when you go and start making decisions without community involvement—you asked me that question earlier, Laura.

0850 Mrs. Laura Albanese: Yes.

Mr. Stephen Thompson: What community involvement was there? None; zero. It was only us communicating with Hazel and telling her what was going on in city council and giving her the facts that we actually came to a decision. Thank God we didn't get a plant back down at Lakeview. Yes, okay, the infrastructure is there, but you know what? Was it the right location? No. We have a beautiful waterfront in Mississauga and we want to return it back to the way it should be—power plants gone. We don't need them anymore.

I think there's also the issue, Laura, of the fact that transmission lines need to be reviewed and where they could be going and how that power can be—

The Chair (Mr. Shafiq Qadri): One minute. Go ahead.

Mrs. Laura Albanese: Yes, one minute left.

Mr. Stephen Thompson: I can't keep going?

Mrs. Laura Albanese: For one minute.

Mr. Stephen Thompson: I'm good.

Mrs. Laura Albanese: You're good. Okay. Chair, we'll save the time for the next round if it's only a minute.

The Chair (Mr. Shafiq Qadri): You forfeit the time. Thank you.

To the PC side, Mr. Fedeli.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Thank you very much, Mr. Thompson, for being here today.

Mr. Stephen Thompson: You're welcome.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: A couple of other issues that this committee is looking at in addition to what our colleagues across the way were speaking about are the cost of the way the Liberal government went about doing the cancellation and moving it, and then about the—we don't have all the documents. It's very clear. So there's a cover-up of the documents.

Let me ask you two questions: Do you know anything about the total cost of either the Oakville or the Mississauga move, the total cost to move either the Oakville or Mississauga plant to the spots they ended up in? Do you know anything about the cost of this scandal?

Mr. Stephen Thompson: No.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Do you know anything about who ordered the cover-up of documents?

Mr. Stephen Thompson: No.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Thank you, Chair.

The Chair (Mr. Shafiq Qadri): Thank you, Mr. Fedeli.

To the NDP: Mr. Tabuns.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Mr. Natyshak.

The Chair (Mr. Shafiq Qadri): Mr. Natyshak.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Thank you, Mr. Thompson, for being here. Thanks for your impassioned—

Mr. Stephen Thompson: I'm a passionate guy.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: That's good. You have to be, in a scenario like this.

You said in questions from Ms. Albanese that politicians should make the right decisions from the outset.

Mr. Stephen Thompson: Yes.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I simply want to ask you: Who's responsible for siting these plants initially? From a political standpoint.

Mr. Stephen Thompson: I believe that the Loreland plant was the Minister of Energy at the time, so—

Mr. Taras Natyshak: But on the political end of it.

Mr. Stephen Thompson: Sorry?

Mr. Taras Natyshak: On a strictly partisan—which political party was involved in it?

Mr. Stephen Thompson: The Liberal Party.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: And who ultimately is responsible for signing off on the construction of those plants?

Mr. Stephen Thompson: The Liberal Party.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Thank you, Chair. I have no further questions. Thank you, Mr. Thompson.

The Chair (Mr. Shafiq Qadri): Thank you, Mr. Natyshak. To the government side, 10 minutes. Ms. Albanese and/or Delaney and/or Cansfield. Ms. Albanese, 10 minutes.

Mrs. Laura Albanese: I just want to go back for a second to Mr. Rohn. He told the committee, "I went up to Tim Hudak at a campaign stop. I introduced myself and I explained that this was major in Etobicoke and Mississauga, in the riding that you're in right now. He brushed me aside.... Then they tried to rewrite history with

brochures saying they'd been campaigning against it for years...." Do you know what those brochures said?

Mr. Stephen Thompson: No, and I don't remember ever seeing them, receiving one. Being in the role that I took on, Laura, I had an actual meeting with Mr. Yakabuski in his office, with our chair, Tony Jones, explaining to him the concerns that we had in the community. I don't remember having Mr. Yakabuski follow through on finding out how things were going, if there was any help that we needed. Then, all of a sudden, because there's an election, we get Mr. Hudak actually coming to the table and saying, "Oh, we're going to help you." We had asked for help since 2004, so sending out brochures and flyers because maybe somebody might not win a seat or might not have their candidate elected—we didn't care about that. We cared about the fact that we had concerns related to the power plant and the location of the power plant.

