



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 31 May 2016

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Mardi 31 mai 2016

**Standing Committee on
Government Agencies**

Intended appointments

**Comité permanent des
organismes gouvernementaux**

Nominations prévues

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Room 500, West Wing, Legislative Building
111 Wellesley Street West, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Telephone 416-325-7400; fax 416-325-7430
Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario



Service du Journal des débats et d'interprétation
Salle 500, aile ouest, Édifice du Parlement
111, rue Wellesley ouest, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Téléphone, 416-325-7400; télécopieur, 416-325-7430
Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON
GOVERNMENT AGENCIESCOMITÉ PERMANENT DES
ORGANISMES GOUVERNEMENTAUX

Tuesday 31 May 2016

Mardi 31 mai 2016

The committee met at 0901 in committee room 2.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

The Chair (Mrs. Cristina Martins): Good morning, everyone. Welcome to government agencies. Before we begin our intended appointments review this morning, our first order of business is to consider two subcommittee reports.

We have a subcommittee report for Thursday, May 12, 2016. Would someone please move adoption of the report?

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I move adoption of the subcommittee report on intended appointees dated Thursday, May 12, 2016.

The Chair (Mrs. Cristina Martins): Any discussion? All in favour? Opposed? The motion is carried.

We have a second subcommittee report, dated Thursday, May 19, 2016. Would someone please move adoption of the report?

Mr. Wayne Gates: I move the adoption of the subcommittee report on intended appointments dated Thursday, May 19, 2016.

The Chair (Mrs. Cristina Martins): Discussion? All in favour? Opposed? The motion is carried.

INTENDED APPOINTMENTS

MS. SHARYN VINCENT

Review of intended appointment, selected by official opposition party: Sharyn Vincent, intended appointee as member, Ontario Municipal Board (Environment and Land Tribunals Ontario).

The Chair (Mrs. Cristina Martins): We will now move to the appointments review. We have two intended appointees to hear from today. We will consider the concurrences following the interviews.

Our first intended appointee today is Sharyn Vincent, nominated as member, Ontario Municipal Board (Environment and Land Tribunals Ontario). Please come forward and take a seat at the table. I wanted to welcome you and thank you very much for being here today. You may begin with a brief statement, if you wish. Members of each party will then have 10 minutes to ask you questions. Any time used for your statement will be deducted from the government's time for questions. Welcome, and you may begin.

Ms. Sharyn Vincent: Thank you. Good morning, Chair and members of the committee. My name is Sharyn Vincent, and I'm here this morning to discuss with you my interest and expertise, which I believe will make me an effective member of the Ontario Municipal Board.

I have both an academic background and a professional career in land use planning. As a land use planner and development consultant, I have worked in both the public and private sectors.

This Ontario Municipal Board appointment would allow me to bookend my career by working as an adjudicator in a realm in which I've been involved and for which I have tremendous respect.

My work experience as a planner in both sectors has given me considerable experience in interpreting and applying the relevant provincial and municipal policies and laws that guide land use and development in Ontario. I also work frequently as a member of multidisciplinary teams, encompassing the wide range of experience necessary to implement development projects.

My role as both a consultant and a municipal planner has given me broad exposure to policy documents, regulatory bylaws, methodologies, data sources and all forms of architectural tools, and I believe I've developed a solid expertise in testing the veracity of arguments formulated in support of development applications.

As an expert planning witness before municipal authorities and the OMB, I have acquired an intimate knowledge of the municipal approval process and the quasi-judicial mandate and adjudicative responsibility of the OMB.

As part of its practice, the board offers mediation to the parties before it. I endorse mediation as a proven approach to depolarize opposing interests to achieve settlement, with the resultant savings of time, expense and stress.

Not all matters can achieve settlement. It has been my experience that parties are given an opportunity to argue the conflict before an objective panel which has no interest other than weighing evidence and rendering decisions pursuant to the legislative framework set out by the province and the respective municipal jurisdiction. I believe, for all of the foregoing, that as a member of the OMB, I can and will make a meaningful contribution to the work of the board in resolving land use issues and meeting the planning objectives of the province.

The Chair (Mrs. Cristina Martins): Thank you very much. We will now begin our questioning with Mr. Gates.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Good morning. How are you today?

Ms. Sharyn Vincent: I'm well, thank you.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I just had a few questions for you. I'll read it out so I get it right. I'll read slowly. As you are no doubt aware, the OMB has often been accused of siding with developers in the face of local and municipal opposition to development projects. In fact, in some cases, the OMB has gone so far as to essentially rip up municipal planning documents created by duly elected members of local councils. Given this, do you believe that the OMB should continue to operate in its current format, or do you believe that changes are needed to better balance the system?

