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(Hansard)**

A-37

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des débats
(Hansard)**

A-37

**Standing Committee on
Government Agencies**

Intended appointments

1st Session
42nd Parliament

Tuesday 8 December 2020

**Comité permanent des
organismes gouvernementaux**

Nominations prévues

1^{re} session
42^e législature

Mardi 8 décembre 2020

Chair: John Vanthof
Clerk: Julia Douglas

Président : John Vanthof
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

COMITÉ PERMANENT DES ORGANISMES GOUVERNEMENTAUX

Tuesday 8 December 2020

Mardi 8 décembre 2020

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

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): 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 Miller. The following members are participating remotely: MPP Bouma, MPP Coe, MPP Natyshak, MPP Martin, MPP Pang, MPP Stiles and MPP Tangri.

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 a little 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.

MPP Stiles?

Ms. Marit Stiles: Actually, Chair, before we begin, I just wanted to make a request of the Clerk, if possible. I'm wondering if we might be able to get a full list of all the appointments that have been made to the Landlord and Tenant Board so far this year, in 2020. That would be very helpful. Thank you.

Interjection.

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): They will send the certificates, yes.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): And now that we're stopped, MPP Skelly, can you please identify that you are indeed MPP Skelly and that you are in Ontario?

Ms. Donna Skelly: It is MPP Skelly. I'm in Toronto.

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): Thank you very much.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): Our first item of business is the subcommittee report dated December 3, 2020. We have all seen the report in advance, so could I please have a motion? MPP Miller.

Mr. Norman Miller: I move adoption of the subcommittee report on intended appointments dated Thursday, December 3, 2020, on the order-in-council certificate dated November 27, 2020.

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): Thank you, MPP Miller. Any further discussion? Seeing none, all those in favour? Opposed? It carries.

INTENDED APPOINTMENTS

MR. JAMES MINNS

Review of intended appointment, selected by the government party: James Minns, intended appointee as member, Fire Safety Commission.

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): Next order on the agenda, a review of intended appointments. We will now have our review of intended appointments. First, we have James Minns—welcome, sir—nominated as member of the Fire Safety Commission.

As you may be aware, 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 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.

Welcome, Mr. Minns. The floor is yours.

Mr. James Minns: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and members of the committee. Good morning. I'd like to begin by thanking you for inviting me to be here this morning. My name is James Minns. I'm here today as a prospective appointee to the Ontario Fire Safety Commission as a part-time member. I'd like to begin by telling you a little bit about my background and then to discuss with you my qualifications for appointment to the commission.

I am Ontario-born and raised. As a student, I attended the University of Western Ontario, where I studied political science and economics as an undergrad, and then I was accepted into the law school at Western. After graduating from law school, my wife and I settled in the Toronto area. I practised law as a partner with three different downtown Toronto law firms.

Throughout my life, I have pursued a thirst for knowledge and continuous learning. I started off with my LL.B. law degree and a call to the bar in 1982. Along my journey, I stopped off at the University of Toronto Rotman School of Management and picked up an MBA back in 1993 to 1995. I also stopped in at York University Osgoode Hall Law School in 1999 to 2001 to pick up a

master's of law degree, specializing in intellectual property law.

During my career, I have been both a barrister and a solicitor; that is, both a litigator and a transactional lawyer. I was in private practice for 35 years, from my call to the bar in 1982 until my retirement in 2017. During that period, I practised primarily in the insurance, real property, intellectual property and media, sports and entertainment sectors. The areas of greatest relevance to the Fire Safety Commission would be my insurance and real property work experience, which I will discuss with you in a moment.

In addition to my formal education, I started taking alternative dispute resolution, or ADR, courses back in 1994 when ADR was in its infancy. The first training was a one-week course taken at CDR Associates in Boulder, Colorado. Additionally, in 1994, I took a one-week training course at Harvard Law School in Boston. At the time, there was nothing equivalent being offered in Canada. Eventually, the forerunner of today's Alternative Dispute Resolution Institute of Ontario, or ADRIO, was formed and offered an eight-month arbitration workshop course based on the new Ontario Arbitration Act, which was passed in 1991. I took the workshop program in 1996 and 1997.

