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**Official Report
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(Hansard)**

A-48

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des débats
(Hansard)**

A-48

**Standing Committee on
Government Agencies**

Intended appointments

1st Session
42nd Parliament
Tuesday 11 May 2021

**Comité permanent des
organismes gouvernementaux**

Nominations prévues

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Mardi 11 mai 2021

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON
GOVERNMENT AGENCIESCOMITÉ PERMANENT DES
ORGANISMES GOUVERNEMENTAUX

Tuesday 11 May 2021

Mardi 11 mai 2021

The committee met at 0900 in committee room 2 and by video conference.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): Good morning, everyone. I call this meeting to order. We are meeting to conduct a review of intended appointments.

We have the following members in the room: MPP Gates and MPP Nicholls. We have the following members joining us via Zoom: MPP Bisson, MPP Bouma, MPP Miller, MPP Pang and MPP Stiles. Did I miss anyone?

Interjection.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): MPP McDonnell is also joining us via Zoom.

We are also joined by staff from legislative research, Hansard, and broadcast and recording.

To make sure that everyone can understand what is going on, it is important that all participants speak slowly and clearly. Please wait until I recognize you before starting to speak. Since it could take time for your audio and video to come up after I recognize you, please take a brief pause before beginning. As always, all comments by members and witnesses should go through the Chair.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): Now we will move to the first item on the agenda: the subcommittee report. Our first item of business is the subcommittee report dated May 6, 2021. We have all seen the report in advance, so could I please have a motion? MPP Nicholls.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: I move adoption of the subcommittee report on intended appointments dated Thursday, May 6, 2021, on the order-in-council certificate dated April 30, 2021.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): Thank you. MPP Nicholls moved the motion. Any discussion? Any further discussion? I see none. Are the members ready to vote? Yes?

All those in favour? Thank you. All those opposed? The motion is carried.

INTENDED APPOINTMENTS

MS. AMANDA CHAPMAN

Review of intended appointment, selected by official opposition party: Amanda Chapman, intended appointee as member, Landlord and Tenant Board.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): We will now move to our review of intended appointments. Today, we have Amanda Chapman, nominated as member of the Landlord and Tenant Board.

As you may be aware, Ms. Chapman, you have the opportunity, should you choose to do so, to make an initial statement. Following this, there will be questions from members of the committee. With that questioning, we will start with the government, followed by the official opposition, with 15 minutes allocated to each recognized party. Any time you take in your statement will be deducted from the time allotted to the government.

Now, Ms. Chapman, the floor is yours if you would like to make an opening statement.

Ms. Amanda Chapman: Good morning. I do wish to make an opening statement.

Thank you, Vice-Chair and members of the Standing Committee on Government Agencies. My name is Amanda Chapman. I am honoured to attend and discuss my credentials and my experience as an intended appointee to the Landlord and Tenant Board.

By way of background, I hold an honours BA from York University, and I received my law degree at the University of Ottawa. I also have a post-graduate certificate in dispute resolution. I had the opportunity to work on the justice committee at Parliament Hill as a law student. In fact, to fund my legal education, I worked two part-time jobs during law school in addition to my studies.

I have practised law in the Barrie area since 2009. I began my own law firm in 2011. The focus of my practice has evolved over the years, but it has always encompassed the areas of family and civil law, including employment, insurance and estate law. Most of my civil practice is plaintiff-based, which means I represent everyday Canadians. In addition to practising as a lawyer, I also teach part-time at Georgian College in the law clerk and paralegal programs, and I work as both a mediator and a workplace investigator.

As a lawyer and advocate, I have appeared on behalf of clients at all levels of court in this province, including various tribunals, the Superior Court of Justice and the Ontario Court of Appeal. I am familiar with Tribunals Ontario, and I have also appeared before the Financial Services Commission of Ontario, the Licence Appeal Tribunal and the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario. I understand the rules and the procedures of Tribunals Ontario.

I have participated in hundreds of mediations and dispute resolutions as both counsel and as a private mediator. I believe I have developed a reputation as being reasonable and approachable. I certainly have experience in a wide variety of legal matters, and I have a solid understanding of both the law and legal process.

I have also had an opportunity to hone my writing skills as a lawyer and as an educator. I have managed, mentored and educated law clerks, paralegals, law students and junior lawyers in my planning and teaching at Georgian College and also in my law practice.

In addition to my law practice, I am also the administrator and counsel for the Summary Legal Counsel panel, which is a project in Barrie offered through the Law Foundation of Ontario. This panel provides in-court counsel to self-represented parties. I am a pro bono volunteer lawyer and mentor. I am a board member of the Elizabeth Fry Society of Simcoe Muskoka, and I'm actively involved in a number of charities, including Gals That Give and Ripple of Kindness. I am also a mother. I'm raising two children with a very supportive spouse.

I believe that as a lawyer and as a professional, I should contribute to bettering both my community and society at large, which means giving back where I can. At times this is as an educator or an advocate, but I also believe that being a part-time member of the Landlord and Tenant Board also honours my commitment to use my skills for the greater good. I believe my qualifications and experience will be a good fit for the tribunal, and I'm here to answer any questions that you may have.

Thank you for your time.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): Thank you, Ms. Chapman.

Before I go to the government side for questioning, I see MPP Tangri joined us. MPP Tangri, please identify yourself and your location.

Mrs. Nina Tangri: Good morning, everyone. Yes, this is MPP Tangri, and I am in Mississauga, Ontario.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): Thank you.

Now we will go to the government side. You have a little bit over 10 minutes. MPP Bouma, go ahead.

Mr. Will Bouma: Thank you, Chair, and through you: Ms. Chapman, thank you so much for joining us today. It's a pleasure to have you here before us. I would just like to start right off by asking—you have, it seems, a brilliant career and seem very well suited for this, but I was wondering what motivated you to apply for this position, and was this the only one that you applied to? Just two questions there. Thank you.