Ms. Sharyn Vincent: As I'm sure the member is aware, there are a number of things that are actually being taken as very proactive initiatives by the Legislature. Bill 73—which has been approved, and I presume the imminent proclamation would come during this session—actually addresses a number of changes to the Planning Act which would allow municipalities, at their election, to bring practices back into their own control to allow for mediation at their level after the actual lodging of appeals at the municipalities.

I think that that recognizes the validity of actually going through the public process, bringing things to a decision, and then recognizing that where there are still conflicts, there's still also the potential for mediation. I believe that the board practice in mediating outstanding matters and conflicts has actually proven to be very successful in trying to, as I said in my statement, depolarize the conflicts. They're refocusing them, which, unfortunately, sometimes is not adequately put forward during public participation in the process. So I think there's that.

I'm also aware that there is a commission looking into the actual workings of the Ontario Municipal Board. I know that it has been my experience—and I'm aware anecdotally of the types of measures—that they continuously look at themselves in terms of reviewing their practices to make them accessible to the general public.

I can only speak to my own experience, but I believe that in general, the board can only render decisions based on the evidence put before it, and that would be derived from the official plans and the zoning bylaws as put forward by the municipality. The act itself is looking at creating new time periods during which appeals would not be accepted to ensure that, for example, the ink is dry on the document before it's being challenged before a provincial body after the municipality has put considerable time and effort into their public process and their deliberations.

I think there's a whole series of things that are going on right now that will allow the local municipalities, at their election, to recapture the autonomy which I gather from your concern you think has been perhaps eroded from them.

Mr. Wayne Gates: No, I think what my question was about was: Do you believe that a better balance is needed for the system when you have duly elected representatives making decisions, and corporations and developers just going into the OMB and getting those decisions overturned?

A follow-up to your answer, because it was interesting to me: Right here in Toronto, do you believe the city of Toronto should be subject to the OMB, given that they have repeatedly asked to be removed from its jurisdiction? Obviously, you have big problems in Toronto because they want no part in the OMB, and there are reasons for that. Do you believe that the city of Toronto should be allowed to not go to the OMB?

0910

Ms. Sharyn Vincent: The City of Toronto Act was amended a number of years ago—and I apologize for not knowing precisely when, but I think that it was at least five or six years ago—to actually allow for the municipality to establish its own appeal jurisdiction. To date, they have not elected to invoke the permissions that have been allowed to them under the legislation, but that clearly exists for them. I presume that they're looking at both the administrative and financial implications of that. But that possibility currently exists for them.

Again, the legislation has been responsive to the concerns expressed about local autonomy.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I actually was a city councillor for three and half years. We just had a situation in Niagara Falls where the elected reps—there are eight in Niagara Falls—and the mayor unanimously supported not to allow a service station at a very busy corner that is approximately half a block in front of a school, and they turned it down. They go the OMB, and the OMB turns it down. There's a service station now that's almost adjacent to the school.

These are the types of decisions that are happening that—certainly, for our community—aren't the best decisions, yet people continue to go to the OMB. I guess the problem that we're having is that elected representatives are making decisions based on what is in the best interests of communities, and the OMB continues—and you can say “evidence-based.” Sometimes, it's how the case is presented. Those types of decisions are happening every day in communities right across the province of Ontario. I think that we have a problem.

The only other questions that I think that I'll have for you is—I'll just get to it here; it's back here a page: What are some of the challenges facing the board?

Ms. Sharyn Vincent: Challenges facing the board? Well, I think that, despite the access through the Internet or through consultation, there are often individuals who appear unrepresented and may not fully appreciate the decorum of the board, despite the fact that there are resources to acquaint themselves. I think that, because that board has recognized that and has actually encouraged people as much as possible to go to a much—let's call it—less formal but still as effective mediation process, that has proven to be a model that's less stress-

ful, less formidable and certainly less costly to, particularly, the individuals who might actually be attempting to represent themselves. I think that that continues both for the decision-maker and for appellants, be they third-party or the actual appellants themselves, to deal with.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Okay. Thanks. I have no questions. I'm good, thank you.

The Chair (Mrs. Cristina Martins): You're good?

Mr. Wayne Gates: Yes.

The Chair (Mrs. Cristina Martins): Thank you so much, Mr. Gates. We'll now go to Ms. Vernile. You have seven minutes and 42 seconds.

Ms. Daiene Vernile: I would like to, first of all, thank you for putting your name forward and for wanting to serve. Bear with me as we try to compete with the weed whacker outside trying to upstage us.

You mentioned Bill 73. I wanted you to comment on the positive aspects of the legislation and how it would assist the OMB in conflict resolution.

