

Legislative  
Assembly  
of Ontario



Assemblée  
législative  
de l'Ontario

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**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

PH-26

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

PH-26

**Standing Committee  
on Procedure  
and House Affairs**

Legislative precinct

**Comité permanent  
de la procédure  
et des affaires de la Chambre**

Enceinte parlementaire

1<sup>st</sup> Session  
43<sup>rd</sup> Parliament

Thursday 25 July 2024

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

Jeudi 25 juillet 2024

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Chair: Jennifer K. French  
Clerk: Christopher Tyrell

Présidente : Jennifer K. French  
Greffier : Christopher Tyrell

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

**STANDING COMMITTEE  
ON PROCEDURE  
AND HOUSE AFFAIRS**

**COMITÉ PERMANENT  
DE LA PROCÉDURE  
ET DES AFFAIRES DE LA CHAMBRE**

Thursday 25 July 2024

Jeudi 25 juillet 2024

*The committee met at 0907 in the Holiday Inn Kingston-Waterfront, Kingston.*

LEGISLATIVE PRECINCT

**The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Good morning, everyone. The Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs will now come to order.

We are in Kingston, Ontario, right now, continuing the committee's study on the renovation and restoration of the Legislative precinct. Specifically today, in response to a request from the Legislative Assembly of Ontario's Board of Internal Economy, we are considering ways in which Indigenous representation and viewpoints can be reflected at the Sir John A. Macdonald statue installation on the south grounds at Queen's Park.

BELLEVUE HOUSE COMMUNITY  
ADVISORY COMMITTEE

**The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Many of the committee members had the opportunity to tour Bellevue House yesterday morning, the former residence of Sir John A. Macdonald that has recently undergone a significant transformation thanks to the combined works of Parks Canada and the Bellevue House Community Advisory Committee. We will be joined today by Parks Canada and by the community advisory committee, and we'll hear first from a panel of CAC, or community advisory committee, representatives. Our hope is that, as a committee, we will have the opportunity to hear more about the redevelopment process and how the community advisory committee and Parks Canada worked together to ensure that the representation and viewpoints of Indigenous and other groups interested in that time period are now represented at Bellevue House.

With that, I turn the floor over to our guests for any introductory comments that you care to make. We would be very glad for you to introduce yourselves, and the process will unfold, I think, organically. We don't have a question-and-answer format but a discussion. And certainly, if you have any questions about the work of the committee, we're happy to clarify that as well.

So, thank you very much, and we have a few folks joining us, so I'll have you introduce yourselves, and we're happy to proceed.

**Dr. Terri-Lynn Brennan:** Shé:kon.

*Remarks in Kanien'kéha.*

Hello. Welcome. Welcome to this land. If your ancestors are not from this particular piece of land, on behalf of my Mohawk ancestors, I welcome you here.

I identified myself. My name is Dr. Terri-Lynn Brennan. Please call me Terri. My family comes from Six Nations of the Grand River, and I do identify of mixed heritage, British and Mohawk. I also live on Wolfe Island, so I had to take a ferry and was in line at 6:30 this morning—just to throw that out there—to make it here for your timely meeting.

I guess, as part of my introduction, what is protocol—and many protocols have been broken so far towards everything that this meeting is about and how it's been delivered, so I will share some corrections over the process of my conversation with you. But what I really would like to happen—I see everybody's name, which is lovely, but I have no idea what land you occupy. If folks are comfortable with this, I'd like you to—and those who don't have names, so I'm including everybody in the room. If you could say your name and what riding or what city, what community you live in, I would be greatly appreciative. Although I'm Haudenosaunee and we go counter-clockwise, I will honour my Anishinaabe brethren—who also share this land with us—and go clockwise. The reasons for that: Anishinaabe actually follow the solar calendar more so than the Haudenosaunee, and we follow the lunar calendar—probably something many of you did not know.

**Ms. Jennifer Campbell:** Thank you and good morning, everyone. And thanks, Terri. I'll limit my introduction, and perhaps when we come back around I can give a little bit more.

