

Legislative  
Assembly  
of Ontario



Assemblée  
législative  
de l'Ontario

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**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

A-5

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

A-5

**Standing Committee on  
Government Agencies**

Intended appointments

1<sup>st</sup> Session  
42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament

Tuesday 20 November 2018

**Comité permanent des  
organismes gouvernementaux**

Nominations prévues

1<sup>re</sup> session  
42<sup>e</sup> législature

Mardi 20 novembre 2018

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Chair: John Vanthof  
Clerk: Jocelyn McCauley

Président : John Vanthof  
Greffière : Jocelyn McCauley

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Toronto ON M7A 1A2  
Telephone 416-325-7400; fax 416-325-7430  
Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario



Service du Journal des débats et d'interprétation  
Salle 500, aile ouest, Édifice du Parlement  
111, rue Wellesley ouest, Queen's Park  
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Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

ISSN 1180-4335

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

## STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

## COMITÉ PERMANENT DES ORGANISMES GOUVERNEMENTAUX

Tuesday 20 November 2018

Mardi 20 novembre 2018

*The committee met at 0900 in committee room 1.*

### INTENDED APPOINTMENTS

#### MR. DAVID SHINER

Review of intended appointment, selected by official opposition party: David Shiner, intended appointee as member, Ontario Infrastructure and Lands Corporation (Infrastructure Ontario).

**The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof):** I would like to call this meeting to order. Good morning, everyone. This morning, we have David Shiner, nominated as a member for the Ontario Infrastructure and Lands Corporation (Infrastructure Ontario). Mr. Shiner, could you please come forward? Thank you.

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 the 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 allocated to the government.

Welcome, and you may begin.

**Mr. David Shiner:** Thank you very much. Good morning, members of the standing committee. I would be pleased to spend a few minutes to introduce myself to you. My public sector experience began in 1991, when I was first elected to North York city council, and continued when I was re-elected in 1994.

For those of you who might have been around, in 1998 the former six municipal governments in Toronto and the Metropolitan Toronto government were amalgamated into the new city of Toronto. I was elected to the new city council, and I have had the honour and the privilege of serving there consecutively ever since.

This fall, in the October election, I chose not to run and am now no longer going to be a member of council, after 27 years of public service.

But during the past 27 years, I have chaired and served on numerous city agencies, boards and commissions, and many not-for-profit organizations. In the last term of council, I again carried significant responsibilities and served as the chair of the Planning and Growth Management Committee, where all the planning and building departments report to and all major planning policies are considered. As well, I served as chair of Build Toronto,

which is the city's former real estate development corporation, where we managed the redevelopment and sale of the city's surplus real estate and many major capital projects.

I served as vice-chair of the Toronto real estate agency, which is now known as CreateTO, the city's new real estate agency, and it's being built generally in the model of what Infrastructure Ontario is. I served as a member of the Executive Committee, the mayor's committee, which is responsible for strategic policy and priorities, governance policy and structure, financial planning and budgeting, fiscal policy including revenue and tax policies, intergovernmental and international relations, and human resources and labour relations. Then I served on the North York Community Council, where local issues and planning matters are considered.

In previous terms of council, I have been appointed to the Toronto Transit Commission, I have chaired and been the city's budget chief during the city's Budget Committee, and I have served on many other organizations.

I've also served on many not-for-profit organizations, including one I'm most proud of, which is Eva's Initiatives. They have three shelters for homeless youth across the city, and I've been there to see them built—all three new shelters—to finance them, fundraise for them and operate them. I have served on TIFF, the Toronto International Film Festival. I've served on the board of directors of Mount Sinai Hospital, and I have served on Enwave, the city's district heating and cooling company, where we brought on the first major project for district heating in the city of Toronto, which is now world-renowned.

In the private sector, I have owned and operated a number of businesses. I have experience in the manufacturing and service industries and in the property management and development area.

I am a graduate from the Rotman School of Management Directors Education Program.

I believe that my considerable experience in the public service and in the private sector will be beneficial as a member of the board of Infrastructure Ontario. I thank you for this opportunity to be invited here to speak with you today.

**The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof):** Thank you very much for your opening statement. The questions will start with the official opposition: Mr. Natyshak.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Welcome, Mr. Shiner. Thank you very much for your deputation, and congratulations on

your imminent appointment here. We have just a couple of questions here. It's sort of a formality that we've been going through.

Sir, are you currently or have you ever been a member of the PC Party of Ontario?

**Mr. David Shiner:** Yes.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** You are currently a member?

**Mr. David Shiner:** Yes.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Have you ever donated to the PC Party of Ontario?

**Mr. David Shiner:** Only my annual dues to be a member in my local riding. I did serve as a candidate in 2007 when John Tory was running.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Would you have donated to your own campaign then? Out of your own personal funds, I would imagine.

**Mr. David Shiner:** Not that I recall.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** No? Okay.

**Mr. David Shiner:** No, I'm a good fundraiser.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Very well. So you don't recall, other than just your annual dues being paid to the PC Party?

**Mr. David Shiner:** Yes.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** How much are those dues?

**Mr. David Shiner:** Twenty-five dollars, I think.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Twenty-five bucks?

**Mr. David Shiner:** Yes.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** So no financial contributions to the recent leadership campaign in which Mr. Ford was chosen as the leader?

**Mr. David Shiner:** No.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Sir, how was this appointment initiated? Did you make a call? Did you express interest? Who contacted you to offer this appointment to you?

**Mr. David Shiner:** I looked at the appointments that were available to serve after the election that were online. I went through a number of them. I put my name down in particular for Infrastructure Ontario, having been the chair of our real estate company, having the experience in the development industry and similar experience, and serving now as a vice-chair of a new real estate company. I went online, filled out the form and put my name in there.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Did you apply solely for the Infrastructure Ontario post, or were there other posts that you had applied for?

**Mr. David Shiner:** I would have checked off a few others because I was interested in serving, but I don't recall right now which ones they were.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Subsequent to your application, were you contacted by anybody in the Premier's office or any legislative staff or partisan staff?

**Mr. David Shiner:** I was contacted by Alicia Markson.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** That was after you had made the application?

**Mr. David Shiner:** To notify me, after I had made the application.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** To notify you that you were successful in your application?