Ms. Sharyn Vincent: It has been my experience that once—to use the cliché—the lines are drawn in the sand between a proponent and the approval authority—or a neighbour, because it's not always simply the appeal of a municipal decision or a council decision—it really takes the coming together, again, of the parties, to actually sit down and have somebody who is more fundamentally listening to what the individual parties are saying, as opposed to necessarily the prepared statements that are coming before them that are attempting to, either very intelligently or in a shotgun fashion, take away from the merits of a proposal.

I think that the changes to the act are going to allow municipalities to create an extended appeal period. After an appeal has been filed after the final date, which we now know it to be, there would a period of 90 days for the municipality, through a mediator at their own level—I'm not sure whether it's to be determined at the provincial level or at the municipal level; I believe it's at the municipal level—to bring those parties back to the table to see what in fact, if anything, can be done in terms of narrowing the issues. Sometimes narrowing the issues is a very significant matter in terms of eliminating or reducing the costs of a hearing, in terms of whether it can be determined through basically a statement of agreed facts that these particular aspects of a proposal are not at issue—that it really can bring things to a focus. That's where I think mediation is most effective, and I think that the legislation will allow the municipality to have that brought back within their autonomous realm.

Ms. Daiene Vernile: What compelled you to want to put your name forward and to want to commit yourself to this kind of public service?

Ms. Sharyn Vincent: Having done it for a number of years—I mean, I've always been very much involved and interested in change and the management of change, obviously, from my academic background. I've really respected the work that the Ontario Municipal Board does, where they have to stand outside of the political, deal with the quasi-judicial responsibility that they're

given, and work within the framework of the documents. I think that my experience will give me the opportunity to contribute not only in terms of having broad exposure as to sometimes reading between the lines of the words, but also interpreting the actual documents, looking to what the intent of the document is.

Ms. Daiene Vernile: I see that you are a graduate of U of W, the urban planning course there. That's in my backyard. I think that that has served you very well. Thank you very much.

Ms. Sharyn Vincent: Thank you.

The Chair (Mrs. Cristina Martins): We'll now go to Mr. Pettapiece.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Good morning.

Ms. Sharyn Vincent: Good morning.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I see that you've worked as a municipal planner and as a consultant, where I assume that you've advised developers. I also see you've been retained as an expert witness before the OMB. Can you speak about your experiences before the OMB and those different rules?

Ms. Sharyn Vincent: Typically, as a consultant, you're not there under subpoena, which can often happen as a municipal planner, where you have actually made a recommendation to a council that they may not have elected to pursue or approve. That's a little bit of a different type of experience.

But fundamentally, the role of the planner is to be there as an objective witness, to give opinion evidence. Unlike a lawyer, they're not there as an advocate, even if they have supported an application or made recommendations to refuse an application. They're still subject to having to defend their opinion evidence under cross examination. So the roles aren't significantly different, other than when there is the potential additional stress of actually having to appear under subpoena.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Okay. You work for a planning and development consultation firm now?

Ms. Sharyn Vincent: It's my own firm, yes.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: That's your own firm. Are you not going to work for your firm again if you get the appointment, or do you see that there may be a conflict of interest here?

Ms. Sharyn Vincent: Over the last five years, in particular, my practice has taken on a very different type of focus where I have, for all intents and purposes, almost been semi-retired from the very traditional high-paced role of a development consultant. I've been taking only files that are related to sole proprietor, commercial users, retail stores that are not part of a chain, residential property owners, individuals—so they've all been one-off types of files that have needed independent consultation, where either their other consultant hasn't been able to actually be successful for them or where they've attempted to manage it with the consulting team in lieu of actually having a planner on the team. So my distance between my former corporate clients and myself is considerable.

I'm not exactly sure what I will do after the appointment, so I'm afraid that I can't answer that. Clearly being part of change is—

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I think you might agree that people could perceive this to be a conflict of interest because of your firm and then going on the OMB—

Ms. Sharyn Vincent: Well, the firm, for all intents and purposes, will be shelved during the time of the actual appointment. There is a very rigorous in-house vetting process at the Ontario Municipal Board to ensure that nobody who's ever been associated with an appeal matter coming forward for adjudication would have any access to the matter or the file. That's something that I would be keeping in constant review any time a matter came forward, but other than one very small file that I am aware of right now, I don't perceive any matters that I've been involved with in the past actually coming before the board.

0920

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: You used the word “perceived.”

Ms. Sharyn Vincent: Pardon me?

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: You just used the word “perceived.” It may be a perception that this could happen, is what I'm suggesting, because of your background.

Interruption.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I'm glad that guy started up again. I'm glad we have Hansard.