I'm Jennifer Campbell. I'm the commissioner of community services for the city of Kingston. That includes a number of portfolios, but I think most relevant to the conversation today has been my past work with the heritage department as well as with our arts and culture department and the work that we have been doing over the course of the last many years, but most notably from 2016 onward—work through the Engage for Change project, which eventually evolved into conversations around Sir John A. Macdonald.

As many of you are aware, we did take down the statue in Kingston, with intent to reinstall it elsewhere through Indigenous consultation and community engagement and

involvement. There have been some stalls in that process, which I'm happy to speak to as well. At the end of the day, we were certainly happy to participate with Bellevue House and with Terri and others in a community conversation about the redevelopment of that site, conversations about Macdonald and how to unpack his history and the histories of all of those who came alongside of him.

I'm going to stop there and honour Terri's request that we move forward with introductions.

**Mrs. Robin Martin:** Hi. I'm Robin Martin. I introduced myself earlier. I'm from Toronto, and my riding is Eglinton–Lawrence, which is in the middle of Toronto, which I think you said you had some connection to at some time—or maybe that was you, Jen.

**Mr. Ted Hsu:** I'm Ted Hsu. I grew up in Kingston, and we follow both the lunar and solar calendars in our family.

**Ms. Christine Hogarth:** My name is Christine Hogarth. I represent the area of Etobicoke–Lakeshore.

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** I'm Robert Bailey, and I represent the area of Sarnia–Lambton, which had the—actually I think it's going to be the only First Nations community within the city boundaries of Sarnia. It's the Aamjiwnaang community.

**Dr. Terri-Lynn Brennan:** Can I just hear the table first?

**Mr. Dave Ringer:** We don't have microphones.

**Dr. Terri-Lynn Brennan:** That's okay.

**Mr. Dave Ringer:** I wasn't prepared for this. I'm Dave Ringer, and I am from Toronto.

**Mr. Justin Rivet:** Justin Rivet, also from Toronto.

**Ms. Casidie Prebianca-Upson:** Casidie Prebianca-Upson, and also from Toronto.

**Mr. Jeff Dimock:** Jeff Dimock, Toronto.

**Mr. Steve Smal:** Steve Smal, Toronto.

**The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Good morning. I'm Jennifer French. I have the opportunity to serve as the Chair of this committee. I live in Oshawa. We're under the Williams Treaties, and Oshawa used to be known as the carrying place. It is where folks came in off Lake Ontario with their canoes and travelled north to the next body of water on what is now known as Simcoe Street, which is just a small piece, but the land has been cared for by the Anishinaabe, the Haudenosaunee and the Huron-Wendat.

**The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Christopher Tyrell):** Hi. My name is Chris Tyrell. I'm Senior Clerk of Committees at the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. I'm also the Clerk of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs. I live and work in Toronto.

**Mr. Nick Ruderman:** My name is Nick Ruderman. I live and work in Toronto.

**MPP Jamie West:** Morning. My name is Jamie West. I'm the MPP for Sudbury. Sudbury is in the Atikameksheng Anishnawbek treaty territory. It's part of the Robinson-Huron Treaty of 1850.

**Mr. Matthew Rae:** Good morning. I'm Matthew Rae, MPP for Perth–Wellington and also Vice-Chair of this committee. Perth county has obviously been home to Anishinaabe people for many generations as well.

**Mr. Amarjot Sandhu:** Good morning. Myself: Amarjot Sandhu. I represent the wonderful riding of Brampton West. It's nice to meet you.

**Mr. Stéphane Sarrazin:** Good morning. I'm Stéphane Sarrazin. My riding is Glengarry–Prescott–Russell, which was the traditional land of the Anishinaabe Algonquin.

**Dr. Terri-Lynn Brennan:** Oh, Hal. Want to introduce yourself, Hal?

**The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Hi, Mr. Holt, if you can hear us. We can see you onscreen and we'd be glad to have a brief introduction. We'll give you the opportunity again.