More recently, I have taken refresher ADR courses at an advanced level through York University and ADR Chambers, and I have completed a gold-standard course in arbitration offered by the Toronto Commercial Arbitration Society, or TCAS, as it is known.

I've also completed the necessary examinations and peer review to receive the coveted fellowship designation from the international Chartered Institute of Arbitrators, or CI Arb. I now also hold qualified mediator and qualified arbitrator designations from ADRIO. I currently sit on the executive committee of TCAS and on the board of directors of ADRIO. I'm heavily committed to supporting and mentoring others in the growth of their careers in the alternative dispute resolution sector.

Through my career as a practising lawyer, I have appeared as counsel at countless mediations, arbitrations and adjudication matters. In the late 1990s, I started acting as a mediator in my own right. I was accepted and served for many years as a roster mediator with the Ontario Mandatory Mediation Program.

As mentioned earlier, I think it is primarily my legal experience in the insurance and the real property sectors, combined with my background in ADR facilitation, that best suits me for a role with the commission. From my insurance law practice, I've gained extensive experience acting on personal injury, business, and property insurance claims resulting from all manner of losses from all types of perils, including water, flood, fire, smoke, lightning and windstorm damages, to name but a few.

I was also frequently retained for insurance risks, including casualty and commercial risks, professional liability, coverage disputes, excess liability, business interruptions, subrogation claims, course of construction, builder's risk and wrap-up insurance policies. Fire-related

claims, for example, have included everything from arson, careless smoking, faulty electrical wiring, faulty plumbing, faulty chimney construction, oil and gas explosions, lightning strikes, kitchen and cooking fires, to name just a few examples.

The point of relevance to my prospective role with the Fire Safety Commission is that I have experience dealing with origin and cause fire investigations. I have received or reviewed countless fire department reports and fire marshal reports. I have retained, reviewed, examined and cross-examined countless engineering experts dealing with all aspects of building, structure, premises and property construction.

In my current role as a mediator, arbitrator and adjudicator, I frequently serve as a property appraisal umpire under the Insurance Act, section 128. In that role, I work with appraisers retained by the insured and the insurer to appraise the damage sustained to contents, buildings and structures, or other property or business losses as a result of fire or water damage events. This role gives me first-hand knowledge of the toll that such events take in terms of the human and property loss that can occur because of a lack of protective and preventive fire safety measures.

The second mainstay of my legal background has been working in the real property sector. I have subject matter expertise in construction litigation and transactional matters, acting on behalf of all levels of the construction pyramid, including owners, general contractors, and labour and material substrates. My experience includes the drafting and review of construction contracts and litigation involving construction lien, and contract disputes involving industrial, commercial, retail, residential and condominium properties. I am also experienced in dealing with condominium claims under insurance policies because of water and fire loss damage.

I currently serve as a certified adjudicator under the Ontario Construction Act prompt payment legislation, as administered by the ODACC authority. I am also a deputy judge with the Ontario Superior Court of Justice for the Toronto region. In our Small Claims Court, we handle a significant volume of construction and real-property-related claims.

0910

Finally, I am an independent mediator, arbitrator and adjudicator working with Global Resolutions Inc., where I take assignments involving insurance, real property and intellectual property matters.

I believe that I have the legal and substantive knowledge to analyze the facts and laws to conduct fair proceedings and to make timely and well-reasoned decisions to resolve cases consistently with the statutory mandate of the Fire Safety Commission. Thank you for taking the time today to consider my application to join the commission. I would now be pleased to answer any questions you may have.

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): Thank you, Mr. Minns, for your opening statement. We will commence with questions from the official opposition. Mr. Natyshak.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Thanks very much, Mr. Minns. Good morning and thank you for appearing before our committee. Thanks for your deputation. We appreciate the information that you've already shared with us.

I'm not sure if you're familiar with the construct of this committee and/or its history since the tenure of the current government began. Myself and my colleague MPP Stiles from Davenport have sat on this committee for nearly two years, and we've discovered a disturbing trend around the connection between appointees and the current government, in that I mean that there has been an overwhelming amount of appointees who have some sort of connection to the government, either as failed candidates or party donors or partisans themselves, or are somehow affiliated or connected with the party mechanism and apparatus.