I was a former municipal councillor, and I can tell you from our experience with the OMB that we tried to do everything in our power to not go there because of the expense, which was one of the bigger things. Even if we thought we had a chance of winning a case, expenses sometimes held us back from going to the OMB. That's not good. That's wrong.

There's a perception that the unelected OMB controls much of Ontario development, and I would like your response to that claim. As an adjudicator, what kind of regard will you have for municipal decisions?

Ms. Sharyn Vincent: As an adjudicator at the board, you can only look to the evidence that's put to you. The Ontario Municipal Board does not have any independent authority to create policy or to do anything other than actually weigh the evidence of the experts that are put to them in terms of the interpretation of the official plan, the zoning bylaws, and the appropriateness of a development in terms of how it fits within its context. As in all disputes, there are winners and losers. I think that the approach of the board and certainly the initiatives through Bill 73 have come to recognize the merit of bringing matters to mediation prior to adjudication to see whether there are matters where sometimes a solution that's not necessarily on the table can be very palatable to all parties and may not relate to what the development application is in terms of the specifics of the development but may go a long way.

Again, I think that the expense issue is being addressed through the promotion of mediation. There are some municipalities that I'm aware of, too, that also put

together small reserves where there are individuals of a ratepayers' group that can come to the municipality for some support for independent consulting where even the ratepayers' group may not be ad idem with the council decision. So there are different ways of dealing with it, but I really think that mediation in terms of bringing the parties to the—

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I can assure you, we would try to do the mediation even if it wasn't legislated, just because it was less money to do that—“Let's work it out amongst ourselves”—but as you may understand or you may have heard of things that have happened where you have a legislative change, which you certainly don't have control of on the OMB, yet some municipalities, especially rural areas, are very cynical of not only the OMB but of some of these legislative changes which take planning rights out of their hands.

I go to the Green Energy Act, which did that with the location of wind turbines, where municipalities had no say in that anymore. I think you can understand that there may be some lack of trust, if I could put it that way, especially when, if you can't get it done in your own municipality by yourselves, it's a very expensive legal cost involved in going to the OMB, or it could be. You have legislation that changes things where you can't act anyway. So I think that's why some municipalities are a little bit cynical of this whole system.

My friend here has a question.

Mr. Robert Bailey: Have I got some time left?

The Chair (Mrs. Cristina Martins): You've got two and a half minutes.

Mr. Robert Bailey: Oh, great. Thank you, Ms. Vincent, for coming in today. I think you answered most of the questions I had—the ones I heard, anyway. I didn't hear them all. I had one question here about, as a number of people have talked about, reforms to the OMB, which have been called for as long as I can remember. I was on municipal council back in the 1980s, and I know that there were issues with the Ontario Municipal Board at that time. That hasn't changed.

As you've worked closely with the OMB throughout your career, what are your thoughts on its effectiveness, and can you elaborate—I know you're just going to go on there if this appointment is successful—on any ideas of how it could be more effective? Have you any ideas on how it could be made more effective and more user-friendly?

Ms. Sharyn Vincent: I think that there are many opportunities for people to come and witness a hearing so that they know what they're getting into. I think that even just being in the physical room is very helpful for those that might not ultimately be represented. Sometimes people come from a committee experience at a local level or a committee of adjustment and aren't quite aware of the fact that it is a little bit more formal.

It has been my experience that most of the board members or panels are very welcoming and are very helpful to people who may not be informed in terms of just what the decorum is before the board.

I think that we can all look forward to what the recommendations coming out of the ongoing commission will be. There's certainly going to be considerable opportunity for people to input and to review the effectiveness at the board itself.

Then, of course, we'll also have the opportunity of looking to what the city of Toronto experience proves to be, should they elect to take advantage of the authority that they have under their own legislation to pull back the appeal panel to their own jurisdiction.

I think that there's a whole series of things that are happening. It's a very dynamic time right now both for evaluating the process and for formally acknowledging, through the changes in the legislation, what the municipalities have been saying in terms of regrouping and reclaiming some of the autonomy.

Mr. Robert Bailey: Okay. I have nothing further.

The Chair (Mrs. Cristina Martins): You only had a second left.

Thank you very much. That concludes the time allocated for this interview. You may step down. We will consider the concurrences following the next interview.

MS. TERESA PIRUZZA

The Chair (Mrs. Cristina Martins): Our next intended appointee today is Teresa Piruzza, nominated as member, University of Windsor board of governors.

Please come forward, Ms. Piruzza. It's wonderful to see you here. Welcome, and thank you for being here. You may begin with a brief statement, if you wish. Members of each party will then have 10 minutes to ask you questions. Any time used for your statement will be deducted from the government's time for questions. When question time does begin, we will begin with the government side. Welcome, Ms. Piruzza.