**Mr. David Shiner:** That I was so far successful in the application, and that I was being asked to then schedule an appointment to meet with the minister.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Okay. With minister who?

**Mr. David Shiner:** I'm lousy with names. The minister of industry.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Okay. What was the nature of that discussion?

**Mr. David Shiner:** I believe it was so he could understand who was being recommended to cabinet and whether I might be the right person for the job.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Did the minister at that time allude to any of the policy positions that the government was looking towards in relation to Infrastructure Ontario, mainly any interests in Ontario Place and future developments there?

**Mr. David Shiner:** Sorry, I missed the question.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Within that initial discussion with the minister, were there any discussions that you recall about future initiatives on the part of Infrastructure Ontario as it relates to infrastructure with, namely, Ontario Place? Do you recall talking about Ontario Place?

**Mr. David Shiner:** We did not talk about Ontario Place.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Did you talk about any other projects that may be in planning?

**Mr. David Shiner:** I don't recall any specific projects.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Okay. That's kind of the nuts and bolts of my questions for you. I'm going to pass it on to my colleague. I may have some at the tail end of the 15 minutes.

**The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof):** Ms. Stiles.

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** Thanks for coming here. Congratulations on your imminent appointment. I appreciate you appearing here.

My colleague has asked you some questions in relation to how you came to this place. Obviously, as a Toronto MPP, I'm quite familiar with your time on time on city council. Can I ask you some more details about the appointment? Have you been told how much you would be compensated for this role?

**Mr. David Shiner:** In the documents that I sent, it said that you get \$500 per meeting per diem.

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** Okay. I have some more questions, just generally about some of the issues at Infrastructure Ontario in the last number of years. I'm sure you are probably familiar with some of the Auditor General's reports. Are you familiar with the Auditor General's reports on Infrastructure Ontario and some of the P3 issues?

**Mr. David Shiner:** Not very much. Only that, in reading the brief information that I had, there were some recommendations that were made that Infrastructure Ontario has been working on.

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** Are you familiar with some of the questions that have come up in the Auditor General's reports around possible cover-up of procurement fraud at Infrastructure Ontario? Is that something you've been

familiar with? It has certainly been in the news, so I just assumed.

**Mr. David Shiner:** No, I am not familiar with that.

0910

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** No? So, having been involved in CreateTO now for some time—oh, and by the way, I did mean to ask you—I'm assuming, since you won't be a city councillor anymore, you won't be sitting on CreateTO; is that true?

**Mr. David Shiner:** Yes. I am the mayor's representative on CreateTO.

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** Okay.

**Mr. David Shiner:** And that ends with this term of council.

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** Right. Thank you. I'll tell you a little about it. I would suggest, obviously, reading up on what the Auditor General has said, because there are some really interesting issues that were raised, particularly with respect to hospital maintenance contracts and the move to more public-private partnership models, in which we've seen quite a few accusations of some ethical issues, some breaking of conflict-of-interest rules and almost like the establishment of a network of hospital officials inter-related with Infrastructure Ontario that are quite concerning and have been concerning to the Auditor General.

I just wonder if you might talk a little bit about how we avoid, in a situation where you're dealing with quite lucrative contracts—how we can do better on Infrastructure Ontario?

**Mr. David Shiner:** I don't know what the actual issues are in there. I do understand the work of an Auditor General, and I've worked closely with the Auditor General at the city and their recommendations. Those are matters that go in front of the board. Again, it will be in front of management and the board to try to deal with those issues. I believe that everything that a public organization does should be open and transparent and people should understand why it's doing its work, how it's doing its work and how it's making its decisions. But unfortunately I can't comment on those particular concerns as I haven't read them.

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** Maybe thinking a little bit about some of the things that—are there lessons you would take from Build Toronto to CreateTO and bring to Infrastructure Ontario, particularly with what we see as what I think is a government that's interested increasingly bringing the private sector into health care?

**Mr. David Shiner:** CreateTO is—we're in November, so it's 11 months old.

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** But previously it was infrastructure Toronto—

**Mr. David Shiner:** It was Build Toronto.

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** Build Toronto.

**Mr. David Shiner:** Build Toronto generally dealt with the city's surplus real estate. Coming onto the board of Build Toronto was where I worked to change the focus on the way we managed our surplus properties and the way that we received and earned community benefits. To explain that: If a property was for sale, of course it has to

go through the development process. It has to go through a development approval process. It has to go through council. It has to have community involvement, and oftentimes there may be benefits. Some, we were able to work to have a YMCA inside of it; some with child care; some with affordable housing. It was a different focus, so we weren't in quite the same area that we might have, and we did not establish any of the public-private sector partnerships.

When we went to CreateTO, one of the considerations was: How do you manage your property? We have 8,000 properties in the city. So—

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** If I may, I was also involved with—I was a TDSB trustee on similar issues through the Toronto Lands Corp, which is the TDSB's wing—similar. But I have been part of conversations with CreateTO that were more about—as you said, about developments, but developments actually around even school property and the role that the city would play and negotiations with developers and stuff.

Anyway, I don't want to get too stuck on that. I want to make sure you're aware of some of the issues that have been raised at Infrastructure Ontario and the kinds of questions that I think a lot of people will be asking about ensuring greater transparency and accountability.

Do you want to—

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Sure.

**The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof):** Mr. Natyshak.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Are you familiar with the thresholds at the provincial and federal levels to qualify the use of public-private partnerships when it comes to Infrastructure Ontario and builds?

**Mr. David Shiner:** Again, a brief review—is it \$100 million?

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** That's right. Was there a similar threshold under BuildTO?

**Mr. David Shiner:** No, but we didn't do those same types of public-private sector partnerships. It was generally dealing with surplus real estate or some of the major projects. We're working on Rail Deck Park. We're working on—and continue to—the new Etobicoke Civic Centre, where Dundas Street and Bloor Street are being re-aligned, and we're gaining eight acres of land, so we're going to build a new centre there. It has been out for design competitions. We're working on that.

We did a bridge project because it was better for us to do it down near Strachan Avenue. It had come through over cost with the city and was taken offline, repriced and became a project.