Off the top, we have a series of pro forma questions that we have asked almost every deputant. I hope that you don't take offence to them, but they are important for us as committee members to vet intended appointees and to ensure that there are no conflicts of interest.

That being said, Mr. Minns, are you currently a member of the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario or the federal Conservative Party of Canada?

Mr. James Minns: No.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Have you ever donated financially to the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario or to the election campaign for the PC Party of Ontario?

Mr. James Minns: Not that I recall, no. If I did, it would be little more than \$20, but I've also likewise donated to other parties.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Okay. Have you ever worked on an election campaign for the PC Party of Ontario?

Mr. James Minns: No.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Did anyone within the current government—the Premier's office, ministerial staff, ministers themselves, MPPs—contact you to apply for this position?

Mr. James Minns: No.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Have you ever applied for a position through the Ontario government, through this process? Have you made an application before to agencies and committees?

Mr. James Minns: Through the public secretariat website.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: And is that how you found this position?

Mr. James Minns: Yes, it is.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Okay. In your disclosure form on the public secretariat website, did you identify any pecuniary interests that may put you into conflict, or any conflicts of interest?

Mr. James Minns: No.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Do you have any financial holdings that may put you in conflict of interest within this position?

Mr. James Minns: No.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: When you stated that you had been retained, who in fact retained you as either a lawyer or—you mentioned that you had been doing some dispute

resolution. Who is it that you have been retained by and are currently retained by?

Mr. James Minns: When conducting dispute resolution proceedings, typically I am retained by legal counsel acting on behalf of either or both parties, increasingly so in situations where there are self-represented individuals.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: As a lawyer, have you ever been retained by insurance companies to advocate on their behalf?

Mr. James Minns: You're not asking about ADR; you're asking about my practice as a lawyer?

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Yes.

Mr. James Minns: I've been retained by individuals, private businesses, private corporations and insurance companies over—

Mr. Taras Natyshak: But you're currently not under retention from any insurance company?

Mr. James Minns: No. I no longer practise law. I haven't practised for three years.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Okay.

Are there any red flags that maybe I haven't asked questions to find out? I mean, what questions am I not asking you that identify any red flags? I know that's an interesting way to get to some answers, but is there anything that I'm missing that may stand out that you may want to volunteer, any information that might come up in the future?

Mr. James Minns: No, there's been nothing that I'm aware of.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Okay, well, I thank you very much, Mr. Minns, for appearing before us. I appreciate your candour and wish you good luck.

Mr. James Minns: Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): Thank you. Does that conclude questions from the official opposition? Seeing yes, we will now switch to the government. Mr. Miller.

Mr. Norman Miller: Thank you, Mr. Minns, for volunteering for this position. You certainly have a very full experience, incredible background and work experience, and also, your educational background is really impressive as well. I guess my question is, what motivated you to apply for this position, and was it the only position that you did apply for on the website?

Mr. James Minns: At the end of 2017, I felt that it was an appropriate time to retire from the full-time practice of law. I had practised for 35 years and had turned 65 years of age, but I was not interested in retirement, per se. I wanted to continue to work and felt that it was a good opportunity and time to give back to the community in a way that I could help society and individuals. So I sought out a position through the public secretariat that would allow me to do that. I think the Fire Safety Commission is the ideal situation for me given my background and in terms of my legal experience and in terms of my ADR experience.

Mr. Norman Miller: Good. Thank you for volunteering. I'll pass it on to MPP Pang.

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): MPP Pang.

Mr. Billy Pang: Good morning, Mr. James. I think you may understand that our government is very friendly to all who contribute to Ontarians and Ontario, whether you're a member or donated to our party or not. But I want to know—can you please describe the skills, experience and perspectives that you bring to Tribunals Ontario, and the Fire Safety Commission in particular?

Mr. James Minns: Thank you for that question, member Pang. I think the experience that I bring from a legal standpoint is my background experience doing insurance and real property claims. I am familiar in general with the construction and design of buildings, structures, whether they be industrial, retail, commercial or residential. I have also, from that legal experience, gained a great deal of knowledge about the things that can go wrong, the mishaps that do occur and the importance of fire protection and fire prevention measures.