Ms. Amanda Chapman: Thank you. As I said in my opening statement—and I'm sorry, I will answer of course through the Chair. As I stated in my opening statement, I have always felt as a lawyer and professional, I would be committed to my community and to access to justice, and I believe this is an opportunity for me to continue with that commitment.

0910

As for the second part of your question, I did apply to more than one tribunal, and I was interviewed for more than one tribunal.

Mr. Will Bouma: Thank you very much. With that, Chair, I will turn it over to MPP Tangri.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): MPP Tangri, go ahead.

Mrs. Nina Tangri: Good morning, Amanda. It's nice to see you here today. Thank you for joining us. I have a very quick question: What do you believe it takes to be an effective member of the landlord and tenant tribunal?

Ms. Amanda Chapman: I am happy to answer that question, through the Chair. I believe any effective member of a tribunal is going to try to achieve fair, effective and timely justice.

Mrs. Nina Tangri: Thank you very much. I'll pass it over to MPP Pang.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): MPP Pang, go ahead.

Mr. Billy Pang: Mr. Chair, through you: It's nice to meet you here, Ms. Chapman. I heard about your personal experience and your engagement in the community, so I want to hear more about what sort of engagement you had in your community—volunteer work etc.—what you have learned from it, and how it will inform your work on the LTB.

Ms. Amanda Chapman: Thank you for the question. Through the Chair: I think what I could tell you about is my role as an administrator and counsel for the summary legal panel here in Barrie. That is a program that was set up through the Law Foundation of Ontario, and it is a program that provides a panel of lawyers on the ground and available for self-represented parties in Family Court. That panel is available to parties who do not have counsel for whatever reason. It could be because they cannot afford counsel, or they may have exhausted their resources, or they just need some advice and wish to represent themselves in the court.

That program allows me an opportunity to work directly with self-represented parties and to assist them with their Family Court hearings, but it also gives me an opportunity to work with the lawyers and learn more about what needs the community has in terms of appearing in court as a self-rep. It is increasingly an issue, meaning that there are more and more self-represented parties in front of our judges and courts, and certainly in front of the tribunals, and so it gives me an opportunity to learn more about them and what their needs are, and certainly to use my knowledge and experience to represent them.

Mr. Billy Pang: Thank you. Mr. Chair, I would like to pass the floor to MPP Nicholls.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): MPP Nicholls.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Good morning, Ms. Chapman. It's nice to have you be a part of our committee hearing this morning. COVID actually presents some significant challenges for operating the Landlord and Tenant Board, in particular with in-person hearings. How do you think the Landlord and Tenant Board can adapt? And, secondly, do you have any concerns about not being able to conduct in-person hearings?

Ms. Amanda Chapman: Thank you for the question. I will answer you through the Chair: I don't have any

concerns about conducting those hearings. As a lawyer who appears in Superior Court on a regular basis, I have been involved and continue to be involved with remote hearings—

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): Five minutes left.

Ms. Amanda Chapman: I'm sorry?

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): Just a reminder that there are five minutes left for the government side.

Ms. Amanda Chapman: Thank you.

So, I certainly don't have any concerns about adjudication occurring remotely. I think it is of value to have that as an option, and it may in fact increase access to justice. But in terms of the specifics relating to the board, at this point I am not a member of the tribunal and so I don't feel that I can provide any direct information as to the board. Thank you.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Thank you very much. I know that by meeting by Zoom and not in person, it probably takes some of the emotion out of some of the hearings as well, perhaps.

I'll turn it over now to MPP Norm Miller.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): MPP Miller, go ahead.

Mr. Norman Miller: It's nice to meet you via Zoom this morning, Ms. Chapman. Thank you for coming before the committee. You've had a wide range of professional experiences in your career. Could you please share how these experiences prepared you for your work with the Landlord and Tenant Board?

Ms. Amanda Chapman: Thank you for your question. I'm happy to answer that through the Chair: I believe that my wide range of experience, certainly in the dispute resolution area, will be an effective tool at the board. I believe that should always be the first opportunity, to try to resolve disputes between parties, including landlords and tenants, before any kind of adjudication is undertaken. I believe my role as a lawyer representing parties in those types of dispute resolutions, and certainly my role as a mediator, has given me a good background and knowledge on how to handle those situations and parties who may not see the issue from the same position. Thank you.

Mr. Norman Miller: Thank you very much. I'll pass it on to MPP Martin.

Is she not on the call?

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): MPP Martin is not with us this morning. Anyone else from the government side? Yes, MPP Miller, go ahead.

Mr. Norman Miller: Yes, sure, I'll ask another question, then. Thanks. We have the time.

You were recommended for this position following Tribunals Ontario's competitive, merit-based recruitment process. What was your impression of the process, and why do you think you were the best candidate for this role?

Ms. Amanda Chapman: Thank you, Mr. Miller, for your question. Through the Chair: I was part of the process, and certainly it was a long process. It took some time to get to this point, but I think that's because they are

thorough in both their review of the application and the interview process.

As I said, I have a long history of being involved in dispute resolution mechanisms, and I have appeared at different levels of court. I believe that that experience likely made me a good candidate for the board. I certainly believe that I have the knowledge and experience in the subject matter to be a good appointment here. Thank you.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): One minute left for the government side.

Mr. Norman Miller: Thank you very much. Unless anyone else has questions, I think we're finished.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): Anyone else from the government side? If none, I will move to the opposition. Okay, I see none. We will turn to the opposition. MPP Gates, go ahead.

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

Ms. Amanda Chapman: Good morning.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I'm going to ask you some political questions, and don't feel bad about these. We ask everybody this because we've seen, on these appointees, it happens quite regularly.

Have you ever run for any political party?

Ms. Amanda Chapman: I have not.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Have you ever donated to a political party?