It wasn't about who the candidate was or who the candidate wasn't. It didn't matter what party. We were bipartisan in every way, shape or form when we came into this. We even reached out to other people. We had lots of Liberals. We had lots of NDP. We had Green. We had Conservatives. It was disappointing. You people, you politicians—it doesn't matter who you are—should listen to the community and have some understanding that we have some knowledge about what goes on.

Laura, I've been researching this and doing this for quite a while now, I've learned a lot about the power industry and the energy industry and how it works. I've sat with most of the proponents that proposed to build some of these power plants. You know what? It was an education for me. Now it's a situation whereby—did we get help? No, and I think Mr. Hudak is trying to sway the matter.

Mrs. Laura Albanese: I just want to ask a couple of questions more about your meeting with Mr. Yakabuski. When did that meeting happen?

Mr. Stephen Thompson: I believe it happened in 2006. Laura, for me—

Mrs. Laura Albanese: So it was a long time before 2011.

Mr. Stephen Thompson: Well before 2011.

Mrs. Laura Albanese: Was it only one meeting?

Mr. Stephen Thompson: No, we had two meetings with Mr. Yakabuski. We had one down here at Queen's Park with Tony Jones and Rob Burton. Rob wasn't the mayor of the town of Oakville at the time. Then, through Phil Green, we also had Mr. Yakabuski out to Mississauga and we had a meeting at an old Boy Scout house that's on Lorne Park Road in Mississauga and had that discussion with regard to whether they could help us out.

Mrs. Laura Albanese: Were any commitments made?

Mr. Stephen Thompson: At the time of the meeting we had with Mr. Yakabuski, he said he'd look into it and that he'd try to find out some more information. I don't remember ever receiving anything in terms of writing from the Conservatives saying, "This is what we're going to do. This is how we're going to help you. We're going

to reach out and do whatever we can to help you get this plant relocated or stopped."

Mrs. Laura Albanese: Was there any email correspondence between yourself and Mr. Yakabuski?

Mr. Stephen Thompson: There were a couple of emails from me.

Mrs. Laura Albanese: Would you be able to table those with the committee?

Mr. Stephen Thompson: You know what, Laura? We have almost nine file boxes full of information. For me to go through every single, solitary one of those documents and retrieve emails or pull them all up—it may take me a while, but as far as I'm concerned, that's between Mr. Yakabuski's conscience and trying to help us out, and then what we believe is the right thing and what was the wrong thing.

Mrs. Laura Albanese: Well, even if it will take a little bit of time, can we ask for those documents to be tabled, the correspondence, please?

The Chair (Mr. Shafiq Qaadri): Noted. Thank you.

Mrs. Laura Albanese: Thank you. I guess another question that I would ask is about another quote. I want to ask you about the quote from the same CHIP press release on expressing disappointment at the political games that were being played with the power plant issue, noting that the PCs had inflated a big red elephant beside the site. Why did that incident upset you so much?

Mr. Stephen Thompson: For the first time in my life, Laura, I decided that I was going to get involved in something that I believed in. To us, it was something that was not a game; maybe it was to the Conservatives. Spending the amount of time and the amount of energy going to meetings, meeting with people, talking to people—you know what? I have a family.

0900

Doing those things took away from my family time, but my family understood, and so did the residents and the people of Mississauga. You know, playing games and putting elephants up or whatever they wanted to do—all they had to do was reach out and talk to us and allow us to communicate with them and understand what we were looking at. You know, balloons and all the other stuff, to me, that's frivolous. It becomes now: Is this a joke? Is this a game? This is not a game to us; it was never a game to us. This is about making the right decisions to put power plants in communities that either didn't want them or making sure that that decision to put them in communities was the right location under the right conditions. You know, our mayor keeps saying it over and over again, and she's right: right conditions, right circumstances, right location. Those are the things that should be concentrated on, not blowing up balloons and sticking them in front of locations.