That is the nature of them. CreateTO hasn't gotten into those larger projects yet.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Okay. There's been a high degree of criticism towards Infrastructure Ontario over the years because of their increased use of public-private partnerships and the lack of accountability and transparency that those contracts bring. Do you have a personal opinion on the use of P3s to finance infrastructure projects in the province?

**Mr. David Shiner:** I think you have to assess each project on its merits—the ability of that project. Some might be more valuable than others and fit that mold.

I do know, for example, that we entered into a project on the rebuilding of Union Station that was supposed to be a P3. It didn't turn out that way because the mayor at the time didn't want that. We took it upon ourselves. We did a cost estimate. We put the project to work. It was in the range of \$450 million. That was about eight years ago. It escalated when I was chair of the committee that was dealing with it. I was promised that it was in the mid-\$700 millions and it would never get more than that.

The fault was that we hadn't really done a thorough estimate initially of what it was—it was a 10% review, and then to a 20% and a 25% review. But I was guaranteed that that was it; it won't go up any more. Now it's up around \$850 million. It has gone up again, and the cost is ever-increasing. It may have been a case where a P3 might have been better there.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Gotcha. I'm just going to circle back to—you had listed off a whole host of boards and agencies that you, over your career, have been a part of. Are you a member of any of those still, currently, and will you retain any of those memberships and positions?

**Mr. David Shiner:** No.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** This will be your only baby?

**Mr. David Shiner:** My only public sector appointment at this time, yes.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Your full attention will be given to this position?

**Mr. David Shiner:** Well, it's not a full-time role; it's a member of the board.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** While you are sitting on the board, we can be assured that this is your sole focus?

**Mr. David Shiner:** I am a very focused individual. I'm one who likes to understand what I'm dealing with to make recommendations and to work with my colleagues in a collective manner to try to come to decisions that help move organizations—

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Sir, that is incredibly refreshing, because some previous appointments to other agencies that we've seen in the short tenure of this government have maintained their roles. We question whether they're actually going to be able to dedicate the amount of time and have a sole focus on the agencies or boards to which they have been appointed.

I trust that that is going to be your initiative and I'm very happy to hear that, but it's a question that I have to ask, because there has been a concerning track record in terms of the appointments that have been made to various boards under this government. I'm happy to hear that this one will be your singular focus while you dedicate the time that you have to the board. I appreciate that.

**Mr. David Shiner:** Thank you.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Thanks.

**The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof):** Thank you to the opposition. We'll switch over to the government. Ms. Fee, please.

**Mrs. Amy Fee:** First off, thank you, Mr. Shiner, for being here this morning and for answering our questions and taking the time to meet with us and talk with us about this position.

For people in my riding—I mentioned to you earlier that my riding is Kitchener South–Hespeler—certainly commuter gridlock comes up a lot, and transit is definitely something that we need to focus on. I think, as a government, we have definitely recognized that. In our fall economic statement that came out last week, we talked about the cost of gridlock and how many billions of dollars it's costing our economy each year, while people sit in gridlock.

You previously talked about uploading the TTC to the province, most recently last winter, I believe, when Giorgio Mammoliti brought that motion forward. I think you were one of 10 councillors to support that motion. I'm just wondering if you can talk to us a little bit about that view and how you think something along those lines could help our government with working towards solving gridlock.

**Mr. David Shiner:** After amalgamation, I was also vice-chair of the Greater Toronto Services Board transportation committee. I don't know if many of you recall that, but it was out there. The chair at the time was Bill Fisch, who was chair of York region.

One of the things that we were working towards, and I think is most important when it comes to public transit, is that there are no borders between the municipalities. Currently, political borders often stop the flow of people across them on the transit systems.

**0920**

The Yonge Street subway is an example right now, where it stops at Finch. The problem with putting it up to Highway 407 is the capacity issues on it, which we know, but the priority should be to bring people in and out of the city from north, south, east, west, from close afield and from far afield, on public transit, in a good, coordinated system. If uploading the system to a central agency that is open and transparent in their decision-making and understands the needs of all the communities there, I'm fully supportive of that.

**Mrs. Amy Fee:** How do you see that benefiting the GTA as a whole for people who want to drive, for people who want to take transit, and that sort of thing?

**Mr. David Shiner:** One of the things lacking—and I won't be the only one to say it—in the greater Toronto area is a comprehensive public transportation system. Cities around the world have them. We've all travelled to those cities, and we've all experienced the fact that you can get on a public transit system and you can go anywhere.

If you're in New York, for example, if you're going from downtown New York to the Bronx, no one is telling you it's the Bronx system. They're telling you you're on the subway.

In my service on the Greater Toronto Services Board transportation committee, it was a time when the regions of Markham, Vaughan and all the others up there had their independent transportation systems. There was a model



put forward by York region to bring them together to be the York Region Transit Authority. All the members were sitting there, naturally protecting their own transit systems because it had their name on it. Their taxpayers see if it says “Markham.” If their money is going towards it, it’s nice to have a bus that has their name on it.

But Chairman Fisch asked me for help, so I came to the meeting. It really wasn’t affecting us. They presented the plan, and everybody did their talk. My comment was, “I’m here just after amalgamation. North York was one of the cities, but we’re now the city of Toronto. But in all the time that I was in North York, did anyone care that the side of the bus said ‘Toronto’? And does anybody care up in York region what the name was on the side of the bus, whether it said ‘Markham,’ ‘Vaughan’ or ‘Richmond Hill’?”

“They care about good transit service. They want to get on a bus that goes back and forth, and they want the best value for money. So if that can be coordinated,” I said, “I would suggest that everyone support the initiative to go forward.” It wasn’t for me to vote on, as I’m not a member in York region. I couldn’t see anything better to do.

Fortunately for my fellow elected colleagues up there, they went forward with it; they amalgamated the system. Let me tell you how much better you can see that it works now, because the Finch-Yonge Street subway terminal is in the ward that I represented for 27 years.

**Mrs. Amy Fee:** Thank you.

**The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof):** Mr. Ke.

**Mr. Vincent Ke:** Good morning, Councillor Shiner. Your family name is so familiar in our riding. I’m from Don Valley North. Thank you for coming out to this meeting.