Ms. Amanda Chapman: I have.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Do you remember what parties that would have been or what party it was?

Ms. Amanda Chapman: Certainly. I have donated at times to both the Conservative Party and the Liberal Party.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Do you remember how much?

Ms. Amanda Chapman: I do not.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Have you ever worked on an election?

Ms. Amanda Chapman: I have not worked on an election, but I did work in a federal MP's office, as I noted, when I was a law student.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Which one was that?

Ms. Amanda Chapman: That was Patrick Brown.

Mr. Wayne Gates: In Barrie? Was he in Barrie then?

Ms. Amanda Chapman: He was in Barrie then, correct.

0920

Mr. Wayne Gates: Okay. What made you want to have this position?

Ms. Amanda Chapman: Well, certainly I think that it's something else I can add to my repertoire in terms of, as I said, providing access to justice. I believe my skills as a mediator are well suited to this role. I certainly believe in fair and effective, timely justice, and I believe that's something I could add as a board member.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Were you approached about this position?

Ms. Amanda Chapman: I was not.

Mr. Wayne Gates: How did you hear about it?

Ms. Amanda Chapman: I heard about it through the online application process.

Mr. Wayne Gates: What are some of your previous experiences that could help you be successful in this position? You did touch a little bit on that in your opening statements, but maybe you could do it again, if you don't mind.

Ms. Amanda Chapman: Certainly. As I said, in addition to practising as a lawyer and representing mostly plaintiffs in civil and family court—it would be an applicant or a respondent in Family Court—I've had the opportunity to work with everyday Canadians on legal issues. I have had the opportunity to deal with self-represented parties both as a lawyer and as a mediator. I believe that this appointment and having the opportunity to also be an adjudicator is certainly something I look forward to and I would benefit from.

I also believe the board would benefit from my knowledge and experience.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Maybe for everybody here, particularly on the other side of the House, why don't you explain what "self-represented parties" mean? I think you see this a lot in the system because of affordability.

Ms. Amanda Chapman: Sure. My understanding of a self-represented party is a party who is before a court or a tribunal without the representation of counsel or a lawyer. They are having to file their materials and follow the law and procedure as a lawyer would, without that education or experience.

There is a way to handle a party who is self-represented on the other side, as a lawyer, because I'm not there to advise them. There's also a way that I believe a judge or an adjudicator will handle a self-represented party and assist them, without actually providing them with any kind of advice or guidance.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Just a follow-up to that question, if you don't mind: When we talk about affordability, as a lawyer—and how long have you been a lawyer?

Ms. Amanda Chapman: I've been a lawyer for 12 years.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Okay. As a lawyer, have you seen more people representing themselves? Some of it could be because of the cuts to legal aid; they can't get a lawyer, so they're representing themselves because they can't afford a lawyer. Are you seeing more of that as a lawyer?

Ms. Amanda Chapman: I certainly see a number of self-represented parties. It's why we started the summary legal program here in Barrie—that's been expanded to Toronto—where lawyers provide service at a discounted rate to self-represented parties.

I can't speak specifically to legal aid, but certainly in my role as a lawyer and as a mediator, I deal with self-represented parties and there's no doubt I am aware that there is a significant number of people without counsel appearing in court and at the tribunal level.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Thanks for that. Because you threw this out as well, maybe talk about the mediation process. We've gone to that a lot more in family law, as you're aware. What is mediation and how does that work?

Ms. Amanda Chapman: Certainly. Mediation is a dispute resolution mechanism that allows the parties to move

away from their position on a legal issue and talk about how best to resolve the legal issues between them.

In a mediation, a third-party neutral, or a mediator, would be involved to sometimes as much as communicate between the two parties who are at odds and assist them in reaching a resolution. I certainly see the courts and the tribunals moving towards that. I believe that that is a great tool in any litigation or dispute. Certainly, that's why I did a postgraduate in dispute resolution after my undergraduate degree, and I am working on a master's degree in dispute resolution.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Well, there's a lot of growth into it, if you're lawyer as well, right? There's a lot more movement to mediation. The only downside to mediation, obviously, is you need two dance partners to do the process or agree on the process. Sometimes, particularly in family law, we see that as something that doesn't happen, unfortunately.

Could you outline for us some of the main issues you believe that the Landlord and Tenant Board currently experiences?

Ms. Amanda Chapman: Well, again, I would say that at this point, I am not a member of the tribunal, and so I can't speak to their biggest issues. But I am aware, in terms of being in the community, that there are some concerns that matters are taking time to be reached. I expect that they're working on undoing that, like every other area that's been affected by COVID. Certainly, the courts have been affected as well.

Mr. Wayne Gates: That was part of my second part of the question, so I'll ask it, and maybe you can follow up on that—particularly with problems presented due to COVID-19. What are some of the problems that you're seeing, as an experienced lawyer, having some experience in the system?

Ms. Amanda Chapman: Sure. I can speak, obviously, to my experience as a lawyer in the system. I think the courts are trying to manage the COVID situation and the requirements for us to be socially distant, to reduce in-person appearances etc., obviously, for the greater health of us and the rest of society. There has been a lot of juggling and rescheduling, but I think everyone is working together to try to bring matters before the court and to provide that fair and effective justice that the system is intended to do.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Because you spoke a little bit about your community, the only thing I know about Barrie, quite frankly—I do know Patrick Brown, so I certainly know about Patrick Brown; I think most of us do. But I also know about the Barrie Colts. They're a junior hockey team there. Maybe you can tell me—I know you briefly touched on it, but I didn't hear it, around your community involvement in the Barrie area. It's a very beautiful area, in my understanding, a great place to live.

Ms. Amanda Chapman: Sure. Thank you. Yes, in terms of Barrie, it is a great community. I live just outside the city and certainly am thankful to raise my family here.