From my ADR experience, I think that I bring to the commission an ability to appreciate the needs of the parties appearing before the commission, whether they be represented or unrepresented. I'm sure you see more unrepresented people in a Small Claims Court, for example. I also have some experience and familiarity with alternative technologies, such as what we're doing here today, working with Zoom, which is increasingly becoming more important.

I think one of the other things that hasn't been touched on is I have been receiving a great deal of training and I have experience in addressing questions of bias and equality and diversity and inclusivity in terms of how people on agencies and commissions and tribunals should approach their position. So I think that I bring all of that in benefit to the position on the commission.

Mr. Billy Pang: Thank you, Mr. Minns, for sharing your experience and perspectives. Now I pass it to my colleague.

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): MPP Martin.

Mrs. Robin Martin: Thank you, Mr. Minns, for your testimony here today. I'm also a litigator by background, although I don't think we have ever had any contact. But you will appreciate that it's a bit of an adversarial setting here. Although my friends on the NDP have suggested that there are some appointments that are not legit, I guess, yours [*inaudible*] that I see, is the most common application, people just applying through the portal. So thank you for putting your name forward.

I want to just talk about your mediation-arbitration experience, and maybe you could give us a little bit of the detail of your work in this area and share with us, maybe, what in your opinion makes an effective adjudicator.

0920

Mr. James Minns: Thank you. My mediation experience has been varied. I've mediated things involving intellectual property, construction claims and personal injury claims. I think that probably the most important skill set that a mediator can bring to the table is to listen with patience, to take the time to allow the parties to fully express their point of view and to understand that; and then, through listening to what they have to say, to identify the interests that they are expressing, either knowingly or

without realizing it; and then to work with the parties to use those interests to try and reach a resolution of the matter.

Certainly in a litigation experience—a setting that you're familiar with—ultimately, the parties can resolve a matter on their own, or they will go to a court or a tribunal and they will have a decision imposed upon them. I think that at the end, most people do come to realize that the best result is one that they can craft for themselves.

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): Thank you.

Mr. Bouma, you have about a minute and a half.

Mr. Will Bouma: I will take that minute and a half, Mr. Chair. Through you: Mr. Minns, thank you so much for joining us today. I guess I have to repeat some of the concerns that MPP Martin mentioned, too, just to set the record straight that I have not seen this partisan nature of appointments here at this committee. It strikes me, actually, as the exact opposite. We've seen an incredible representation, a cross-section of Ontario, of people who are willing to give of their time to sit on these agencies, and you're just another candidate along the same lines.

With that in mind, since you're going into this, I was also wondering if you could just expand in the last few seconds on other volunteering opportunities that you've had in your community and how that has shaped how you think and look at things.

Mr. James Minns: Well, over my lifetime, I've done many different things. I was legal counsel. I incorporated Hospice Caledon at one point in time, in conjunction with our local there and members of the medical community. At the time, there wasn't much in the way of hospice care being offered in the community.

I served as a Big Brother for many years to two young lads at different times and helped them in their life. I coached minor hockey and minor baseball when my children were younger.

In my practice of law, I was a member of the lawyer referral service and would receive referrals regularly, almost on a weekly basis at times. If you're not familiar with it, you offer up at least half an hour of your time to assist people who call who have legal issues. Where appropriate, I would direct them elsewhere. Where they needed assistance and I was capable of providing that assistance, I quite often took on their cases on a pro bono basis, so I've done a lot of pro bono work.

I incorporated and served as a founding member and the chair of a not-for-profit charitable organization called Lights Camera Access, whose mandate was to assist persons with disability both in front of and behind the camera—

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): Thank you, sir. That concludes the time allotted. Thank you very much for the time you took at committee today. You are welcome to stay on the line. We will move to the next appointment.

Mr. James Minns: Thank you.

MR. STEPHEN PELLEGRINI

Review of intended appointment, selected by official opposition party: Stephen Pellegrini, intended appointee as member, Ontario Heritage Trust board of directors.

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): Next, we have Stephen—

The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Julia Douglas): I don't think Mr. Pellegrini is on the call yet.