**Mr. David Shiner:** My pleasure.

**Mr. Vincent Ke:** Over the last 15 years, Ontario has suffered from the previous government’s mismanagement of funds, and in return built only a little infrastructure. There is so much infrastructure that needs to be built in Ontario now. In your opinion, what are the key infrastructure projects that the province needs to deal with over the coming years?

**Mr. David Shiner:** It’s a good thing it’s coming to Christmas, because that list could be so big that maybe only Santa Claus could fulfill it all.

I think you have to look at what the needs really are out there. Of course, public transit and transit systems across the province are extremely important.

Our hospitals are at the breaking point and often have difficulty managing the flows that are in there. I know that from both my experience serving on a hospital board, and, in North York, from dealing with the president and CEO for many years of North York General Hospital and knowing their demands and their wishes to expand, and the fact that they have land but they can’t build any new facilities.

I would suggest that there are many other pressing needs right across the province. I think the decision as to the need in projects is one that comes from the government. The delivery model, as I understand it, to make those

projects as efficient as possible is Infrastructure Ontario. I would look to work with any projects that the government deemed to be of importance to them and make sure that the best attention was given to them.

**Mr. Vincent Ke:** Okay, thank you.

**Mr. David Shiner:** Thank you. We’ll have to see you up in the area, as well.

**Mr. Vincent Ke:** Yes, thank you.

**The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof):** Mr. Cuzzetto, please.

**Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto:** Thank you, Mr. Shiner, for being here today. Can you provide us with any feedback regarding Infrastructure Ontario programs associated with your work at city council with the Pinewood studios?

**Mr. David Shiner:** I don’t know if many of you know what Pinewood studios are about, but about 10 years ago the major studio down there was built and constructed and times weren’t right and the studio had to be refinanced. The city came in and took over that with three other partners, but Infrastructure Ontario, at the time, was instrumental in providing financing to the tune of just over \$30 million at a low interest rate to help the studio go forward. That has carried on since then.

Recently, we had to recapitalize the studio. There was a major partner in there—less than 50% ownership but a major partner. It was time to move on as making the capital investments that were needed was becoming a difficulty with them and their ability to do that. We were able to negotiate a new strategic partner. For those of you who might not know, Bell Media now is a 50.1% owner of Pinewood studios. With that, we had to work as well, in the last year and a half or two years, to renegotiate the loan with Infrastructure Ontario because my understanding is that it wasn’t quite the same type of loans that Infrastructure Ontario was looking to put out at this current time.

They did work with us and we were successful, and we continue to have that loan. It’s a backbone of what’s required to make the studio work. I can tell you, with the involvement now of Bell Media—I was there about three weeks ago for an announcement of an expansion of another 250,000 square feet of studio space down there on the lands that they have long-term leases from the city.

**Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto:** Thank you.

**The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof):** Mr. Nicholls.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Good morning, Mr. Shiner. It’s nice to have you here this morning. I’m from the great riding of Chatham–Kent–Leamington, and our idea of rapid transit, sir, is 10-speed bicycles.

But I want to change gears for just a moment and I want to ask: Can you speak perhaps about the issue of bureaucratic congestion? I kind of interpret that as red tape: things such as staff reports, official plan amendments, secondary land use policies, rezoning, special site plan submissions, tree injury removal forms. In other words, that’s quite a list, and I know.

I guess my question to you is two-fold: How do these processes—multi-divisional coordination and internal meetings—affect timely infrastructure development? Do you see an opportunity to streamline these processes? I’ll use a word that I know our opposition love, and that’s the

word “efficiencies.” Can you perhaps expand on some of that?

**Mr. David Shiner:** I think you’re asking me questions about the development review process.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Yes.

**Mr. David Shiner:** The development review process is unfortunately a very difficult process. Currently, I initiated a review through the city manager’s office which is going on at the city now, as they have an efficiency person who was hired in there, and we have brought in a consulting team to work on an end-to-end review of the development process.

It’s complicated because of the amount of development, but it’s also complicated because in my opinion when a property owner wants to redevelop a property, it’s very difficult to understand what the municipality really has as a vision for that property. That same difficulty then goes out to the residents who live nearby: Is it supposed to be a single-family project, a townhouse project, a mid-rise project, a high-rise project? If so, how is it supposed to go forward? Unfortunately, from the time someone walks in with that until the time they get out, it’s two to three years.

0930

When you’re dealing with anything that is that long and you’re holding it for that long, what I’ve tried to emphasize to all of the staff that I’ve worked with in the planning division is that there are three very important things to a developer: ROI—their return on investment—and if you can work in a clear, concise manner, given direction up front, it’s amazing how they can work on a project that the community supports, that they’ll support and the staff will support. But the system has to be changed to allow that, because it’s not happening now. It’s not just in the initial review—

**The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof):** Your—

**Mr. David Shiner:** I will finish up—it’s from the time a project comes in, gets approved by council, gets its bylaws in place, gets its agreements in place and actually goes to building permits. It is an extensively long process that has to be shortened, and we have to find ways to do better.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Thank you very much.

**The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof):** Thank you, Mr. Shiner. That concludes the time allocated. Thank you very much. You may step down.

#### MR. MICHAEL SMOSKOWITZ

Review of intended appointment, selected by official opposition party: Michael Smoskowitz, intended appointee as member, Ontario Cannabis Retail Corp.

**The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof):** We have Michael Smoskowitz, nominated as member for the Ontario Cannabis Retail Corp. Please come forward.

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 allocated to the government. Welcome.

**Mr. Michael Smoskowitz:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and members of the committee. I have to apologize, first off: I’m under the weather, and if I look anything like I feel, I feel bad for you guys looking at me.

My name is Michael Smoskowitz. I’m 53 years old. I’ve been married for 31 years, and I have three phenomenal kids. We’re second-generation in land development, and we own and manage close to three million square feet of retail, industrial and residential lands. I also sit on the board of directors for my family’s charitable foundation, the David and Luba Smoskowitz Family Charitable Foundation, through which we donate to many charities in Toronto plus other parts of the world. As well, we’re major contributors to the UHN and other hospitals in the city.

I also spend my free time as a volunteer hockey coach for a triple-A 10-year-old team and a double-A nine-year-old team, which is my passion. Other than that, that’s pretty much me—short and sweet.

**The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof):** Okay. Thank you. We will turn to the government for questions. Mr. Roberts.