In terms of my involvement with the community, again, I'm a sitting member with the Elizabeth Fry Society in

downtown Barrie. We have a women's shelter and we have what are called bail beds, in terms of providing a place for women who are on bail to have surety. So I'm involved with that. That is an unpaid board position.

I am a member of Gals That Give and of Ripple of Kindness, which are two amazing community charities that donate more than \$30,000 every quarter. Each member gives their time, but also their money, in terms of providing charity to local charities. So we vote on which local charity we're going to donate to that quarter, and they receive those funds towards their efforts, the last being New Path, which is a wonderful family counselling program here in Barrie.

I'm also involved in the planning of the paralegal program at Georgian College. I was involved in planning that and applying to the law society to have that program brought to the college. And, certainly, I'm involved in my children's school where I can—when we get back into school. Usually, on an annual basis, they do a fundraiser where we have a silent auction and a market, and I'm involved with that.

0930

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): Mr. Gates, you have three and a half minutes.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Thank you for your work within the charity community. I think it's so important, particularly with the women's shelters—we know about the challenges they face—and also supporting local charities, which is also important. They're all hurting for money, all the charities, no matter which one you choose every month.

We know that there's an extensive backlog at the Landlord and Tenant Board right now for hearings. With the lack of appropriate funding and COVID-related delays, landlords and tenants are facing difficult situations. Do you think the government has a role to play in fixing this issue now?

Ms. Amanda Chapman: Again, I would just say that I'm not yet a member of the tribunal, and so I can't speak specifically to their biggest issues. But I think as an outsider, I can understand that their priorities would be ensuring there are sufficient resources to meet their demands.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Just for the record—I'm going to help you out so you're not so nervous facing this tough committee—the PCs do have a majority on the committee, so I certainly like your chances of being appointed to the Landlord and Tenant Board. That's kind of how it works.

Do you believe that tenants in the province currently face challenges to accessing justice through the Landlord and Tenant Board, and if so, what reforms do you believe are necessary? With you being a lawyer, I think this is really a fair question.

Ms. Amanda Chapman: Again, I would say that, at this point, I'm not yet a member of the tribunal, and so I really can't comment on the specifics. But I would reiterate that access to justice is a very important issue and something I think we all need to continue working on.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Thanks. As many of these services—

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): One minute.

Mr. Wayne Gates: —are sought out by marginalized groups who have been hit the hardest by the pandemic, how do you feel the government should work to protect these groups, and how can the government possibly do this amid funding shortfalls in a backlogged system?

Ms. Amanda Chapman: I really believe that, again, it comes down to fair procedure and ensuring there is fair and effective, timely justice for any individual who encounters the tribunals or the courts in our province.

Mr. Wayne Gates: What we're seeing in our office quite a bit is there seems to be a lot more delays on getting hearings and getting it resolved.

We know that legal aid in the province is currently facing a funding shortage. How do you think this is affecting people's ability to access justice through the Landlord and Tenant Board?

Ms. Amanda Chapman: Again, as I'm not yet a member of the tribunal, I don't have a concrete answer for you on that—

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): Thank you, Ms. Chapman. Unfortunately, the time is up. Thank you for coming and sharing your experience and your input with us.

MR. BARTON MAVES

Review of intended appointment, selected by official opposition party: Barton Maves, intended appointee as member, Niagara Parks Commission.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): Now we will move to our next witness. We have Barton Maves, nominated as member of the Niagara Parks Commission. As you may be aware, Mr. Maves, you have the opportunity, should you choose to do so, to make an initial statement. Following this, there will be questions from members of the committee. With the questioning, we will start with the official opposition, followed by the government, with 15 minutes allocated to each recognized party. Any time you take in your statement will be deducted from the time allotted to the government.

Mr. Maves, if you wish so, you can make your statement.

Mr. Barton Maves: Certainly. Thank you very much. Good morning to the committee. Good morning to you, Chair. I'd like to give a special good morning to all the members of the committee.

A former colleague, Gilles Bisson, I notice is on there—good morning to Gilles—and, of course, my own MPP is Wayne Gates. He has effectively retired me from politics. Good morning to my own MPP, Mr. Gates.

It's a pleasure for me to be here on the other side of the desk. I spent many years—almost nine years—as a member of provincial Parliament, as most of you probably know, from 1995 to 2003, and I spent many hours on a whole variety of different committees and enjoyed it immensely. It's a different experience to be on this side of the cameras.

I'm here today as a candidate for a board position on the Niagara Parks Commission. It's a storied organization in Niagara Falls and in the Niagara region. It was founded 130 years ago to make sure that we would remove all of the barkers and the salespeople and so on around the brink of the falls and to make sure that the area around the falls from Fort Erie all the way through Niagara Falls and Niagara-on-the-Lake was kept in park-like condition, and it has proven to be a brilliant decision, 130 years ago.

The parks commission is probably what has been the biggest difference between Niagara Falls, Ontario, and Niagara Falls, New York, and the prosperity in the tourism industry for Niagara Falls, Ontario. Everyone always talks about which side of the border is nicer, and I think the fact that we've had the parks commission for 130 years has been a big part of that.

My own personal history with the parks commission is that I actually started my first job there as a 15-year-old at the Queenston Heights Restaurant as a busboy. As an MPP, I was happy to move through the provincial government processes, the permissions to build Legends on the Niagara golf course and the butterfly conservatory.

In 2001, Premier Harris started Ontario's Promise, which was something that Colin Powell started in the US. It was simply an organization that would hook the private sector up with children's organizations. The very first partnership that was created was between the Niagara Parks Commission and the Boys and Girls Club of Niagara. We were on hand to mark that occasion.

Also, I worked, obviously, as an MPP on many occasions with the board members and the staff and the senior leadership at the parks commission on the many issues that we might have had between 1995 and 2003. I'd be proud to join it as a board member.

