



ISSN 1180-4335

Legislative Assembly
of Ontario
First Session, 41st Parliament

Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario
Première session, 41^e législature

Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Tuesday 8 March 2016

Journal des débats (Hansard)

Mardi 8 mars 2016

**Standing Committee on
Government Agencies**

**Comité permanent des
organismes gouvernementaux**

Intended appointments

Nominations prévues

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON
GOVERNMENT AGENCIES**

Tuesday 8 March 2016

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

**COMITÉ PERMANENT DES
ORGANISMES GOUVERNEMENTAUX**

Mardi 8 mars 2016

*The committee met at 0901 in committee room 1.***SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT**

The Chair (Mr. John Fraser): Good morning. Welcome back to public appointments and government agencies. Again, it's Tuesday morning.

We have one intended appointment this morning, but before we begin our intended appointment review, the first order of business is to consider the subcommittee report. Mr. Rinaldi.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Sir.

The Chair (Mr. John Fraser): Sorry, no, it's not Mr. Rinaldi. Sorry, Mr. Pettapiece—my mistake.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I don't know how you can mistake the two of us.

The Chair (Mr. John Fraser): Well, he was holding a piece of paper and looking at it, so I immediately thought it was Mr. Rinaldi. He's at the end of the meeting.

Mr. Pettapiece.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Thank you, Chair. I move the adoption of the subcommittee report on intended appointments dated Thursday, March 3, 2016.

The Chair (Mr. John Fraser): Any discussion? All those in favour? Opposed? Motion carried.

INTENDED APPOINTMENTS**MS. DEBORAH HASWELL**

Review of intended appointment, selected by third party: Deborah Haswell, intended appointee as member, Council of the College of Naturopaths of Ontario.

The Chair (Mr. John Fraser): As I said, we have one intended appointee today. Our intended appointee is Deborah Haswell, nominated as member, Council of the College of Naturopaths of Ontario. Ms. Haswell, can you please come forward? Thank you very much for being here this morning.

Ms. Deborah Haswell: Thank you for having me here.

The Chair (Mr. John Fraser): You will have time to make a brief opening statement. Any time that you use for your statement will be taken away from the government's time for questions. The questioning will begin today with the third party. Again, thank you very much,

Ms. Haswell, for being here this morning. You may proceed.

Ms. Deborah Haswell: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair and members of the committee, for having me here to express my interest in serving. My opening statements are about three minutes long, so brief, and then we can get to your questions and so on.

Thank you for considering my interest in serving on the Council of the College of Naturopaths, representing the public interest. As you can see from my application and my CV, I have considerable experience in a broad range of governance and oversight models. As a business owner, I bring a strong work ethic that recognizes both the commitment required and the purpose of the role which I am hoping to undertake.

Over my 17 years in municipal politics, I was always committed to serving in the best interests of the public, to whom I was accountable. In my capacity as a director on the former Waste Diversion Ontario board of directors, I was appointed by my peers to represent the interests of municipalities. This work, of course, was often contentious, very complex and, at times, both frustrating and rewarding.

As a commissioner on the Niagara Escarpment Commission, representing the county of Grey, the files were often complex and the process very lengthy. It involved a very diverse group of representatives, not the least of which were the aggregate industry, environmental interests, the agricultural sector and First Nations communities—while always upholding the principles and framework of the Niagara Escarpment Plan.

In the fall of 2014, the municipal political landscape shifted and I found myself, for the first time in 17 years, no longer elected to serve. This brings me to today.

Early in 2015, I began to research opportunities on the Public Appointments Secretariat website and I submitted an application to serve. Today, I'm here to offer to the Council of the College of Naturopaths myself to serve. I bring an in-depth understanding of how government regulatory bodies work. I understand the time commitment required, and I can fulfill this. I bring a demonstrated capacity to understand and analyze volumes of data and participate in discussion, and finally, a demonstrated ability to make decisions that are informed, relevant and current, and in the best interests of the public and adhering to transparency at all times.

I have a keen interest to serve my fellow citizens, and I'm interested in and support the expansion of regulated health care options for Ontario residents.

I'm confident my participation on the council will help to ensure the ongoing transparency and accountability in this particular health care sector.

The Chair (Mr. John Fraser): Thank you very much, Mr. Gates?

Mr. Wayne Gates: Good morning, Deborah. How are you?

Ms. Deborah Haswell: I'm well, thanks. How are you, sir?

Mr. Wayne Gates: Good. Maybe you could elaborate on some of your elected appointments. You said that you served for 17 years. What were you elected to?