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): Has he not appeared yet? Okay. We're just waiting for Mr. Pellegrini to connect. We're going to recess for five minutes while we're waiting for Mr. Pellegrini.

The committee recessed from 0924 to 0929.

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): We will now resume the meeting.

Next, we have Mr. Stephen Pellegrini, nominated as member of the Ontario Heritage Trust board of directors. Welcome, sir. As you may be aware, 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.

Welcome, sir. The floor is yours.

Mr. Stephen Pellegrini: Thank you very much, and good morning, Chair and members of the standing committee review. First, I'd like to say how honoured I am to be nominated to be a member of the Ontario Heritage Trust. I'm also pleased to appear before you this morning as you consider my appointment for this very important position.

0930

I have significant experience serving on a variety of volunteer boards. They include being the honorary governor of the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair. I'm the honorary chair of the King Township Food Bank. I'm the honorary chair of the Arts Society King. I was the chair of our award-winning Communities in Bloom back between 2006 and 2010. I was the treasurer of Parks and Recreation Ontario, an advocacy group for recreation and parks within Ontario. I was a member of KingFest music festival back in 2005, and I have coached baseball, soccer and hockey over many decades of having five children. I've always believed in giving back to communities.

Preparing for my retirement after working over 35 years in the municipal sector for both the city of Mississauga and the city of Brampton, I put forth my name as willing to sit on the board that required voluntary service. The Ontario Heritage Trust is a great fit, as I have attended training in cultural heritage conservation fundamentals for municipal heritage by Bert Duclos back in October 2019.

I could continue, but I believe it would be more appropriate to stop now, Mr. Chairman, and I would be delighted to answer any questions from the committee. Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): Thank you, sir, for your statement. We will start with questions from the government. MPP Miller.

Mr. Norman Miller: Thank you, Mayor Pellegrini, for applying for the Ontario Heritage Trust, and thank you for

your opening remarks and for 30-plus years of community service.

The Ontario Heritage Trust vision statement reads as follows: "An Ontario where we conserve, value and share the places and landscapes, histories, traditions and stories that embody our heritage, now and for future generations." Can you share with the committee why you believe you are well-suited to meet the expectations of the Ontario Heritage Trust, please?

Mr. Stephen Pellegrini: Absolutely. I believe a couple of words that were missing in that statement were "celebrate"—it's important that we celebrate our heritage—and "protect" and "repurpose" and "utilize." Where I am very fortunate to live, there are many heritage facilities that have been designated. In fact, as mayor, I was the one that designated Shift, which is an outdoor, large art installation established by Richard Serra. It's protected now in perpetuity for all, and I believe strongly in that.

Mr. Norman Miller: Thank you. I'll pass it on to MPP Tangri.

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): MPP Tangri.

Mrs. Nina Tangri: Good morning, Mayor Pellegrini, and thank you for joining us today. Mayor, I see that amongst the many associations that you're involved with, there are two that stood out for me. I'd like you to share with the committee how your past experiences with these committees may inform your participation with OHT, specifically looking at your participation with Arts Society King and the King Township Historical Society. Could you just elaborate on that a little more? Thank you.

Mr. Stephen Pellegrini: Absolutely. Thank you. Arts Society King, which is also called ASK, has just celebrated 15 years. It's a completely volunteer-run organization. They were very fortunate to have a Trillium donation for 10 years. I have run a gala to help provide funding. The incredible work that ASK does—it's actually renowned in York region and Peel as the model, where there are volunteers who provide, with the help of the municipality, cultural activities. And these are all different activities. People think of music and plays and things, but they do cooking shows, dance—it's incredible, and I am very proud of what Arts Society King has done to enrich the lives in our community.

Mrs. Nina Tangri: Thank you so much. I'll pass it on to MPP Coe.

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): MPP Coe.

Mr. Lorne Coe: Welcome, Your Worship, to the committee, and thank you for your public service for such a long time.

In reviewing your résumé, I noticed a couple of professional designations: one in project management and another in municipal management. Could you please share, Your Worship, how you see these particular designations helping to prepare you in your role as a potential board member?

Mr. Stephen Pellegrini: Thank you, sir. Yes, I am a PMP, which is a professional project manager. I've been that since 2003. My role with the city of Brampton was to lead the project management office with 18 direct reports.