**Mr. Jeremy Roberts:** First of all, thank you so much for coming to appear today and thank you so much for putting your name forward for this position. This is obviously a topic that has been getting a lot of attention in the last little while, given that the federal government moved to legalize cannabis, so a lot of exciting issues in this field.

One of the questions that I want to start with today is about the consumer experience. Oftentimes, we always hear that people struggle when they’re dealing with anything that’s run by government that’s not a fantastic consumer experience. That’s something that I think our government really wants to change. Certainly, with the Ontario Cannabis Store, we want to make sure that customers across our province are having the best possible consumer experience that they could have. I wondered if you had some thoughts on that and whether or not that’s going to be a big priority for you as you take on this new role.

**Mr. Michael Smoskowitz:** Knowing how large it is—and the magnitude is unbelievable. Usually, I’m used to taking a project out of the ground to its fruition and seeing it flourish. In this case, I believe that no one in this room will be alive to see this flourish, because it will just continue to grow and manifest to monstrous amounts.

But it’s very important to have the consumers have easy access to stores, and also online as well, to make sure that stores are in the right areas—you have issues with kids; you have issues with minors—to make sure that’s all dealt with. And just to make sure that the delivery and the pickup is easy for the consumer, to make it the easiest possible way for the consumer and do whatever we can do to make the consumers’ shopping experience easier, better, happier and with no complaints.

Other than that, until I actually see some of the challenges ahead—I’d be able to answer that a little better at that time.

**Mr. Jeremy Roberts:** Fantastic. I really appreciate that. Of course, I'm a member from Ottawa, from Ottawa West–Nepean, so I need to give a little plug for Shopify, our golden child in Ottawa. We're particularly excited that they partnered with the provincial government on this. I think they'll be a wonderful partner for the Ontario cannabis retail store to work with to make sure that we're delivering that online consumer service that citizens expect. Wonderful, thank you.

**Mr. Michael Smoskowitz:** Thank you.

**The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof):** Ms. Fee.

**Mrs. Amy Fee:** Thank you, Mr. Smoskowitz, for being here this morning. I'm sorry that you are feeling under the weather. I hope you start to feel a little better soon.

**Mr. Michael Smoskowitz:** Thank you.

**Mrs. Amy Fee:** A little bit about me: I'm a mom to four young children. I'm also a parliamentary assistant on specifically representing children in the province. So my question is around just that—children—and where you think your expertise can come in to help make sure that we can keep cannabis out of the hands of children across Ontario.

**Mr. Michael Smoskowitz:** You've done a great job with tobacco and alcohol, and I don't see this as being any different. If you follow the same guidelines, I don't see this as—my belief is that if you put this out to everyone, it will not be a major issue. After a while, it will just be second-hand to everyone. Obviously, kids, minors—you already have those provisions in place, like I said, with alcohol, gaming and tobacco. I believe if you keep those same restrictions ahead, you would be able to protect the minors from accessing cannabis.

**Mrs. Amy Fee:** Thank you.

**The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof):** Mr. Nicholls.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Good morning, sir.

**Mr. Michael Smoskowitz:** Good morning.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** It's unfortunate that you're feeling a little under the weather, but with the weather out there, I think we're all under the weather, to some degree.

**Mr. Michael Smoskowitz:** I think so.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Back when we were not in government and we were the official opposition, for four years I was the community safety and correctional services critic. Of course, I went after the then ministers during that time. But as we talk about this, the community safety aspect of cannabis legalization is obviously very critical to me.

One of the key issues, in fact, that I see and our team sees is, of course, addressing the black market that continues to operate here in Ontario and across Canada. My question to you is a simple one, but it may require a more detailed response: How important is shutting down the black market for cannabis to you? In other words, you know where it is. How are we going to go about shutting that down?

**Mr. Michael Smoskowitz:** I think it's the number one goal. I mean, you have dispensaries that are open illegally in Toronto now. Why they aren't shut down, I don't understand. First and foremost, they should all be shut down. Until the new retail stores are rolled out, we should

try—whether it's the police or whoever—to zero in on all of these illegal distribution centres that are currently operating in our city that should not be around right now. I heard that they were supposed to be closed by October 17, and then they could reapply for a licence. I know of two that are still operating.

I think the first thing would be to go and physically shut these operations down.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** One of the major concerns that we have is that black market versus what the federal government has proposed and now we have to implement and work on—of course, it's the quality. Again, that goes back to the safety, because on the black market, you don't know what it's laced with, versus the quality control. Down in my area, as I said earlier, in the great riding of Chatham–Kent–Leamington—especially in Leamington—we have a lot of greenhouse growers down there. The quality control is there.

Again, you've got the quality aspect, then you have the black market side of things, and that needs to be addressed.

**Mr. Michael Smoskowitz:** It does, but I don't know if I would be the one to address it. We have a great police force in this city, and I think it would be their number one objective to close down, like I said, the distribution centres and the black market and get that out of the way, so we can go on with proper cannabis that isn't infused with anything and that is actually going to help from a medical standpoint or whatever it is being used for.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Okay. Thank you very much.

**Mr. Michael Smoskowitz:** Thank you.

**The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof):** Mr. Ke.

**Mr. Vincent Ke:** Good morning.

**Mr. Michael Smoskowitz:** Good morning.

**Mr. Vincent Ke:** Thank you for being here today. You are being considered to join the board of the Ontario Cannabis Retail Corp. Could you please tell this committee how your background and your work experience would be a benefit to the board of the OCRC?

**Mr. Michael Smoskowitz:** From the real estate standpoint: Again, taking a project from applying for building permits to coming out of the ground to traffic studies to pedestrian walk-up studies to making sure our tenants are looked after and given the best possible resources so they can make a good living for themselves and make everybody happy—I think I can bring that and my people skills the same way to the cannabis corporation.

**0940**

**Mr. Vincent Ke:** Yes. Recently, we saw the news that some of the customers are not happy with the online shopping. How can we improve?

**Mr. Michael Smoskowitz:** Well, that was a tough one to begin with. I don't think anyone could have thought of how big a magnitude of orders would come through. Canada Post being on strike—I think I read that there were 150,000 orders in the first week. If Canada Post is charging \$5 each, that's half a million dollars to Canada Post. I would say, "Get back to work. Start delivering the product." They're going to be making money.