Members should know that the parks commission has about \$125 million in revenues annually, has 1,600 employees, 300 of which I think are full-time. It's bigger than many of the municipalities in the Niagara region, and I think that it almost acts as a 13th local municipality, so it's very important to our community as a whole.

I think that my experience as a member of provincial Parliament for nine years, where I served as a parliamentary assistant to Ministers of Labour, Ministers of Health, Ministers of Transportation; chaired many committees—I was actually the first member of Management Board who was not a cabinet minister in, I think, Ontario's history. I served on some other committees of cabinet where I was Vice-Chair to Jim Flaherty, who was the Chair when I was on the economic development committee of cabinet.

I also spent eight years as a regional councillor, and I've chaired the public works committee, been on the planning committee, the public health committee and so on.

I've been active in public service, largely as a coach—baseball and basketball and hockey—over the years. I'm an avid curler and have been a member of that board, a member of the boys and girls club and a long-time member of the chamber of commerce.

I hope that my experience in government—I actually started my very first political job working as a legislative

assistant to a St. Catharines MP, so I've got experience at the federal, provincial and regional/municipal levels, all of which I think will serve me well as a board member on the Niagara Parks Commission. Thank you.

0940

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): Thank you, Mr. Maves. Now we will move to the questioning. We're going first to the opposition side. I see MPP Stiles. Go ahead, MPP Stiles. The floor is yours.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Thank you, Mr. Maves, for joining us this morning. Welcome back, I guess. You'll have to excuse me; I wasn't a sitting MPP when you were here. I have a bunch of questions that you sort of addressed in your opening, but I want to get in a little bit deeper. Just to confirm, you were elected as an MPP for which years?

Mr. Barton Maves: From 1995 until 2003.

Ms. Marit Stiles: And the riding, what was it called then?

Mr. Barton Maves: The riding was Niagara Falls in 1995 to 1999, and then it merged to become—it was still called Niagara Falls, but it took in Niagara-on-the-Lake in 1999. Now it takes in Niagara Falls, Niagara-on-the-Lake and Fort Erie.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Okay. So you've run. One of the things that we've seen in this government under Premier Ford has been a large number of partisan appointees. You'll understand this is really one of the reasons we have this committee, to allow for some public transparency and accountability. You're familiar with that, of course, and I know you understand.

I wonder if you could tell me how many elections you've run in for the Conservatives.

Mr. Barton Maves: Um, 1995, 1999, 2003, 2007 and 2014.

Ms. Marit Stiles: And you ran against Mr. Gates, right? It was MPP Gates who you ran against in 2007. Is that correct?

Mr. Barton Maves: No. Kim Craitor from the Liberal Party won in 2003 and 2007. MPP Gates defeated me in both a by-election in 2014 and a general election five months later.

Ms. Marit Stiles: All right. Thank you for that. I'm just trying to understand the political history here. Thank you very much.

Mr. Barton Maves: He technically retired me with the last one.

Ms. Marit Stiles: You're a former candidate. I'm not going to be surprised by this, and nobody would be, but just to confirm, you have contributed quite significantly to the Conservative Party of Ontario. Any particular candidates, perhaps? Would you like to refresh us in terms of the nature of some of those contributions?

Mr. Barton Maves: Sure. As you know, donation records are a matter of public record. I've been a very proud member of the Ontario PC Party probably since 1993. I've attended every single convention since 1994. I am an unabashed provincial and federal Conservative. No one would be surprised to hear and know that. Probably since 1994, I've made many donations to many different

candidates and riding associations, both federally and provincially, all the way through from 1994 to present day, and I try to contribute the max every year.

I know a lot of candidates would sit here and try to fudge, but there's no sense in me ever fudging them. I'm a card-carrying—

Ms. Marit Stiles: No. You're right: It is public record. I could probably list it all out here, but I don't think that's helpful. I think you're being very clear about that.

If you don't mind me asking as well, which leadership candidate did you support in the last provincial Conservative Party leadership race?

Mr. Barton Maves: Well, we can go back to a whole bunch of them. In the provincial one—

Ms. Marit Stiles: The 2018 one, I think, is when—

Mr. Barton Maves: I've always been a supporter of—I served with Jim Flaherty, and when Jim Flaherty ran in 2002 to replace Mike Harris, I was one of the first people to jump on board with Jim, along with Tim Hudak and John Baird and several other folks. I've had a very close relationship with the Flahertys since that time, and I supported Christine Elliott each time she's run.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Thank you for that—

Mr. Barton Maves: I'm also very public about that too, Marit.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Sure. Yes.

Can I ask you, for this position, were you approached by anybody to apply?

Mr. Barton Maves: No. In 2018, as soon as we won office, I knew the process, and so I went online and I submitted my resumé for public appointments. I checked off several boxes at the time, and the Niagara Parks Commission was one of them.

More recently, as a vacant position came available, I didn't approach anyone, but I did get asked by our local mayor if I was interested in sitting on it and why didn't I, and I said that I put my name in and checked the Niagara Parks Commission box back in 2018. He asked me if I was still interested, I said I was, and all of a sudden someone from the minister's office called me and asked if I was still interested, and I said I was.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Sorry; which minister's office would have contacted you specifically?

Mr. Barton Maves: After I had some conversations with the mayor, and maybe some other board members who might have asked me too, it would have been the minister of tourism, Lisa MacLeod.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Lisa MacLeod's office—

Mr. Barton Maves: And it was Michael Sparling who specifically called.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Sorry; who was that again?

Mr. Barton Maves: Michael Sparling, a staffer in her office.

Ms. Marit Stiles: And you know the minister, Lisa MacLeod?

Mr. Barton Maves: Yes. I've known Lisa and her husband probably since 2005. I believe Lisa ran around 2006 or 2005, and I've been a long-time supporter of hers. I probably have campaigned for her in her area, and she

certainly has been down here to campaign for me in my campaign, so I know her quite well.