With that, it's about organization. It's about delivering and managing things from initiation right through to closure. It's helped me well, not only in life but in all organizations, to have a very disciplined approach to getting things done.

My CMO is a certified municipal officer. It's the highest municipal designation one can get.

At the end of the day, I tell people that leadership is about relationships. It's not being the smartest person in the room; it's about how you deal with people. I'm a very, very big advocate about utilizing all people's strengths. Everybody brings something to the table.

Mr. Lorne Coe: Thank you, Your Worship, for that response.

Chair, through you, to MPP Bouma.

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): MPP Bouma.

Mr. Will Bouma: Thank you, Chair. Through you, I'll say again, as my colleagues have, thank you, Your Worship, for joining us today and for putting yourself out there to volunteer for this board.

I just had a question on fundraising. You know that it's such an integral part, and obviously, you've taken part in many, many fundraisers. If I read correctly, you host the mayor's golf tournament every year to help out your community. While this may be an unfair question in this setting, I was wondering if you'd had the chance to give any thought to how you might be able to use some of those tools in your toolbox as far as fundraising goes in regard to the Ontario Heritage Trust.

Mr. Stephen Pellegrini: Absolutely. As the honorary chair of our food bank—that is one of our largest fundraising initiatives we do in the township. With this unprecedented time we're in with COVID, this year we did it virtually, and we actually raised more money than we have ever raised.

Again, it's this connection with the people. It's about getting out and getting the message of the importance and the good work that the trust does and how—people need to understand how it touches their lives. How to connect people with—it's the conversations. There are different heritage properties that people throughout life have remembered, whether it's a drive to the cottage and you pass something and go, "Yes, yes, I remember." Those are the ways you get this connection with people.

There are many ways, and yes, I'm a big advocate. My golf fund, the money stays in the community. I ran this for Arts Society King. Again, it's for the volunteers. I would be delighted to help the Heritage Trust in a fundraising initiative.

Mr. Will Bouma: Well, thank you very much. I appreciate that answer.

If there's any time left, Mr. Chair, through you, I'll turn it over to MPP Pang.

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): MPP Pang.

Mr. Billy Pang: Good morning, Mr. Chair. Through you to the mayor: Mayor, it's nice to meet you this morning. I'm very impressed with your representation and your sharing and the answers to the questions.

Mayor, you spent 30 years with the city of Brampton's project management office. I'm curious to know how this

experience has helped you as an elected official, as well as how it may help with the Ontario Heritage Fund.

Mr. Stephen Pellegrini: Thank you. I had a very long and distinguished service with the city of Brampton. Before that, it was with the city of Mississauga. I've recently this year retired from the city of Brampton, and as I said, I had 18 direct reports, the most that any manager in the corporation had, and each of my project managers ran a variety of projects totalling over \$25 million. I was able to manage and balance all of them in terms of their workload and also, again, the relationship with each project manager. They're all a little different, and it's managing people and dealing with them.

I'm very pleased with how we delivered. When I left, we had 67 active projects under way, and all in what I call "the green," which means "running smoothly."

0940

Mr. Billy Pang: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have no further questions.

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): That concludes questioning from the government, yes?

We will go to the official opposition: MPP Stiles.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Hi. Thank you very much for joining us today, Your Worship. It's a pleasure. I have a couple of questions. As you have been involved in the political world for many years, I know you will understand some of this, but one of the roles of this committee is also to ensure that there aren't too many people being appointed for partisan purposes. Now, obviously, the members of the government disagree with this, but we've seen a pattern in this committee of a large number of government appointees who have partisan political connections. So I have a few questions that are really intended to provide a bit of transparency and accountability through this process, and then I have some more specific questions to your role coming into the Ontario Heritage Trust.

The first question I have is, did anybody approach you to apply for this position, and if so, who?

Mr. Stephen Pellegrini: No. As I said, I've always basically had—I'll call it a full plate, with working full-time and also being an elected official. All I've heard about retirement is to "prepare to have things," so this was something that I put forward on my own.