Ms. Teresa Piruzza: Thank you, and good morning. Let me just get settled here.

Good morning, everyone. It's a pleasure to be here this morning. I'm running from another meeting, so I guess some things don't change when you're in Toronto. You're always running between meetings. I just need a moment to get focused.

Good morning, Madam Chair and members of the Standing Committee on Government Agencies. It's always a pleasure to be back here, and I am pleased to be here this morning to outline my experiences as they relate to my application to serve on the board of governors at the University of Windsor. It is my honour to be here, and I look forward to our discussion over the next half hour or so.

I thought I would start with a walk-through of my resumé, which outlines my education and experience and hence my attributes that will contribute positively to the University of Windsor. I'm sure that the members of the committee have been provided with a summary of my application, and I would like to provide more details.

My education and experiences have provided me with extensive experience in community partnerships, com-

munity development, relationship building and problem solving.

Starting with my education: I am a graduate of the University of Windsor, for both my BA in international relations, which consisted of studies of economics, history and political science, and my MBA. While it seems like graduation was yesterday, it was a number of years ago, and there have been some amazing changes on campus since I was a student there.

I also have a master's certificate in municipal management from York University, training in alternative dispute resolution and communications.

I am currently with Fiat Chrysler Automobiles, or FCA Canada, in the external affairs and public policy unit.

Prior to FCA, as you know, I was the member of provincial Parliament for Windsor West, the Minister of Children and Youth Services and the minister responsible for women's issues.

0930

As the MCYS minister, I led the fifth-largest ministry in government and co-chaired both the Healthy Kids cabinet committee as well as the poverty reduction and social inclusion committee.

As minister responsible for women's issues, I led the Ontario Women's Directorate, focused on championing equality, reducing violence against women and improving women's economic security.

Prior to becoming a minister, I was the PA to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. As the PA, I led province-wide consultations to inform the development of Ontario's first immigration strategy.

I think everyone in this room certainly knows the role of an MPP, so I don't need to go into what I experienced through that period.

Prior to my election as the MPP, I worked at the city of Windsor. I was with the city for 10 years, moving through various positions, with my final position as the executive director of employment and social services. In the role of executive director, I was responsible for the overall management and monitoring of the department, which was the largest in the city, with about 200 employees and a budget of approximately \$28 million.

The city of Windsor is the Consolidated Municipal Service Manager, or CMSM, for Ontario Works and Employment Services for the Windsor-Essex region. While at the city, I served on multiple provincial committees, including the OW Funding Principles Working Group, Human Services Implementation Steering Committee, and the Director-Administrator Reference Group. I was also a director with the Ontario Municipal Social Services Association, or OMSSA.

I'm also a founding member of Workforce Windsor-Essex and led the Windsor Essex local immigration planning council, and served on Pathway to Potential, our local poverty reduction group.

I worked with all community agencies in the area, including the university and St. Clair College, to develop partnerships to provide support and services for our

clients. Over the years, and as my children have moved through the education system, I always stayed involved in their schools, both at the primary and secondary levels.

Back in the fall, I received a call from a representative at the University of Windsor, canvassing my interest in applying for the appointment to the board. My name had come forward from the board committee of the university that recommends appointments. I was honoured to have been asked, and I indicated that I would be interested in joining the board and welcomed further discussion. This conversation was followed up with a call from the president of the university, Dr. Wildeman. I truly consider it as an honour and a privilege, given that I'm a graduate of the university, as I mentioned previously.

As far as why I'm interested in serving as a member of the board for the university, I believe that universities play a critical role in their communities, and I also believe that this is an exciting time for universities, bringing forward challenges and opportunities. Universities, of course, are institutions of higher learning, committed to advancement and the betterment of society.

As a board member, I will be part of the conversations as the University of Windsor prepares for the future. As well, my experiences as an MPP, a minister and an executive director of a large city department provide me with the background necessary to contribute to the overall governance of the university on issues of both strategic and operational priorities.

In terms of community development, the university, over the years, has partnered with many local agencies, ensuring that students experience the practical application of what they are learning in classes and see first-hand the impact they can have as individuals. The university is going further in this role by moving the school of social work downtown, soon to be joined by the school of creative arts.

The university also has a role to play with local industry. For example, the university and FCA Canada have had a long history of working together. In fact, this year, the Automotive Research and Development Centre in Windsor is celebrating its 20th anniversary. The ARDC is FCA Canada's research and development centre; it began as a partnership between FCA and the University of Windsor. The ARDC opened in 1996 and was the first partnership of its kind in Canada.

This is just one example of the partnerships that the university has forged locally to support research across many different fields: in manufacturing, in the sciences and in health. From cancer research to vehicle technologies and the Great Lakes Institute for Environmental Research, there are exciting developments coming out of the University of Windsor.