**Mr. Vincent Ke:** Okay. Thank you.

**The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof):** Mr. Cuzzetto.

**Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto:** Thank you once again, Michael, for being here today. One of the things that we feel is important for our public appointees is their sense of community spirit and experience serving the public. Do you have any community experience and background that you would like to share with us today?

**Mr. Michael Smoskowitz:** My only community involvement, again, other than our charity endeavours, is my role in minor hockey. I have a passion for minor hockey. My son played triple-A hockey and went to the Ontario Hockey League for four years and then played professionally on the east coast.

Actually, cannabis, from a father's standpoint—the way the trainers were using prescription drugs for shoulder injuries, knee strains or what have you, to get away from possible—sorry, my mind—

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Opioids.

**Mr. Michael Smoskowitz:** Exactly. My mind is not here today, sorry—to get away from that and to use a CBD oil, which would be much better off for the individual and look after the person. That's where, I would say.

**Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto:** Thank you.

**The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof):** Ms. Khanjin.

**Ms. Andrea Khanjin:** I just wanted to ask you, from your experience—you've been watching as the legalization of cannabis has spread across different provinces, since Justin Trudeau has mandated that every province has to find a mechanism for how to sell and distribute it. What's your opinion on how Ontario compares to other provinces in terms of balancing the public safety and security of our children, making sure they don't access cannabis too early, which might cause some cognitive impairment later on, and making sure we combat that black market? How do we compare, as a province, to other jurisdictions?

**Mr. Michael Smoskowitz:** To be honest with you, I don't really know too much about the other provinces; I read all about Ontario. I don't know how I could answer that question that would make any sense to you, because I just don't know about that. I don't know what their issues are, what their problems are or how they compare to Ontario. I'd have to read up on that a bit before I could answer that better.

**Ms. Andrea Khanjin:** Okay. Would you say that Ontario overall is taking the proper steps in terms of the rolling out of legalization?

**Mr. Michael Smoskowitz:** Oh, 100%. I think the online sales—I mean, there were some hiccups, but that was to be expected. No one knew how big it was going to be. As far as the retail stores, retail stores give another great avenue to developers, because the fashion industry is kind of slowing down and big box stores are slowing down. Developers, landowners and building owners who have stores—now you have another avenue to bring in, where before, you didn't. But as far as comparing to other provinces, I'm just not as aware of the other provinces to be able to give you a detailed answer on it.

**Ms. Andrea Khanjin:** Do you agree that it's a good move to put the sales online initially, and then to give time—

**Mr. Michael Smoskowitz:** Oh, 100%. I thought the rollout was great. Forget about the hiccups with Canada Post and everything; I thought online first, to see how that operates, was a great start.

**Ms. Andrea Khanjin:** What do you think of the amount of uptake? What does that really show?

**Mr. Michael Smoskowitz:** I'm sorry?

**Ms. Andrea Khanjin:** The amount of uptake we've had online in terms of the sales.

**Mr. Michael Smoskowitz:** I think it shows you that the future is extremely bright for cannabis sales. The money that you're going to generate to take care of whatever agencies or committees or hospitals you're donating the money to, or to minors or kids or whatever—I think it's a great avenue for looking after all those different agencies, different charities and everything. It's great.

I was in Amsterdam a couple of years ago. You would never know that there was any violence. Everybody just goes, and it's normal. I think that after a certain time, it's going to be normal here, the same way that alcohol is, the same way tobacco is. It's just that this is new and it's the first time it has been done, so it's kind of strange, but I believe over time it's just going to be another thing and no one is going to even be talking about it as much as we are now, obviously, only because it's rolled out now.

**Ms. Andrea Khanjin:** Thank you. I hope you feel better.

**Mr. Michael Smoskowitz:** Thank you very much.

**The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof):** Mr. Baber.

**Mr. Roman Baber:** Thank you very much, sir, for being here this morning.

One of the concerns enunciated by various stakeholders is that there may be a shortage of supply in the market. That would specifically amount to challenges in ousting the black market, which is one of the principal purposes of what we're trying to accomplish.

I understand that this is an industry very heavily regulated by the federal government. In fact, that is the exclusive pseudo producer or licensor. I'm wondering if you have any ideas or suggestions for how to deal with the prospect of shortage of supply in the market.

**Mr. Michael Smoskowitz:** Again, I would say that the demands off the bat, when it was legalized—no one could have imagined how much would be wanted in the orders and the amount of orders and everything else, so it was a strain on, I'm sure, your producers and growers to keep up with the demand.

I'm sure that, in the near future, those producers and growers that you're licensed with are going to be expanding and will be able to fulfill all of your needs with product. Otherwise, they're just going to have to grow more. That's just it. I don't see any reason why there should be a shortage.

As far as the legal cannabis: I think, online, you've taken care of that, because obviously, we're the only distributor of cannabis online so that the black market is

taken out of that. For the retail stores, I believe the policing or the checking of invoices—you're going to have to continuously check sales to inventory to see if the black market has entered that area of sales.

It's not going to be easy, and I don't think I have all of your answers for you today. But I do believe that it's the policing of the retail stores. Again, you just have to be on top of them with your invoices and to make sure that what they're selling has been invoiced out and there's nothing else in their stores.

**Mr. Roman Baber:** I appreciate that. Thanks.

**The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof):** Thank you. The time allocated to the government has concluded.

I'll switch over to the official opposition. Mr. Natyshak.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Thank you very much, Mr. Smoskowitz. Did I say that right?

**Mr. Michael Smoskowitz:** You can call me Michael, if it's easier.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Michael?

**Mr. Michael Smoskowitz:** Michael is a lot easier. It took me until I was 14 to figure it out.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Thanks, Michael. They call me Taras. That's a mouthful too. My brother's name is Michael.

Hey, did you play hockey?

**Mr. Michael Smoskowitz:** I did.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Where did you play?

**Mr. Michael Smoskowitz:** I played all over. I played for the Richmond Hill Dynes, provincial junior A. I was on a world-travelling team called the Toronto Moose. We went to play the Olympic teams of Australia and New Zealand, so that was—

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Did you play college hockey?