Do you know what, I'll help you along with some of it. I have never belonged to any party. I've never donated to any party. As a mayor, you need to be neutral. In King township, we have a Liberal minister, Minister Deb Schulte, and we have a provincial Conservative, Minister Lecce. It has been like that ever since I've been a mayor, where we have different parties, in terms of representation within our beautiful township, and it's best that you do not put your foot in any camp, be as neutral as possible, and I hope I have always displayed that.

Ms. Marit Stiles: If I may, then—and it may be that there are others with your name, so I just want to make sure. Did you attend a fundraiser for Tim Hudak when he was PC leader, back in 2011?

Mr. Stephen Pellegrini: Tim Hudak? Yes, I did. I have been to many fundraisers or things. In fact, I went to Kathleen Wynne's. I have been to Doug Ford's as well.

Ms. Marit Stiles: So those are considered donations. I do appreciate that there are lots of these things that happen and I understand why you might attend those in your capacity as well. But I did want to just clarify that.

Mr. Stephen Pellegrini: Oh, okay. Sorry, no—I attend as a guest, but yes, I understand the connection.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Thank you very much. I have a couple of questions. One of the things that we've been dealing with here at the Legislature over the last while is that the current government, Mr. Ford's government, is using ministerial zoning orders, MZOs, to expedite development projects. We've seen this recently a number of times. We're very deeply concerned in the official opposition. I've had hundreds and hundreds of calls and emails myself just as an MPP about this from concerned residents of Ontario.

As you know—obviously, in your position—one of the big issues here is that this process can then allow government to override other processes or what a municipality might deem important. It's a process that's really hidden from public view. There are no public meetings. It's a fait accompli when it's done, and there's no right to appeal or anything like that. But—

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): Ms. Stiles, we have a point of order.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Please.

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): Mr. Bouma?

Mr. Will Bouma: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Through you to the opposition member, I was wondering if she could explain how this line of questioning has anything to do with the Ontario Heritage Trust. Thank you.

Ms. Marit Stiles: I would ask Mr. Bouma to have some patience, as I'll get there.

I was wondering because, in this capacity sitting on the Ontario Heritage Trust and having that enormous responsibility, there is the ability, I think, for government to still override and provide exemptions. I wondered if you had any concerns, Mayor Pellegrini, about how you might deal with those issues of government overriding some of our heritage—we've had this happen in Toronto, I should just add, very recently with a property on Eastern in downtown Toronto where there are heritage concerns. I just wondered if you might comment a little bit on how this might work and how you would see your role there. Would you be willing to take on the government if they tried to override and bring in an MZO.

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): Mr. Bouma, a point of order?

Mr. Will Bouma: Yes, a point of order, Mr. Chair. Through you: I still don't see the connection between the Ontario Heritage Trust and [inaudible]. The member is asking a question about the candidate's work as mayor, but I don't understand the connection between that—I'm just seeking that clarification, if I could, before the question is answered.

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): I don't find that a valid point of order. The member made a very good

connection between heritage buildings and government actions, so I don't find that a valid point of order.

Mr. Natyshak?

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I just wanted to rebut what Mr. Bouma was saying. Mr. Bouma's lack of understanding of how municipal planning works and its relationship to the provincial government's use of MZOs does not preclude Mayor Pellegrini from answering or offering his opinion on the government's actions. Mr. Bouma may want to refresh his knowledge around municipal planning before he interjects into the committee.

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): Thank you. I would like now to return to Mr. Pellegrini to give his comments.

Mr. Stephen Pellegrini: Thank you for that question. I would absolutely support the Ontario Heritage Trust and the position that the board takes. I'll give you an example right now: I sit on the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, and I have supported the position of TRCA with respect to the recent bill that's before us.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Thank you very much for reminding us of that. It is certainly deeply concerning. I appreciate your role and your position.

I have to say, I know that it's been a really difficult time for the conservation authorities. We just saw the resignation of Mr. Crombie and others from the Greenbelt Council. I want to thank you, by the way, for that, because I think that it's a very narrow and short-sighted approach the government is taking here. So you definitely will understand, of course—I appreciate that; thank you—how important this role is in this regard at this moment.

Because you are going to be sitting on this Heritage Trust: It's difficult sometimes for bodies like this, especially when you're appointed by government, to speak out against government policy and decisions, but it sounds to me like you would be quite prepared to do that if you felt it was in any way going to impede the ability of the heritage trust to that important work.