**Mr. Hal Holt:** I'm unmuted, but I don't hear anything.

**The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Well, we can hear you, Mr. Holt. Welcome to the meeting. If you want to do a first introduction and we'll have an opportunity to speak more with you shortly.

**Interjection:** He should be able to hear you now.

**The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Mr. Holt? Can you hear me now?

**Mr. Hal Holt:** Yes, I can.

**The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Wonderful. We will be glad to have a first introduction from you now and have a longer conversation shortly. So if you'll introduce yourself, we'd be grateful.

**Mr. Hal Holt:** Okay. I've scripted a few words. I'm 85 years old and third on the community advisory committee of the Bellevue House renewal project. In summary, my two take-aways from that experience are: Firstly, Parks Canada did a thorough, efficient and amazing job at organizing and facilitating the community advisory committee; and secondly, the Indigenous people on the committee were engaged and provided very useful input, not to mention they were awesome people to learn from and a joy to work with.

So that's by way of my introduction. And I have a slight speech impediment, so bear with me on that.

**The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Mr. Holt, we were able to hear you very well and very clearly and we'll be glad to engage with you in a little bit, but we'll turn it back to Terri.

**Dr. Terri-Lynn Brennan:** Niá:wen, Hal. So yes, thank you, all. Thank you to those who got called out at the last minute—really appreciate it.

It's tradition, in Indigenous societies, to know who's around the table, always. You want to ensure that everyone is here in a good way. The first thing I actually said to you in the Mohawk language—after “hello,” which is “shé:kon”—I said “skén:nen'kowa séwa:kwe'kon.” And what that means is that I hope that you have come to this conversation in carrying the great peace. If you know anything about Haudenosaunee or Six Nations culture, you know that we abide by the great law, and it's the Great Law of Peace process which is our constitution. By offering an opening with that statement, I'm basically saying that if you've come together honestly and sincerely with open ears and a good heart and a clear mind, then this conversation is going to be fruitful. If you have come with an agenda or expectations, then you might be disappointed

that we haven't met them, because not everybody around the table knows individual expectations.

**0920**

The protocols that have been broken so far is the invite—sorry, Chris; this isn't personal. I worked at Queen's Park. Stéphane, my first job out of university—actually, I was finishing university—I had a summer position, replacing a woman who went on maternity leave, for Noble Villeneuve at Queen's Park.

**Mr. Stéphane Sarrazin:** Oh! Wow.

**Dr. Terri-Lynn Brennan:** I was there for four months and had the pleasure of working for Noble, a wonderful man. I'm partisanly not part of that world, but he was a man who covered all areas of partisan politics, so it was a joy to work there for him. Harris was not in power at the time; just throwing that out there.

The way that the government works—and I understand very clearly the language, the approach, those scripted letters. They're informal. They're colonial, so much, in the language, and very worrying. The reason that Grandmother Blue Skies is not here is that she has been wrestling with that invitation and the language of that invitation for four days. We met on Tuesday, and she was extremely nervous about it because of the way that it was going to be set up.

We're in circle, but I'm part of a grilling platform right now. You're all sitting with your names. Jennifer and I were not given names, so there's a dissociation there of us not getting names—you knew we were coming—in that manner. You do have food, so that's good. Although the Haudenosaunee don't necessarily always smudge, it is good to have the medicines available and to know that the opportunity to have medicines available is there.

It's not meant to be a formal grilling when we have conversations. Even our Chiefs, longhouse or elected, don't go into every conversation with an expectation to have this level of colonial expectational oppression—because that is what it feels like. And so, Grandmother Blue Skies declined at the last minute last night. She was going to come and support me, and I was going to come in and defend her and our traditions and our protocols, but she chose, for the betterment of her own health, to not come.

I wanted to share that in the sense that what and how you do things is just as important as the questions you ask when you work with Indigenous peoples. You need to understand how to greet Indigenous peoples not just through your process, but through their process.