**Mr. Michael Smoskowitz:** No.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Junior?

**Mr. Michael Smoskowitz:** No, I played a bit of provincial junior, and that was it.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** What team did your son play for out east?

**Mr. Michael Smoskowitz:** My son, out east, played for the Gwinnett Gladiators in Atlanta after finishing—

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Is that in the IHL?

**Mr. Michael Smoskowitz:** That's in the East Coast Hockey League.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** The east coast.

**Mr. Michael Smoskowitz:** Yes. It's a tough league.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** It's rough hockey.

**Mr. Michael Smoskowitz:** Yes, it's rough hockey.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Cool.

**Mr. Michael Smoskowitz:** It's not easy on his mother.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** No. It's good, fun hockey. It's good Canadian hockey.

Thanks for all of your charitable endeavours, your benevolent endeavours. It's great to know that you carry that with you.

I've got a couple of formality-type questions here that you may have heard previously. Are you currently or have you ever been a member of the PC Party?

**Mr. Michael Smoskowitz:** No.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Have you ever donated to a candidate for the PC Party during an election or a leadership campaign?

**Mr. Michael Smoskowitz:** No.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Okay. How were you approached for this appointment?

**Mr. Michael Smoskowitz:** I was approached by an acquaintance of mine, who was also an acquaintance of Dean French, who introduced me to Dean French. I had a brief chat with Dean, and then he asked me to go online and do all of the applications online.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Gotcha. Do you have any pecuniary interests in any cannabis-related stock or companies?

**Mr. Michael Smoskowitz:** Zero—none.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Of your three million square feet of holdings that you own and operate, are any of those properties currently involved in cannabis at the retail level or any type of—

**Mr. Michael Smoskowitz:** No. We would be open to looking at it, as long as they passed all of the restrictions.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Conflict stuff?

**Mr. Michael Smoskowitz:** No. There are schools near some of our properties, so that would be an issue. I don't know what the other issues are. But as long as we pass all of the security questions, I'm sure I would have no problem having a store or something like this.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** But do you see any conflict with you now being a member of the Ontario Cannabis Retail Corp. board and then also your holding company or your companies being a leaser to a renter?

**Mr. Michael Smoskowitz:** I don't believe there's any conflict of interest in that.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Would you check on that prior?

**Mr. Michael Smoskowitz:** Sure—100%.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Okay. I'm going to shoot it over to my colleague for a couple of questions. Thanks.

**The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof):** Ms. Stiles.

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** I'm sorry you're not feeling well.

**Mr. Michael Smoskowitz:** Oh, thank you.

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** I want to say, I also am hopeful that you can help this industry get off to—well, I would say that it has gotten off to a bit of a rocky start here in Ontario, so I hope that you can help us move things along a little bit better.

**0950**

I wanted to start with a couple of questions. We've talked a little bit already about some of the bumps in the road over the last little while. There have been—I'm sure you're aware of this—over 1,000 complaints to the Ombudsman, and they're not all associated with Canada Post. One of the things that one of the members opposite raised was the issue of quality control. Are you aware of some of the complaints that have come up? My understanding is that some of these do relate to quality control, to people not receiving the right product.

The important thing about this move to a provincial body is that we can actually exert some quality control and it will be safer for people. Do you have any concerns about the way that that has played out so far?

**Mr. Michael Smoskowitz:** I think that as time goes on, those concerns will be alleviated. Again, you've come out with something new; no matter what you've come out with, you can't expect 100% of the people to be onside with you, so you're going to have complaints no matter what.

Again, I think the Canada Post strike is a major deterrent to the rolling-out of the online cannabis store. But again, as time goes on, I think those complaints will be less and less because I think we're going to get it right.

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** One of the members opposite mentioned—or maybe you've said the same thing—that we couldn't have anticipated this interest. The government likes to say that we couldn't have anticipated this interest. Walk down my street sometime and you'll know that you could have anticipated that interest, let me tell you. I'm not sure that that's the case, but I appreciate that it is a relatively new industry.

We've been raising some questions—I don't know if you've noticed this in the House—around understanding a little bit more about transparency and accountability around online retail. One of the things that we've been trying to find out is why the government won't share information like, for example, the location or even just the name of the successful contractor that has the contract. In Quebec, the public knows perfectly well who the cannabis warehouse and distributor is and who got that contract. In BC, I can even tell you right now where that's located; No. 6 Road in Richmond is where the new cannabis distribution warehouse is. But in Ontario, we're told again and again that we can't know the Ontario contractor for security reasons. Do you want to comment on that at all as a business person?

**Mr. Michael Smoskowitz:** For security reasons, I agree with that, and I also agree with the government's stance on not giving that information out. What other provinces do is up to them, but I think that in this case it's the proper way, especially for security.

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** Wouldn't you expect that they would have locks and security guards and systems in place? There are lots of—

**Mr. Michael Smoskowitz:** You can have all the locks and security guards and alarm systems—banks have that, and there are bank robberies. So you can never be sure.

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** But we don't hide the location of banks.

**Mr. Michael Smoskowitz:** I understand that, but this is a different animal, and again, you've just rolled it out. I think that over time things will become a lot easier, and—

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** So you don't have any concerns? Because this belongs to the public, right? This belongs to the public, so that's why we ask these questions. We believe that there needs to be greater transparency and that there are reasons why you need that kind of transparency.

**Mr. Michael Smoskowitz:** I'm sure the government has their reasons, and I'm sure they're very valid reasons for keeping this private. I can't comment on that; I'm not privy to those discussions.

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** No. I just hope that you'll look into that and maybe ask questions yourself about whether or not that seems like a reasonable thing.

**Mr. Michael Smoskowitz:** Absolutely.

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** The other thing I wanted to mention was that I think earlier on you mentioned that you want to follow along with what we've done in alcohol and tobacco. One of the issues that's being raised is the proximity of retail to—the government just announced that it's going to be—what?—150 metres away from schools?

**Mr. Michael Smoskowitz:** Right.

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** Which is a lot less than what had been previously committed. I think that with the LCBO it's—

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** It's 500.

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** It's 500 metres from a school. Do you have any concerns about that?