Mr. Stephen Pellegrini: At the end of the day, the only thing we as leaders have is our integrity.

This is almost like a job interview, so I'm going to be a little boastful: I'm the only mayor who has ever been acclaimed in the GTA for two consecutive runs, and I built a city hall in the middle of doing that. Part of that is my integrity and how I approach people. I hope that gives you a little reassurance.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Thank you very much. I really do appreciate it. I apologize for those interruptions that you had to experience.

I'm going to ask if my colleague MPP Natyshak might have any additional questions, if we have any time remaining, Mr. Chair.

0950

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): MPP Natyshak?

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Yes, thank you very much, Chair.

Your Worship, thank you so much for your candour, as well as the previous deputant's. We've been charged by the members on the government side of this committee of being aggressive. I don't think we are; I think we're fulfilling our obligation and our mandate and the oath we

took as MPPs to fully vet candidates and to ask difficult questions.

I know you're no stranger to being asked difficult questions, but I want to tell you, sir, that your integrity shines through this morning, and as uncomfortable as it is for deputants to maybe answer some of these questions, it's uncomfortable for us to have to ask them of people. But if we were not to have the ability or the strength and gumption to ask them, we wouldn't get wonderful answers like you just provided to us that showcase your integrity and your motivation to serve the public at this committee so I am truly grateful for you appearing before us this morning. I wish you all the best. If we can provide you any assistance as MPPs, in our role to delivering through the Ontario Heritage Trust to the public and protecting those vital institutions that we have in our communities, we stand ready to help you.

So thanks again for appearing before us this morning.

Mr. Stephen Pellegrini: Thank you very much.

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): Thank you, Mayor Pellegrini, for taking the time to depute before us. You're welcome to stay on for the rest of the meeting if you so desire.

Mr. Stephen Pellegrini: Thank you very much, and holiday greetings to all of you. All the best.

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): To you and yours as well. Merry Christmas.

We will now consider the intended appointment of James Minns, nominated as member of the Fire Safety Commission. MPP Miller?

Mr. Norman Miller: I move concurrence in the intended appointment of James Minns, nominated as member of the Fire Safety Commission.

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): Concurrence in the appointment has been moved by Mr. Miller. Any discussion? Seeing none, I'd like to call for a vote. All those in favour, please raise your hands. Opposed? Seeing none, that carries.

We will now consider the intended appointment of Stephen Pellegrini, nominated as member of the Ontario Heritage Trust board of directors. Mr. Miller?

Mr. Norman Miller: I move concurrence in the intended appointment of Stephen Pellegrini, nominated as member of the Ontario Heritage Trust board of directors.

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): Concurrence in the appointment has been moved by Mr. Miller. Any discussion? Seeing none, I would like to call for a vote. All those in favour, please raise your hands. Thank you. Opposed? Seeing none, that carries. Congratulations.

I have no further business on the agenda. Any members who would like to bring forward—oh, Ms. Stiles.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We've been attempting to—I know and I appreciate the work of the Clerk to try to organize a subcommittee meeting. We're about to break, potentially, for the holidays again for several months, and I'm hoping that we can maybe come to some agreement to continue to meet so that we can continue to interview candidates like we did today here at the committee throughout that period.

I know that the government is eager to appoint to some boards and other bodies, and I think we should be able to continue to carry out this work over the holidays. I'm certainly willing, and I'm sure the other members here are as well. I'm wondering if we could get some kind of an agreement. I know we might need to bring it into the chamber, but I think it's time.

We saw previously over the summer last year, for example, long periods where we couldn't meet. We have a lot of appointees and we've tried to be careful about who we picked. We haven't picked everybody, but we'd like to be able to hear from folks who are going to be appointed to these agencies and commissions so that the people of Ontario can have some accountability and transparency around these appointments. I think it serves the government well, as well as the opposition. So I'm hoping that maybe we can move this forward. Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof): Thank you, Ms. Stiles. Any further discussion on that topic? As Chair, I am willing to attend a subcommittee meeting. But seeing no further discussion, I believe that the meeting is adjourned.

The committee adjourned at 0955.

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