Ms. Deborah Haswell: Sure. I started as a city councillor in the city of Owen Sound. I was elected to serve as a municipal councillor at that time and spent a number of years on city council representing—we're elected at large in a community of that size. I moved on to be the deputy mayor of the community, and then, ultimately, I ran for mayor in 2010.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Just so you know, our Niagara IceDogs enjoy beating the Owen Sound Attack. I just thought I'd throw that out. I'm sure you're aware of that.

Ms. Deborah Haswell: Well, yes, and I have to say that next year could be very different.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Next year it could be; not this year, though.

Ms. Deborah Haswell: No.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Okay. I've got a few questions for you. According to the information you submitted to the PAS, you don't seem to have much experience in the field of naturopathic medicine. Given that, I'm interested to know what led you to seek this particular appointment.

Ms. Deborah Haswell: The opportunity to be part of an emerging regulatory board is something that's of interest to me. My daughter is a chiropractor, and having had some fairly close understanding of the regulatory framework in which chiropractors operate—this is a new and emerging health care sector. It's also important, I think, that any health care profession that's regulated has representation by the public and maintains transparency, as well as an opportunity to participate in the process.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Do you use, or have you ever used, any kind of medicine on a regular basis at all? Have you ever gone to a naturopath?

Ms. Deborah Haswell: I have to tell you that I'm fortunate to be in good health, and if there was a health concern that arose at any time, I would certainly not hesitate to seek the services of a naturopathic doctor. At this point in time, no, but as I said, I'm generally fairly healthy. I take vitamin C on a regular basis.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I don't know if that helps or not, but—

Ms. Deborah Haswell: Well, from what I read, it does.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I have no idea. I take lots of medicines; vitamin C is not one of them. Maybe I should.

Ms. Deborah Haswell: Maybe. I don't know.

Mr. Wayne Gates: You're healthy; I'm not. So it could help.

Ms. Deborah Haswell: It's an emerging profession, as a regulated health care option, and in terms of health care options for Ontarians, I believe it's very important that we have a choice.

Mr. Wayne Gates: And that it's regulated.

Ms. Deborah Haswell: Absolutely.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Many practitioners of naturopathic medicine will want to study or will have studied overseas rather than in Canada. As part of the regulating body for the profession, you will be required to help ensure that anyone educated overseas meets Canadian standards. How will you handle the balance between ensuring practitioners meet Canadian standards and also ensuring that they are able to conduct their practice in a manner that they have been trained to do?

Ms. Deborah Haswell: Certainly when the board or when the council is faced with that particular issue, there'll be an incredible amount of information provided on which we can base our decisions. Obviously, there are criteria under the Regulated Health Professions Act and related regulations and legislation that oversee the naturopathic profession in Ontario, and having a deeper understanding of that, those decisions would be made at that time. It's to ensure the integrity and the level of professionalism of the naturopathic profession in Ontario.

0910

Mr. Wayne Gates: I understand that, but it is fair to say that you have absolutely no experience in this field at all.

Ms. Deborah Haswell: That is fair to say.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Yes. My last question was an interesting one that I happened to find. A quick look at your social media shows that you're a very vocal supporter of the Liberals. As a public appointee to an arm's-length government agency, do you believe it is important for you to be non-partisan, and will your public communication change to reflect this?

Ms. Deborah Haswell: It's interesting—I'm curious to know which social media you were looking at, but I do believe it is important to be impartial and non-partisan.

I'm not a member of any particular political party. The last time I was a member of a political party, it was the federal Liberal Party, and it was when Jean Chrétien was Prime Minister, so that might date me a little bit. Certainly, that was the last time I was a member of any party.

As you can appreciate, after 17 years in municipal politics and working at a variety of provincial organizations as a municipal rep, I know quite a few people in this world and I know people from every party.

I do believe that transparency and openness are key to effective regulatory bodies. I appreciate that comment.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I was a city councillor myself, so I understand the importance of working of all political stripes.

The Chair (Mr. John Fraser): Thank you very much, Mr. Gates.

Mr. Rinaldi.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Thank you, Ms. Haswell, first of all for applying, and for being here today.

It's good to see, from your commitment to public life—the same as for most of us around this table—that you still have an opportunity to pursue helping communities at large. That's great.

I'm sure that you did some research on the college, and you know that there's a number of committees that the college has. If you were successful after today, do you have any particular committees that you might have an interest in, which you could help?

Ms. Deborah Haswell: It's interesting: When I was reading the background on the council and the mandate of the council, there was a list of statutory committees and a list of non-statutory committees. I haven't particularly focused on any one of those subcommittees. In fact, the council has only become a permanent council in January of this year, so they've only had one meeting, which I have read the minutes of.

At this point, if successful, I would wait until I met with them to see where I would best serve in that new framework. If I was to say a specific committee, the audit committee would be very interesting, and I think I could serve well there with my business background.