**Mr. Michael Smoskowitz:** I really don't. You still have enough safeguards in place where minors can't come into the store, will not be allowed in the store. It's not like you're going into a Shoppers Drug Mart to buy something else, and bang! you have cannabis as well. From what I understand, this is cannabis-related products only. You can't go in to buy a bag of chips; you can't go in to buy a tube of toothpaste. There would be no reason for a minor to go in or to be allowed inside that store, ever.

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** Yes, I guess it's interesting, though, that we have different rules for alcohol. That came from somewhere. Certainly it's an issue that I have, as a parent myself, but also that parents have raised with me. School boards have asked for it to be a greater distance. Is that something you would be looking at? What are the different stakeholders who would have concerns about children's access?

**Mr. Michael Smoskowitz:** Yes, I would definitely look into that.

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** Okay. Do you have anything else?

**The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof):** Mr. Natyshak.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Just to press on that point, I don't think it's so much about access to the product for minors as it is exposure. If you can envision a cannabis retail outlet being only a nine-iron away from the front doors of a school, and kids being able to see that the place is busy and maybe they're seeing some adult they know go in and out of there, there might be an inclination to build an acceptance of that and then garnering a younger demographic to eventually use the product. We want to, of course, inform every Ontarian about the dangers of using any substance. We're concerned about that.

You had earlier alluded to your comfort level with the government's approach in it being streamlined with the LCBO model or our liquor control laws. This particular point is not streamlined; it is completely different. There are some concerns, of course, from school boards, from civil society and from law enforcement that this potentially may be too close for comfort.

**Mr. Michael Smoskowitz:** I'd have to look into that, but I go back to the LCBO. I've gone into the LCBO with my kids when they were minors. I mean, you're allowed

in. You can't purchase, but you're allowed in. With cannabis, you're not even going to be allowed in the store.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Sure.

**Mr. Michael Smoskowitz:** With alcohol, if I had my 12-year-old son with me and I was buying a bottle of wine for dinner, was that making him any closer to drinking, because he was in the store with me? I don't believe so. He still has a parent's outlook and raising and everything else. I don't think you can get around that.

If an adult goes into a cannabis store with a minor—the minor has to wait outside, from what I understand. But with a liquor store, they can go inside.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Around the warehousing issue and the need for some secrecy or security, we don't apply the same metrics to our liquor control board either. The distribution network there is not held secretly, we know, because these are public assets. This is a part of transparency to the people of Ontario as to where their dollars are going and whether that operator is actually operating effectively and efficiently and giving us value for money. My hope is that in your tenure as a member of the retail corporation, you press the board on being a little bit more transparent and ask those tough questions, because now your responsibility is to the people of Ontario to ensure that there's value for money there.

The security part, no question: Put cameras up. Have security details. Take all those precautions. But when it comes to accountability, I hope you can see that our concerns and those of the general public have some merit.

**Mr. Michael Smoskowitz:** I do, and I would definitely look into that in my role.

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** Can I add to that for a second?

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Sure.

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** Just to be clear—I had talked a lot about the location of the warehouse—it's really also the name of the successful contractor who won the bids. That alone, not being able to have that information, is also—to understand the extent of the secrecy around it. I don't agree with this issue of keeping the location secret. I don't believe that's the issue; I may be wrong. I'm more concerned that we don't have any transparency around that. I think that's what we're concerned about.

**The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof):** No further questions?

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Just to add on that—

**The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof):** Mr. Natyshak.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** —in this day and age, to think that the general public at some point will not find out who that operator is is kind of naive. We will know. We just

wonder why the government isn't being fully transparent about this. There's something weird about this—

**Mr. Michael Smoskowitz:** I understand your question, but I don't believe I am in a position to answer that question.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** You're not, but you will be, and we're just flagging it for you.

**Mr. Michael Smoskowitz:** I will look into that, absolutely.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** We're flagging it for you because we trust you, because we know you're a team player.

**Mr. Michael Smoskowitz:** Correct, 100%, and I'll definitely look into that.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Yes. Wonderful. Thank you very much for being here and congratulations on your appointment.

**Mr. Michael Smoskowitz:** Thank you, sir.

**The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof):** That concludes the time allocated for questions. Thank you very much, Mr. Smoskowitz. You may step down.

**Mr. Michael Smoskowitz:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you, committee.

*Interjection.*

**The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof):** We have some business yet. We will now consider the intended appointment of Mr. David Shiner, member for the Ontario Infrastructure and Lands Corp., otherwise known as Infrastructure Ontario. Ms. Fee?

**Mrs. Amy Fee:** I would like to move concurrence in the intended appointment of David Shiner, nominated as member, Ontario Infrastructure and Lands Corporation (Infrastructure Ontario).

**The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof):** Concurrence in the appointment has been moved by Ms. Fee. Any discussion. Seeing none, shall we vote? All in favour? Opposed? It's carried.

We will now consider the intended appointment of Mr. Michael Smoskowitz, member of the Ontario Cannabis Retail Corp. Ms. Fee?

**Mrs. Amy Fee:** Again, I move concurrence in the intended appointment of Michael Smoskowitz, nominated as member, Ontario Cannabis Retail Corp.

**The Chair (Mr. John Vanthof):** Concurrence in the appointment has been moved by Ms. Fee. Any discussion? We'll proceed to a vote. All those in favour? Opposed? The motion is carried.

The meeting is adjourned.

*The committee adjourned at 1001.*

## STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

### **Chair / Président**

Mr. John Vanthof (Timiskaming–Cochrane ND)

### **Vice-Chair / Vice-Président**

Mr. Taras Natyshak (Essex ND)

Mr. Roman Baber (York Centre / York-Centre PC)  
Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto (Mississauga–Lakeshore PC)  
Mrs. Amy Fee (Kitchener South–Hespeler / Kitchener-Sud–Hespeler PC)  
Mr. Vincent Ke (Don Valley North / Don Valley-Nord PC)  
Ms. Andrea Khanjin (Barrie–Innisfil PC)  
Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde (Orléans L)  
Mr. Taras Natyshak (Essex ND)  
Mr. Rick Nicholls (Chatham-Kent–Leamington PC)  
Mr. Jeremy Roberts (Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean PC)  
Ms. Marit Stiles (Davenport ND)  
Mr. John Vanthof (Timiskaming–Cochrane ND)

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Research Services