Ms. Marit Stiles: So it wasn't a surprise to get a call from the minister's office, for sure.

Mr. Barton Maves: Well, I didn't get a call in 2018. Of course, that was Minister Tibollo at the time. But no, I was pleasantly, modestly surprised. How's that?

Ms. Marit Stiles: Fair enough.

One other question here, if you don't mind me asking: I have your CV here, but if you could be clear, what other agencies, boards etc. do you sit on currently?

Mr. Barton Maves: I'm on the Niagara Falls Bridge Commission, and I'm the chair of the governance committee on that. I've previously been the chair of the finance committee. That's probably the only board I sit on right now.

Ms. Marit Stiles: And do you mind me asking, as well—and I know this is quite personal; I apologize, but it would be on the public's mind, I think—are you one of the rare recipients of the elusive MPP pensions that were done away with?

Mr. Barton Maves: I've got no pension; correct. That's an interesting comment, because probably 95% of the public will say to me, "But you're okay, Maves. You've got your MPP's pension." Most people don't know we did away with the pensions. When I left after nine years, we had about \$34,000 in an RRSP that had been accumulated—back then it was about \$4,000 a year; I know that got bumped up to about \$10,000 a year or so that got put into MPPs' RRSPs. So no, I get no pension whatsoever; I was one of the guys who voted to abolish pensions.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Okay. I have a few questions related to the actual parks commission. My understanding is that, just looking back and talking to some folks locally, the parks commission has been a recipient of some provincial funding, clearly—and particularly in this difficult moment, one would expect that. We are hearing, however, that some employees are being laid off. Would you care to comment on what you know about what's happening there in terms of layoffs and the state of things?

Mr. Barton Maves: Well, in general, the state of things in Niagara Falls—which is predominantly, as you would know, a tourist community—is extremely difficult for the private sector, whose businesses have been effectively shuttered for 12 months, just having rare openings from time to time. The parks commission would be no different. They're a revenue self-generating agency; they don't get any regular dollars from the province of Ontario, any taxpayers' dollars. They're on their own. They have restaurants and golf courses and attractions where they try to raise the revenues, and they raised \$125 million in their last year before the pandemic. So their revenues, like the rest of the private sector, have been decimated for the past year, and I'm sure that they're in a position where they have to preserve all they can in order to come out the other side of the pandemic and then be able to staff up.

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I personally believe, and it's only an opinion, that when the economy is reopened and we're able to successfully

get the majority of our citizens vaccinated and we can reopen the economy in full, tourism is going to come back in a very big way. I'm sure the parks commission will be hiring up, and they do hire up in the summertime, as you can imagine. I'm sure that they'll be hiring up quickly, and I think we're going to have a very good year or two coming out of the pandemic. There's so much pent-up consumer dollars in people's bank accounts, both in the US and Canada. People do want to come. In the summertime, we did see visitation—as MPP Gates would tell you, we did have visitation here. Hotels and restaurants don't get the rate that they would normally get, and so everyone is still just struggling to get by.

There are several programs that have been helpful. The CEWS program out of the federal unemployment portfolio has been extremely helpful, to help people get by so that when they do have people come to hotels—that CEWS helps quite a bit. I don't know if the parks commission has tapped into that. I don't know about eligibility since they're a public agency, but I'll find that out if I happen to be approved by the committee and get there.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): MPP Stiles, you have three and a half minutes left.

Ms. Marit Stiles: The government is making some big decisions every day, I assume, about things like the continuance of the lockdown. We, as MPPs, are hearing a lot from people who are very unhappy about the closure of outdoor activities. I wonder if you could comment on your perspective on the lockdown, as it affects people's movement in the great outdoors in our beautiful parks.

Mr. Barton Maves: Well, as a former MPP and even as a regional councillor, I really think the government and you as MPPs are in almost an unwinnable situation: You're damned if you do, and you're damned if you don't. You have to make difficult decisions about locking down in order to protect public health, and, at the same time, you know that there's a negative impact on businesses that are forced to shut down. That's no different now for golf courses and recreation facilities.

I know half the equation would say, "Yes, you've got to shut it down because this new virus seems to spread more readily." So whether you're at a golf course or any other recreational facility, proximity with new virus variants are extremely contagious. I think that's probably guiding the decision. But those are extremely difficult decisions that you as the government of Ontario need to make. I know it's probably difficult for the government members, but also just as difficult for the opposition members, because I'm sure you get called by people who want to be in their parks, who want to be on the golf course or who want to be going to restaurants and be able to get out and about. They're very difficult decisions to make; they're almost unwinnable. Half are going to love you and half are going to be angry with you.

Whatever the science tells the government of the day, whether it be the public health department of the region or the province or the federal government, whatever the science of the day—you get more information than the rest of the public. So, I think those decisions, while difficult—

just abide by them and let's get out of this pandemic, let's get vaccinated, and, hopefully, we can have a very good summer and fall season.

Ms. Marit Stiles: I don't have any other questions. Thank you, Mr. Maves.

Mr. Chair, I do want to actually raise on a point of order that I've noticed MPP Billy Pang is appearing twice on our Zoom screen, which seems odd given that we're not allowed to have staff or anything on these calls. I just want to clarify what's going on there.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): Yes, we realize that. He's having Internet problems, and that's why he logged on with his phone as a backup.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Great. So is he going logging off again? We've asked repeatedly to have these broadcast so that the public, heaven forbid, could actually be able to watch these proceedings, and we are apparently not allowed to do that. I find it strange—I'm not understanding why there are two MPP Billy Pangs here on this Zoom call. We're not allowed to have even the public, let alone staff, on these.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): Thank you very much for your input. I believe the opposition side questioning period is over.

Now we will move to the government side.

Interjection.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): Yes, MPP Gates, you have a point of order?