Again, I would be remiss if I didn't acknowledge the balance of the council and the expertise that is around the table. As a member of the public, I would defer to where I would best fit the organization.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Great. That's all I have.

The Chair (Mr. John Fraser): Madame Lalonde.

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: I'm just reminded of an important day today. On our behalf, I just wanted to wish you a happy International Women's Day.

Ms. Deborah Haswell: Thank you very much, and to you as well—to everyone.

The Chair (Mr. John Fraser): Thank you very much, Madame Lalonde.

Mr. Pettapiece.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I, too, was a councillor for a number of years in North Perth. I've been to your community on the odd golf excursion when OSUM was up there—

Ms. Deborah Haswell: Mr. Walker.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Bill Walker is a good friend of mine, and you certainly know him well.

I guess this question has been kind of asked by my friend Mr. Gates, but I want to know exactly what drew you to the College of Naturopaths. Was there a specific interest that drew you there?

Ms. Deborah Haswell: The fact that it's something that's new and emerging. When I was searching through the website—if you've ever spent any time on the Public Appointments Secretariat website, there's an incredible array of opportunities to serve, as a member of the public. So I was looking for not only new opportunities, but I also did apply for others I have had experience on. Having said that, the opportunity to serve on a new and emerging regulatory body in a new health care sector is what really drew me to it.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I see. I've had several meetings with naturopathic doctors in my riding in Perth-Wellington. They've raised a number of concerns, and I have a couple here that I'd like you to comment on.

Under the government's Naturopathy Act, Ontario is the most regulated jurisdiction for naturopathic medicine in Canada. They did not feel that the transition council took their concerns seriously or made the changes they requested before the ministry approved the regulations. The college was established under this act, so I wonder if you think those concerns would have any impact on your role as a member.

Ms. Deborah Haswell: Until we meet as a complete council, I would have to say that the role of the council is to regulate the naturopathic profession in Ontario. Having said that, the concerns of the profession are represented by eight naturopathic doctors on the council, and I would defer strongly to them to voice the concerns of the profession at that table.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Okay. They would also like their role expanded.

Ms. Deborah Haswell: I understand that, and I've read some broad articles—magazine articles and whatnot. Certainly, looking to other provinces, the variety of regulatory frameworks in other provinces is quite interesting. British Columbia has a much broader scope of practice for naturopathic doctors than Ontario currently does. Saskatchewan has an even more rigid or narrow scope of practice regulated for naturopathic doctors. So, as a new and emerging council, I think that that discussion and discussions like that will happen at that table.

Again, as a member of the public, I don't put myself forward, by any means, as an expert on naturopathic medicine. I put myself forward as someone who is interested in protecting the public interest, maintaining transparency in decision-making and understanding how that regulatory framework will affect health care choices for Ontarians.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: So you must have read these things—you keep leading up to my next question all the time, so that's very good.

There are certain challenges that are going to face the college in the future.

Ms. Deborah Haswell: Absolutely.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Just as you've explained, we have differences, province to province. Do you see a reason? Do you have a theory as to why that is? Is it a matter of trust? Is it a matter of the medical profession not allowing this profession to expand? Do you have any opinions on that?

Ms. Deborah Haswell: You know, when it's a new and emerging profession, I would look back to the chiropractic profession. Over the last 75 years, the chiropractic profession has gone through a huge shift in public recognition, professional recognition and professional acceptance. I think that naturopathic medicine is probably at the point that chiropractic was 50 or 75 years ago. So I think it's just a cultural time in society's era. Most of us—I'm sure most of the people around this table have a little bit

of a smorgasbord of health care professionals who keep us all healthy and running and moving forward.

I think that it's new, so I don't think that it is a matter of my opinion. I think that being part of those discussions and moving forward to be accountable to Ontario citizens is the key to serving the council properly.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. John Fraser): Ms. Haswell, thank you very much for being here this morning.

This concludes the time for your interview. I want to thank you again very much for being here. We're going to consider the concurrences at the end of the meeting, and you're welcome to stay.

Ms. Deborah Haswell: Thank you very much.

The Chair (Mr. John Fraser): We will now consider the concurrence for Deborah Haswell, nominated as member of the College of Naturopaths of Ontario. Mr. Rinaldi?

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Chair, I move concurrence in the intended appointment of Deborah Haswell, nominated as member, Council of the College of Naturopaths of Ontario.

The Chair (Mr. John Fraser): Any discussion? All those in favour? Opposed? The motion's carried.

Congratulations, Ms. Haswell. Thank you very much.

The meeting is adjourned.

The committee adjourned at 0921.

CONTENTS

Tuesday 8 March 2016

Subcommittee report	A-353
Intended appointments.....	A-353
Ms. Deborah Haswell.....	A-353

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