I was extremely happy to notice that many of you mentioned the First Nations land that you're on. That's an excellent start. You should all know that, even those in Tkaronto. You should know a little bit about the history of how those lands came to now house you and give you the privilege of living there in such a healthy way. We are very privileged in this country. As someone who has lived on four continents, I can honestly tell you that we are extremely lucky to live in this country and everybody needs to take note of that.

Professionally, I'm now an equity consultant. I have a background, I mentioned at the very beginning, in politics, which 35 years ago—actually, more than 35 years ago. I

then became an archaeologist, much like my previous boss, by the way—Dr. Campbell, beside me. From archaeology, I went into education and then travelled the world with education and archaeology, and then came back to Canada, to a time that was very much a revolutionary time; it was 2013. The movement was happening towards having Indigenous voices stand up and tell our stories and tell our truths, of which you're all, I'm sure, aware—of 2015's TRC reports.

For the last 10 years—I worked at the city of Kingston in cultural services for seven of those years, and for the last—oh, no, I guess it's less than that. I worked at cultural services for just over four years, because I've now been a consultant in the community for seven. I have tried to be very fair within the community, and I have supported it even when I was in my role at the city. I helped formulate the beginning seeds for Engage for Change and saw through the first phase before I left my post there. I have helped support the writing of land acknowledgements—of which our current municipal government uses, of which my township county government uses, on Wolfe Island. And I've tried to support various equity actions as well as I can and/or recommend folks I know across the sector in different areas of the province, if not country—because it's hard for me to walk into Squamish territory in downtown Vancouver and culturally know what's appropriate. Knowing who is in your own community and can help serve your own education is important. And there's somebody in every community, at least one person.

It has been my pleasure to work with Parks Canada for the last five years. It started with a coffee date on a patio here in Kingston with Hugh Ostrom, who you will meet later, and Elizabeth Pilon, who is the site manager for Bellevue House, who many, I hope, met yesterday. And it was between the two of them that we struck a conversation to basically start to tell the truth in that building; as a building that is the only national space dedicated to John A. Macdonald, it is an important place to do it right, but to do it honestly. Starting with what was there before Bellevue House, what was there before Macdonald, was really important to lay the groundwork of knowing how things changed to put Macdonald into this community and raise the fervour of the man who became the first Prime Minister of this land called Canada—and tells a story in a more equitable, if not equal, way. We went through that journey for five years together, and I can honestly say—and I have honestly said, in public—I've never worked with a more open, listening, humble group of people as the people who work at Bellevue House. They cried tears. We all shared lots of laughter, as well as good food, which is very important—because you have to understand how colonization has affected not just Indigenous peoples but everyone else who hasn't been part of the privileged classes or races or faith or ability or gender. And once you start to take a look at your own knowledge, or lack thereof, you can then maybe be directed to getting more informed.

**0930**

On that note, I'm going to leave it there, because I'm sure questions will bring out a little bit more. Niá:wen.

**The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Thank you, Terri.

As this committee doesn't tend to have a formal process of a back-and-forth, if there is a committee member that would like to ask a question now or if we would continue with Ms. Campbell and have a discussion, I will—I'm looking around the room. Okay. Mr. West.

**MPP Jamie West:** I don't have a question. I want to start first by thanking you for waking up so early and thanking you for the smudging and for having difficult conversations with us. I'm often reminded, sometimes, when things happen that are offensive, to see them through the lens of if it's intentional or if it's arrogance or if it's just ignorance. I would like to think that what happened today was ignorance and not—I know my colleagues well. I just want to offer apologies. If we offended you or Eartha or anybody, it certainly wasn't intentional, and we're taking this as an opportunity to learn. So thank you for this.

**Dr. Terri-Lynn Brennan:** Niá:wen, Jamie. I always walk into these types of meetings—I'm not uncomfortable, but my goal is to make others get used to feeling uncomfortable, and then work with that towards your own education and learning.