You know, I reached out to every one of the candidates in all ridings that were affected—could have been affected—by this power plant. I reached out to the Conservative member running against Laurel Broten; I reached out to the candidate that was running against Donna Cansfield. I specifically asked Zoran Churchin to

make a statement, to come and stand in front of the property, and what we got, Laura, was nothing, zero. We got no help.

Mrs. Laura Albanese: I want to ask you another question. During his testimony, Mr. Rohn mentioned a few times that the NDP had attended a CHIP rally.

Mr. Stephen Thompson: Yes.

Mrs. Laura Albanese: Can you tell the committee a little more about the rally and what it meant to have the NDP in attendance there?

Mr. Stephen Thompson: Okay. So you're holding a provincial election, and you want to get an understanding from all parties of their position. At the first rally we had well over 1,500 people and the second rally we had over 1,200 people sitting in a room, with anybody and all parties invited. The Conservatives decided they didn't want to show up. What does that tell the community? That they didn't care. That was well before—well before—Mr. Hudak all of a sudden gets off the bus, stands in front of the property and says, "You elect us, we're going to close this plant." Then why didn't any of those Conservative members or those Conservative candidates show up at that rally?

You know, I'm looking at it from the standpoint that it's common sense. The common-sense thing is—you know what?—make the right decision. Show up at a rally, say what you have to say, and let the voters decide on how they want to go. But not showing up at a rally and not making a statement until after the fact kind of puts a bad taste in my mouth.

Mrs. Laura Albanese: And on September 26, 2011, Mr. Tabuns told Inside Toronto, "We wouldn't build it."

Mr. Stephen Thompson: Yes.

Mrs. Laura Albanese: So did you receive a similar commitment from the NDP?

Mr. Stephen Thompson: We had more help from the NDP than we did the Conservatives. You know, I remember meeting Mr. Tabuns a long time ago with regard to the Portlands plant and having them in their community down in—

The Chair (Mr. Shafiq Qaadri): The floor goes to the PC side: Mr. Fedeli? Mr. Leone.

Mr. Rob Leone: Sir, just a few questions. When did you first learn about the plant, that the plant was going to be sited where it was going to be?

Mr. Stephen Thompson: When did I first learn about—

Mr. Rob Leone: When the plant was going to go forward.

Mr. Stephen Thompson: In 2004.

Mr. Rob Leone: In 2004, so that's pretty early.

Mr. Stephen Thompson: Yeah.

Mr. Rob Leone: And you had conversations with members of the Liberals and all parties at that time as well?

Mr. Stephen Thompson: Yes.

Mr. Rob Leone: Okay. Who made the decision to put the plant there, in your estimation?

Mr. Stephen Thompson: The Minister of Energy.

Mr. Rob Leone: The Minister of Energy. And in your estimation, would you say that that decision to put the plant there is the source of your consternation? You've had a lot of testimony today, but really, it was the decision to put the plant there in the first place that led to all your time lost with your family, as you've explained—

Mr. Stephen Thompson: No. I think I got involved in this because of the power plants themselves, not the location of the power plant on Loreland Avenue. You know, it seems like we keep getting painted with the same brush over and over again, Mr. Leone: that it's about NIMBY, NIMBY, NIMBY. It's nothing to do with NIMBY.

Why did I go and spend time down with the people fighting against the Portlands plant? Why did I go to York region and talk to the people about a power plant going up there? Why did I spend time with the people in Oakville regarding a power plant going in Oakville? It was understanding my education on what I learned and passing it on to other people who had just gotten involved in it, and making sure that they understood what our position was in our community based on some of those 46 points that we put forward.

Interjection.

Mr. Stephen Thompson: Okay.

Getting involved in this, Mr. Leone, was a decision based on just the plants themselves—the conditions and under what conditions, and the locations that the plants really were being placed in.

Mr. Rob Leone: All right. Your major interest, too, is to have local input into the decisions on where those plants are.