The University of Windsor and FCA Canada are also partners in a unique education experience with the Politecnico di Torino for engineering students. Master-level students spend one year studying at Windsor and one year studying in Torino, Italy. The research, thesis and analysis are defined and supported by FCA Canada. This provides Canadian students the opportunity to study

in Italy and learn in a different environment, while Italian students come and experience a Canadian university. Providing opportunities for an international education provides for richer experiences and perspectives for both the Canadian student and the international student.

The role of universities, as with all institutions, is evolving. While they've always been a reflection of the students they serve, I think the challenges and opportunities today are more complex than they have been in the past. Universities also face the global trends that we know exist: changing demographics, rapidly changing technology and student perspectives, to name a few.

I'm proud to be a graduate of the University of Windsor and see the exciting opportunities that lie ahead for the university. I'm honoured to be provided the opportunity to serve on its board. I hope that this brief introductory statement has outlined for you what I believe are the salient pieces of my education and experiences that I will bring to the table as a board member.

Madam Chair, I think I'll stop here and provide some time for discussion. I look forward to responding to questions about my education, my experience and my interest in this appointment. Thank you.

The Chair (Mrs. Cristina Martins): Thank you so much, Ms. Piruzza. We will begin with the government side. Ms. Wong, you've got one minute.

Ms. Soo Wong: One minute? Oh, my.

Thank you so much, Teresa, for coming back. It's always great to see you again. I also want to personally say thank you for your continued interest in your community's engagement but, more importantly, giving back as an alumni of the University of Windsor. So thank you. That's all I wanted to say. Thank you.

Ms. Teresa Piruzza: Thank you.

Ms. Soo Wong: I only had one minute; right? I can't ask any questions.

The Chair (Mrs. Cristina Martins): Ms. Vernile?

Ms. Daiene Vernile: May I ask you, Teresa, what compelled you to want to stand for a position on the board of governors at the University of Windsor?

Ms. Teresa Piruzza: As an alumna, I'm very proud to be from the University of Windsor. I believe, as I indicated, that these are exciting times for universities in terms of opportunities, in terms of really seeing what their role will be moving forward, and their role in the community as well.

But it was also an opportunity for me to be re-engaged in part of that discussion. As a member and as a minister, I had had a number of opportunities to meet with the president of the university and with the administration for various discussions, and I look forward to continuing that.

The Chair (Mrs. Cristina Martins): Thank you very much, Ms. Piruzza. That concludes the time of the government. We're now going to go to the opposition. Mr. Pettapiece.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Nice job; you limited the government from going on. Just perfect. One thing I'd

like to ask you about: You've been involved in education—oh, good to see you again, by the way.

Ms. Teresa Piruzza: Nice to see you, too.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: You've been involved with education for a long time. Were you involved in your high school organizations when your children were in high school? Were you involved with an organization in high schools?

I guess what I'm getting at is that we've certainly had issues where I'm from with children maybe not being pointed in the right direction as far as skilled trades and that type of thing. If you want to go to university, that's fine, but some of these other opportunities haven't really been put forward to kids, especially in the high school setting. Would that have been the experience of yours, or have you seen that?

Ms. Teresa Piruzza: In terms of what you're asking in terms of my volunteer involvement, yes, I've been involved. The high school my kids go to, and my younger son is still there, is Assumption in Windsor, so yes, I'm involved there.

But part of my experience—and what I didn't suggest in my comments, because it was one of my first jobs out of university—was as a labour market analyst with the federal government, with Service Canada, or HRDC at the time, when local offices had labour market analysts.

So in terms of determining direction or skill shortages, what I'm suggesting is that that's not a new question. That's not a new concern. It's one that has always been there: How do you get students, how do you get counselors in high schools to recognize the broad array of opportunities that are available, and how do you expose students to that, as well?

That's certainly something, both as the Minister of Children and Youth Services and the minister responsible for women's issues, and as a member as well: How do you ensure those directions and that we're responding to the needs of industry and the needs of our communities in terms of those positions? Certainly, there's more work to be done, as we know, in terms of addressing that issue.

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In a way, just as environment is becoming more complex for universities, the environment of what to study or what direction to go into I think is more complex because of the ever-changing and quickly changing technologies that are coming to fore as well in the economy. I don't think we can say today what the technology is going to look like four years from now or five years from now. We have to look at what the basics are and ensure that students are aware of what different opportunities may arise. So I agree with you that there is work that needs to continue to be done at the post-secondary.