Mr. Wayne Gates: I'm not sure it's a point of order. I just wanted to thank Bart for coming, obviously, and to show him respect as a former MPP as well. So thanks, Bart, for coming today and putting your name forward for Niagara Parks.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): Okay. Thank you.

Now we will move to the government side. The government side has 10 minutes. I see MPP Bouma. MPP Bouma, go ahead.

Mr. Will Bouma: Thank you, Chair. Through you: Mr. Maves, I'd like to thank you for your opening remarks and for appearing before our committee this morning, but especially I'd like to thank you for your decades of service to the province of Ontario and to your community in Niagara Falls. Indeed, you have quite the Niagara public service pedigree. Your commitment to the Niagara region is underscored through your service to the community, both as an MPP and later as a municipal/regional councillor.

I was wondering if you could dig into that a little bit more, how you see those two distinct roles, and how that would impact your ability to serve on the NPC well. Thank you.

Mr. Barton Maves: Thank you very much, MPP Bouma. It's nice to see you again.

As a Niagara regional councillor, the amount of committee work you do—as you do as a provincial MPP. But the amount of committee work I did as chair of the public works committee—I chaired the regional long-term-care renewal committees; I was on planning committees and

corporate services and audit committees and so on and so forth. You're constantly crossing paths with the municipalities. As a regional councillor, you're constantly dealing with infrastructure issues, you're constantly dealing with planning issues. The parks commission is such a vital component of both Niagara Falls, Niagara-on-the-Lake and Fort Erie that you inevitably cross paths with the parks commission and their plans and what they're doing.

After I left as an MPP, I've been able to maintain, as a regional councillor, that involvement at the regional and municipal and, therefore, almost a parks commission level. So my knowledge of the issues municipally, regionally and provincially should help me quite a bit. My experience chairing committees, my experience on governance committees and understanding conflict-of-interest legislation and so on and so forth—I think all of that will do me well as a board member on the parks.

Mr. Will Bouma: Thank you, sir. I can see shining through a quiet passion for public service, and I really, really appreciate that.

With that, Mr. Chair, I'll turn it over to MPP McDonell.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): MPP McDonell, please go ahead.

MPP McDonell?

Mr. Jim McDonell: Yes. I'm just having trouble unmuting.

Thanks very much for appearing today. I see you've had quite a career politically. It's interesting that some of the local mayors contacted you to participate in the board. Maybe you can just relate and talk around that, about your work with your community in Niagara Falls that would spur the mayor to see you as a great candidate.

Mr. Barton Maves: I just think once you're involved in politics provincially and then regionally—I have a lot of people who will call me and ask me what are my thoughts on a variety of different issues. My mayor went to high school with me. He was a year behind me; he was the president of my high school. We've known each other since that time, and then we served together for eight years on regional council. I just think that he thinks I had some capabilities that would lend well to the parks commission.

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I also served for eight years with the mayor of Fort Erie, Mayor Redekop, and got along quite well with him. He sits on the parks commission.

Mayor Disero, who is the mayor of Niagara-on-the-Lake, I've not served with, but I do have communications with her.

I just think, they've known me for years—once you're in politics, you're always around it, and people will always talk to you about it and encourage you to be a participant.

Mr. Jim McDonell: You've had quite a long career municipally and up here at Queen's Park, so it's a long history. It's great to see you wanting to continue in this line and help out the community.

Maybe I'll turn it over to who's up next.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): MPP Nicholls.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Good morning, Mr. Maves. It's good to see you again, sir.

Mr. Barton Maves: Good morning.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Having listened to some of the questions posed to you from the opposition, I guess I'm not surprised that you haven't contributed to the NDP. Having said that—but do you know what? I'd also echo the words of my colleagues and thank you for your service here at Queen's Park and to the people of the Niagara area for serving in government, actually, for those eight years.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): Five minutes left.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: If anybody knows the demands or understands the demands of being in government, I'm sure that you do as well.

And by the way, we do have a mutual friend on the regional council, Mr. Bob Gale. If you happen to see him, say hello to him for me.

You concluded in 2018 an eight-year stint as regional councillor of Niagara. I don't think you can get any closer to having your finger on the pulse of the community than being a regional councillor. That being said, is there anything you could suggest that the regional municipalities could do to further ensure Niagara Parks Commission's success?

Mr. Barton Maves: I think the municipalities actually work well with the parks commission. The fact that the three mayors from Niagara Falls, Niagara-on-the-Lake and Fort Erie are all on the board—there's a lot of good communication. The municipalities always know what the parks commission is up to, and then the parks commission in turn, during those board meetings, can hear municipal perspectives from the three mayors. I think they do quite well together. The region also has a member who sits on the parks commission. So, I think the way that's set up is quite effective. I think that they do work well together now.

Off the top of my head, could I come up with a new way for them to—maybe I can't. But I think they do work well together already. There's always room in these organizations for more and more communication so they understand each other's perspectives. The parks commission might present more often to the regional council to let them know their plans and what challenges they're facing and so on. I believe they try once a year to make a presentation. That might be something they could enhance: the communication between different levels.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Well, thank you very much, sir. I will turn it over to our next speaker, who happens to be—raise your hand—Billy Pang.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): MPP Pang, go ahead.

Mr. Billy Pang: Mr. Chair, through you to Mr. Maves: I can see that you have an established track record of attracting investments to the Niagara region. At a high level, can you share with the committee how you are able to do this, and how might you assist NPC?

Mr. Barton Maves: I think a lot of attracting investment is just relationships. Over the years, if you have relationships with different people in the private sector and

the public sector, and you're a champion of your community and you're letting people know in the business community about Niagara and about the Niagara Parks Commission, about tourism, about the community and why it's a good place to invest, I think that—and having a big Rolodex that you develop over the years is very helpful.