Mr. Stephen Thompson: Well, I'm more concerned about some of the ministries starting to talk to each other. I said it earlier: They live in these little silos and they don't talk to each other. We had the Minister of Health, Mr. Smitherman, out there. It's a health issue with regard to the particulate matter that comes out of these plants. It's also an energy component whereby: Do you really need those power plants—those peaker plants—to go along the transmission lines and put them into communities? Is there more research that should be done into the antiquated and out-of-date transmission lines that are part of this province and start researching and start investing some money into those types of situations? Then there's the Ministry of the Environment that should play a role into the Ministry of Health.

You've got all these different ministries making all these different decisions but no one wants to talk to each other, and we tried to get them involved. We begged them to get involved with each other and talk to each other. The unfortunate part about it is, you get a minister come in, a minister go out; a minister come in, a minister go out. Then they're got to learn all over again. It's just the same process.

Having the OPA around—it didn't help at all. We would have assumed that the OPA would have been able to help us out. We got very, very little out of them.

Mr. Rob Leone: They're just following the direction from the government.

Mr. Stephen Thompson: I know, but their directive, in my opinion, should be an outreach to the community. There's got to be more communication with what goes on with these things. I'm not blaming the provincial party. I'm not saying that they're fully to blame for this. We have our own municipal problems. We could have had this nipped in the bud—just because of two words—and we never would have been sitting here talking about Loreland Avenue, because two stupid words like “power generation” are in a zoning bylaw. The assumption from the city was, “Oh, you know, if you want to build a manufacturing facility and you want to put a 20-megawatt power generator in there,” then you know what? That's going to be what we're looking at.

We have mistakes all the way around. It really doesn't matter who you're pointing the finger at.

Mr. Rob Leone: Has anything changed, in your view?

Mr. Stephen Thompson: I don't know. I don't think it's changed at all until we get a new mayor. It's unfortunate. I'm not really happy reading the statements that our mayor came down here inciting that we, the community, made a deal to allow a power plant to go in Mississauga on Winston Churchill. We never made a deal. There was no deal cut. The community wasn't involved until after the fact, but now—oh, now, all these other things—Lorne Park and Clarkson were involved in it, and Rob Burton and Boyd Upper did a hell of a job trying to get it stopped. Yes, they asked Sithe to make some concessions—stack height, quality control—and Sithe went out of their way to mandate to try to help with that, okay? They implemented that into their proposal. Now you come back and you have people like our mayor coming down to Queen's Park, knocking on any door that she can possibly find, pleading with somebody to put a power plant back down in Lakeview without any communication, any involvement in the community, because she's looking at one thing and one thing only: We're running out of land in Mississauga. So what is she looking for? She's looking for the revenue out of that power plant to go back to a city-owned power company, Enersource, to

start putting that money back into the coffers of the city of Mississauga. Is that right? No, it's not.

Mr. Rob Leone: All right. Well, I think that's great. Thanks, sir.

The Chair (Mr. Shafiq Qaadri): Thank you, Mr. Leone. To Mr. Tabuns.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Mr. Thompson—

Mr. Stephen Thompson: Mr. Tabuns.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Chair, when testimony is complete, you're aware I have a motion that I would like to move?

The Chair (Mr. Shafiq Qaadri): I am fully aware.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I'm very pleased.

Mr. Thompson, you've been very clear. I have no further questions. Thank you.

Mr. Stephen Thompson: Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Shafiq Qaadri): Thank you, Mr. Tabuns, and thank you, Mr. Thompson, for your advocacy and your presence before the committee. You're officially dismissed.

Mr. Stephen Thompson: Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Shafiq Qaadri): Mr. Tabuns, I would now invite you to present said motion.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Thank you, Chair.

I move that the justice committee request the production of the documents from the Ontario Power Authority and the Ministry of Energy referred to by Craig MacLennan in his testimony before this committee earlier this week, including the slide deck he referred to as setting out the draft long-term energy plan and the slide decks prepared on gas plant and transmission matters that led to the long-term energy plan.

The Chair (Mr. Shafiq Qaadri): Thank you, Mr. Tabuns. Your motion is in order and, therefore, before the committee. Are there any comments before we vote on this motion?

Seeing none, all in favour? All opposed? Motion carried.

If there's no further business before the committee, we're adjourned till next week.

The committee adjourned at 0911.

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