I definitely don't think anything was intentional. I know for a fact it wasn't. But that's why it's important to hear what might be a different way to have these conversations with Indigenous peoples and learn the protocols of your home communities or wherever you are going, to understand how to, basically, interpret a world view that you have never been exposed to. You will never fully grasp it, but at least you can understand how to offer respect and, therefore, in turn, earn respect. So thank you.

**The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Okay. Did you—  
*Interjection.*

**The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** In that case, I think—I'm watching people furiously taking notes. We're looking forward to having a full day's discussion, actually, so maybe we'll continue with Ms. Campbell.

**Ms. Jennifer Campbell:** Thanks, Terri, for those comments and remarks. They echo, I think, closely the experience that the city certainly has had in its conversation within its own administration and within our own relationships with community. I think that those did lead into some of the conversations that had been carried on then and through the work that has been under way at Bellevue House.

My comments are going to be less directed towards the Bellevue House Community Advisory Committee and more toward some of what Terri commented on and some reflection I may offer to this group on the approach that was taken by the city, which does lead to that Bellevue House component, to a degree. I offer that not because the city has found the path, but I think we have found our own humility in these conversations, and also found that a path is kind of co-created and that that conversation does begin in relationship. You cannot simply begin a conversation regarding, for many, one of the most traumatic figures in Canadian history without that being grounded in a true relationship, with a series of open well-understood intents. I'm not criticizing or offering any suggestion that the intents here are not correct, but conveying those intents

and building a relationship that will allow for the kind of conversation that results in something that I think we've now seen happening at Bellevue House takes time. I say that as a municipal bureaucrat reflecting on the realities of what it takes to build community relationship within, often, politically governed timelines—again, not a criticism, but a true reality.

Just to echo that point, the city's relationship, if we can call it that, with urban Indigenous community members within Kingston has been a generation long in its making, good and bad. Intentions, certainly, I think, were kind of reformed and put back on the table in the best way we could in and around 2016, coinciding with the TRC but also with work that was happening within the community, that Terri-Lynn was actually involved in at the time, sitting down and talking about what people wanted, what they needed to see within the community, what priorities did urban Indigenous community members have and how could the city help to respond to them.

I share that because it isn't that one day we said we have to have a discussion regarding a Macdonald statue. It was part of an evolution of conversation and those relationships, because I think we had the opportunity to stumble, to trip, to find, to rebuild and to gain and earn trust between different members of the Kingston community at the highest level. We were able, then, to have some very challenging conversations regarding—a statue is an object. What you're engaging in is a dialogue about identity, about people's sense of their history and their relationship to this land. It is not just a discussion about how do we put a plaque adjacent to a statue and call it representative of an entire nation's perspectives on a Prime Minister and all the government and all the people that came before and after him.

Again, I'm just echoing that, because I think the work moving forward has to be grounded in relationship, and I do think when the city of Kingston was engaged in its own conversation about how do we represent; reinterpret more equitably, we hope, with inclusion; bring people to the conversation on Macdonald—we understood, from the very beginning, it required us to challenge our processes. It required us to challenge our typical ways of administering government at the municipal level. And I say that just right at its core, we formed a Sir John A. working group at the city of Kingston—this was prior to the statue being put into storage. At that time, the intent was to build a more equitable understanding of Macdonald and to offer better information about him and his relationship to all Canadians and visitors to this land today, and Indigenous peoples, whose land it is. When we formed that working group, it required us to actually say to our council at the time, "Our current working group structures will not suffice. We cannot have members of municipal government select the membership of this committee." That is inherently a top-down approach. We had to create—and we were working with First Peoples Group, members of which supported the ordering of the TRC, and we worked with them because we said, "We've got to carve a new process."