So just selling your community, being positive about your community and then, in my own relationships with members of the parks commission, members of the provincial government, the federal government, the different municipal governments, making sure that they're welcoming to that kind of business investment. All of those things added together, I think, go a long way.

Mr. Billy Pang: Thank you for a great answer. The relationship—

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): Less than a minute left for the government side.

Mr. Billy Pang: I'll pass it to the next member.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): MPP Miller.

Mr. Norman Miller: Hi, Mr. Maves—Bart, if I may call you that, as a past colleague. It's good to see you. I have a minute, so I'm probably not going to get my question in, but from everything I've heard and your experience in the Niagara area, your love of the Niagara area, I'm sure you're going to do a great job on the parks commission. So thanks for coming before the committee.

I know the government invested \$25 million alone to redevelop the Canadian Niagara Power Generating Station into a one-of-a-kind Ontario attraction—

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): Thank you very much, MPP Miller. The time is up. Thank you very much, Mr. Maves, for coming and sharing your experience with us.

That concludes our hearings for the two witnesses. We will move to the concurrences.

We will now consider the intended appointment of Amanda Chapman, nominated as member of the Landlord and Tenant Board. Do I have a motion?

Mr. Rick Nicholls: I do move concurrence in the intended appointment of Amanda Chapman, nominated as member of the Landlord and Tenant Board.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): MPP Nicholls moved the concurrence of the appointment of Ms. Chapman. Any discussion? Yes, MPP Stiles?

Ms. Marit Stiles: Hi. Can we get a recorded vote, please?

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): Okay. Any further discussion? I see none. Now we will move to a recorded vote.

Ayes

Bouma, McDonell, Norman Miller, Nicholls, Pang, Tangri.

Nays

Bisson, Stiles.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): The concurrence carried.

We will now move to consideration of Barton Maves, nominated as member of the Niagara Parks Commission. MPP Nicholls will move the concurrence.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Thank you, Chair. I move concurrence in the intended appointment of Barton Maves, nominated as member of the Niagara Parks Commission.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): Thank you. MPP Nicholls moved the concurrence for the nomination of Mr. Maves. Are the members ready to vote? All those in favour? All those opposed? The concurrence carried.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): Now we have another item on our agenda, a deadline extension. The deadline to review the intended appointment of Yura Monestime, selected from the April 16, 2021 certificate, is May 16, 2021. Do we have unanimous agreement to extend the deadline to consider the intended appointment of Yura Monestime to June 15, 2021? I heard a no, so the extension is not granted.

1010

MPP Stiles, go ahead. You have a point of order?

Ms. Marit Stiles: Point of order, Mr. Chair: I'm wondering if we could hear from the government members as to why they won't extend the deadline so that we the public, the people of this province, have an opportunity to hear from the candidates that they are appointing to boards and commissions and agencies. This seems like an odd thing. Why would the government not want to ensure that people are being properly vetted and that the people of Ontario have a chance to hear from them?

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): Any further debate? MPP Gates.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Yes, I'd like to actually second my colleague's comments. I can't believe that MPP Nicholls wouldn't want to have people come to this committee, and ask questions so the public can understand what's going on in this room. I'm really, really surprised that, like I said, MPP Nicholls wouldn't make a comment on why they don't want people to come to this forum so we can ask them questions. And if he saw today, quite frankly, I think the questions were fair, they were balanced, but also educated the public that can hear us. I don't get it. I don't understand what you guys are doing.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): Any further debate? MPP Bisson.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Well, I just want to come in, in support of my colleagues. It's one thing that the government is not allowing this committee to be televised or to be rebroadcast by Zoom. And then saying, "No, we're not going to extend the deadline by which we're able to review people," I think just speaks volumes as to the government's lack of commitment when it comes to clarity. I think they should reconsider.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): I see MPP Bouma. Go ahead.

Mr. Will Bouma: Through you, Mr. Vice-Chair: As the Chair knows, if it's so important that the committee be televised, it's at the Chair's discretion to ask to have the meeting moved to a room where it can be televised. Thank you.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): Any further debate? MPP Stiles.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Further to Mr. Bouma's point, I wonder again if we could have this discussion about why we are not moving this to another room, if that's what it takes. We've also, all of us, been on numerous live Zoom town halls and meetings. My goodness, Canada's Parliament is actually meeting right now virtually, online. The fact that we can't simply broadcast in any way these proceedings and that the government would continue to thwart our attempts—we have brought forward numerous motions to try to bring this online or to broadcast it somehow. Constantly, the government members have not supported those motions, for the record.

I'm looking for direction again, Mr. Chair, on why this continues in this way, of all the committees, especially with a government like this, that has had many questions raised around the partisan nature of the appointments that this government has made, the number of failed Conservative candidates—again today—who are being appointed to various boards, agencies and commissions—

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): One minute left before we conclude this meeting at 10:15.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Sorry, I wasn't done, Mr. Chair.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): One minute left for our meeting, so—

Ms. Marit Stiles: Yes, so as I was saying, I also would really like to hear from the government members as to why they are continuing to [*inaudible*] allow for any extensions. I don't even believe we've had one candidate extended so that we would have an opportunity to meet them. This is the way that this government is continuing to push these appointments through, without any accountability to the population, to the people of Ontario, despite numerous, numerous questions raised about the partisan nature of the appointments that this government has made.

The people of Ontario have a right to listen to these proceedings. They have a right to hear from these candidates that are being appointed to—and being paid, quite handsomely sometimes, to sit on these boards and agencies and commissions—

The Chair (Mr. Aris Babikian): MPP Stiles, unfortunately, I have to interrupt you because our time is up.

In regard to the live broadcast, the estimates committee is meeting in that room, Room 151, and to live-broadcast, it has to be coordinated with them. That's the explanation for your question about the live broadcast.

Anyway, since our time is up now, I would like to conclude this meeting. The meeting is adjourned. Thank you very much.

The committee adjourned at 1015.

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