I have seen improvements over the years with the introduction of different types of apprenticeship programs in the universities, different types of certificate programs and the increase of co-op. When I was in high school, we didn't have co-op. You now see high-school students having co-op and internship-type positions. So that is certainly an area.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Yes, I can see that technologies certainly have changed, and I agree with that, but some technologies haven't. To wire a house is pretty much the same as wiring a house 10 years ago. Welding hasn't changed a lot—

Ms. Teresa Piruzza: That's the building of the apprenticeship program.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: —and things like that. I know that we have a shortage, where I'm from. In fact, it was brought up to me again last week at a factory that they can't find people to do these things. So I think there has to be some attention paid to that. I was just wondering what your experience was at the high school level.

I'll turn it over to my colleague.

The Chair (Mrs. Cristina Martins): Mr. Bailey?

Mr. Robert Bailey: Welcome back, Ms. Piruzza. Good to see you here at Queen's Park again. Thank you for hosting us. We had a tour—I guess it's a couple of years ago now—of the Chrysler facility at Windsor.

Ms. Teresa Piruzza: The ARDC, which is celebrating its 20th anniversary.

Mr. Robert Bailey: Yes. I heard you mention that in your remarks. Good for you. I'm sure you'll be a real asset if you go back to where you got your education as well and join the alumni. That would be good.

There's a lot of discussion—we just had some here—about university education and whether it's actually preparing students for skills that they need when they enter the workforce. First of all, do you see that as an issue, and, if so, what can be done to bring that skills gap together? The other one, the second part to that—and maybe if you want to answer it first because you probably answered it with Randy's question there. What do you see as one of the greatest opportunities facing provincial universities, and Windsor in particular?

Ms. Teresa Piruzza: Again, in terms of the question on the skills gap, there's not a one-type answer to that. You need the university involved. You need the colleges. You need the full education system. Where, in the past, some programs may have been introduced in the senior years of high school—in terms of what some of those trades were that we were just talking about—I think those need to be introduced at a younger age. So it's really a full system that needs to respond to those types of skill gaps and skill shortages. In terms of the university's role in terms of covering some of those gaps, it's that continued partnership in community, it's that continued discussion with industry, in terms of what they're looking for or what's required.

I think, too, what we forget and what we can't overlook is those other skills that come from going into any type of higher education, be it college or post-secondary. That's things like communication skills and team building and those softer skills as well that, I think, sometimes get underestimated in terms of their importance.

We also hear from employers—and now I'm going back to when I was at the city, as director of employment services, and when I was a labour market analyst. We

also hear from employers that some of those soft skills are just as critical as the technical skills that they learn when they're on the job. Those are skills I think that you attain in any program that you go into, in college or university, at any level of post-secondary education. I think that's something that is critical, that we can't underestimate those softer skills that are required.

In terms of opportunities for the university, as I said, the university looks much different today than it did when I was there about five years ago, when I was at the university as a student—a bit longer than five years ago. In terms of development, of really partnering with the community and really opening itself up—whereas the University of Windsor was always in its own location, I see its partnership with the community growing in terms of moving the school of social work downtown, where it can really work with community agencies and really ensure those opportunities for students, and bringing even the school of creative arts downtown so it's really engaging itself with being a part of the community and really growing in that role.

On the other side as well, in terms of the research side, we also see growing partnerships across universities in terms of the research that industry needs, and really focusing on what our strengths are in terms of manufacturing and industry—even in terms of the cross-border institute, which is at the university and which is looking at the impacts of trade and the impacts of transportation and logistics across the bridge and across the border, because of our location. It's really capitalizing on what our community is, who our community is, and really shining in that role.

Mr. Robert Bailey: That's all I have.

The Chair (Mrs. Cristina Martins): You have a minute and a half.

Mr. Robert Bailey: I'm done.

The Chair (Mrs. Cristina Martins): Thank you, Mr. Bailey. We now go over to Mr. Gates.

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

Ms. Teresa Piruzza: Wonderful, thanks.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Good. I just have a few questions, and then I'll expand as I go.

As a former Liberal MPP in Windsor West and a leadership contestant, it's pretty clear which party you hold your ties to. In spite of these ties, are you prepared to serve in your role on the board as non-partisan?

Ms. Teresa Piruzza: Absolutely. Being an MPP wasn't—I've been a Liberal, so to speak, for a number of years, whether as an MPP—and I think I've shown in my past experiences, when I was at the city for 10 years working with all community agencies across the city, that certainly I can serve in that role. Partisanship has no role to play when you're working as a community across agencies and really listening to different perspectives and different ideas about how to better your community.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Thank you; I appreciate that.

You talked about employment. Being an MPP for one term, two terms—

Ms. Teresa Piruzza: One term.

Mr. Wayne Gates:—one term, and working for the city, you would also know that for the last number of years—certainly the last 10 years—Windsor has had one of the highest unemployment rates in the country, year after year, which really puts a lot of pressure on the students that are graduating, particularly the local students—I've got Brock University in Niagara. The kids want to stay at home. They want to stay with their parents; they want to live in the communities where they grew up. How do you see the university getting more actively involved in making sure that the students stay and have opportunities in Windsor, knowing that we've got an unemployment crisis in Windsor?

Ms. Teresa Piruzza: Again, that's a full community response. It's not something that the university can do on its own.

Just in terms of the unemployment rate, I will say that over the last number of months, the unemployment rate in Windsor has gone down, given the investment and the work that's being done at the FCA plant in Windsor and the suppliers and the larger community impact. In fact, I will say that our unemployment has gone down. You're right: There were a number of months where the Windsor region had the highest unemployment rate, but we don't now. It has come down. I'm quite pleased to see the community working together towards that. But what role the university has: Again, it's working with industry to make sure that they are providing the appropriate experiences and partnerships, even in terms of co-ops or internship-type positions. But it's not an issue that the university in itself is going to be able to resolve. It's being part of the community, working with other agencies, working with the colleges and, together, working towards that end.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I'm glad you raised the Chrysler plant. It's my understanding you work there?

Ms. Teresa Piruzza: I work at FCA Canada.

Mr. Wayne Gates: The University of Windsor has always been well known for their research in the automotive industry. Unfortunately, it has started to move away from that as the industry moves south. This year, the big three automakers will be going into bargaining, which will have a major effect on the industry as a whole. Given the university's interest in and ties to the automotive industry, do you believe the board should actively support the auto workers during the negotiations to ensure the industry can survive in Ontario and particularly in Windsor?

Ms. Teresa Piruzza: Well, in terms of negotiations, as with all negotiations, negotiations are between the employer and the labour group, as you know, and I don't know that either party would really welcome a third agency coming into those negotiations as well.

In terms of research, automotive research continues quite regularly at the University of Windsor. If you're interested, you're welcome to come down and see our research centre that we have in Windsor. The amount of research that is done there in celebrating our 20th year and the type of research and collaboration that the

university does: That continues. There actually hasn't been a reduction in terms of automotive research that's done at the Ed Lumley Centre for Engineering Innovation. That work does continue.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I appreciate the fact about the negotiations. I was the president of Unifor Local 199 at GM and participated in bargaining for 12 years, so I do know the importance of having universities support the workers during the bargaining process.

Some of the concerns around Chrysler—and your employer has been out very clearly talking about the fact that the plants in Canada are in jeopardy, for two reasons: One is the hydro costs, which the university can't do anything about but, obviously, with you working there you have to have some concerns, and the other one is the trans-Pacific trade agreement, which they said has the potential to lose 20,000 jobs. The union there, Unifor, has come out against the trans-Pacific trade agreement very clearly, saying that it could be the death of the auto industry.

I know it might not have anything to do with your appointment on the board, but certainly—

Ms. Teresa Piruzza: It doesn't.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Let me finish the question. It certainly would have an incredible effect on the university and the number of students who will be able to afford to go to university if Chrysler ends up leaving this country or drastically reducing its production in Windsor. We've already seen the effects of the transmission plant leaving Windsor and the Ford plant leaving Windsor and General Motors leaving Windsor, so Chrysler is really

the heart and soul when it comes to manufacturing. I guess that's the reason why I'm saying that it might help if the University of Windsor does support the auto workers there.

I don't have any other questions for you. Thanks.

The Chair (Mrs. Cristina Martins): Thank you very much, Mr. Gates. Thank you, Ms. Piruzza; you may now step down.

We will now consider the concurrence for Ms. Sharyn Vincent, nominated as member, Ontario Municipal Board (Environment and Land Tribunals Ontario). Mr. Kwinter will move the concurrence, I believe.

Mr. Monte Kwinter: I move concurrence in the intended appointment of Sharyn Vincent, nominated as member, Ontario Municipal Board (Environment and Land Tribunals Ontario).

The Chair (Mrs. Cristina Martins): Any discussion? All in favour? Opposed? The motion is carried. Congratulations, Ms. Vincent.

We will now consider the concurrence for Teresa Piruzza, nominated as member, University of Windsor board of governors. Once again, Mr. Kwinter.

Mr. Monte Kwinter: I move concurrence in the intended appointment of Teresa Piruzza, nominated as member, University of Windsor board of governors.

The Chair (Mrs. Cristina Martins): Any discussion? All in favour? The motion is carried. Congratulations, Ms. Piruzza.

Seeing that there is no further business, the committee is adjourned.

The committee adjourned at 0954.

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