One of the suggestions that we did move forward, ultimately, was that council had the authority to appoint three individuals to that committee. They had to acknowledge, for reasons of the Municipal Act and others, the other membership of the committee, but they did not select them. That committee membership ended up being three community members who could put themselves forward through a nomination and then a political selection process. It involved, then, three urban Indigenous community members who were selected through circle-based conversation with urban Indigenous community members, and it resulted in two nations, Alderville First Nation and Tyendinaga, the Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte, being asked if they would like to participate, and if they would, in what way and with who as their representative. We were very fortunate that Chief Maracle and then-Chief Mowat of Alderville First Nation agreed to sit on that working group. So our working group had five Indigenous community members of varying relationships, varying territories, nations, representation, from the Métis etc. I just raise that because, fundamentally, to Terri's opening comment of how we do things and how we engage in conversations that are as weighty as this—again, this is not a conversation about a statue, and anyone involved in this moving forward will come to understand that very dearly.

We moved forward with our committee. Ultimately, our statue was put into storage with intent to install it within the Catarqui Cemetery. Subsequently, the board of the cemetery removed their agreement to that positioning. Our statue remains in storage. Our intents remain toward community consultation and discussion. We then have regrouped, if you will, with our working group to be thinking about how in other ways do we as the city have a responsibility to the story of Macdonald.

As many of you and I think all of you know, Kingston is Macdonald's Canadian hometown, although he was not born here. But he lived here; he died; he's buried—he lay in state in Kingston city hall. I have always said he is woven into the history of this land.

0940

But we also know that every single person who visits Kingston and engages with that story is not just engaging with the local Kingston component of it.

Bellevue House, I think, has done an admirable job of trying to figure out how to tell a story that is as big as this nation. Trying to contain that within one place and space, and consideration of the balance of voices, is an incredible task to try to take on.

A couple of other closing thoughts before we move forward: I would say the ask, the intent, who is being asked, how they're being brought to the table, understanding what you are asking of people and what their information will be used for or result in—who ultimately has the authority and the power? If you form a committee of community members, if you bring Indigenous representation, urban Indigenous nations, Métis and Inuit to the table, what ultimately is the control you're offering to them? What decision-making authority are you able to extend? I'm not saying that to suggest that you can extend

all decision-making authority; that is okay. But being very honest and upfront about what the decision-making authority is—I remember, in the earliest days of my conversations with the Bellevue House committee at the staff level and Terri-Lynn being involved, a conversation about “what are you asking people to do,” but also having them understand what authority they have within that conversation. I think there was an excellent job done in describing that, so that people knew, and they then were not surprised when things they had shared maybe weren't able to move forward. That was discussed; it was reviewed. The decisions were well articulated in terms of whose power was being brought forward in those spaces. It's a journey; it's one, certainly, the city continues on, and it's one I know Bellevue House will continue on—because I think my closing comment to this opening set would be the discussion of the legacy impacts of Macdonald will not end with the rewriting of a plaque. As this nation continues to grow, as we continue to evolve, as we come to understand our collective and shared history better, our relationship to that history will change, and our perception of how we need to relate to it will change, as well.

So I don't think Bellevue House is done by a long shot. I don't think that if you interpret a statue differently, you will be done either, and I don't think the city of Kingston will either. It is not something that ends. I would say that that is really what the intent of rebuilding relationship and understanding with Indigenous communities, for us, has certainly been—the learning over the course of our time in this conversation.

**The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Thank you, Jennifer.

Are there committee members who would like—I'm going to put myself on the speakers list in that case.

A bit of background, perhaps, of how we came to this table in Kingston: The committee has been tasked, as I mentioned in the introduction, with representing Indigenous perspectives and viewpoints at the installation of the Sir John A. Macdonald statue at Queen's Park. Because we knew of, to some extent, the work that has been done at Bellevue House—rather, we didn't know the work that had been done to get to this point, but certainly, in Kingston and its connection to Sir John A. Macdonald, that we were interested in doing exactly what we have been doing, which is asking people who have been involved in that process to share, maybe, some of the learnings, some of the—if they were in our position—ideas about how to approach or engage.

The committee had actually done some thoughtful work to figure out how to capture what we have learned. Yesterday was an opportunity to walk around and engage with spaces and places and have conversations, but each of the members then remembers what they remember or gathered what they gathered, and we wanted to have an official written record portion, which is what you see here today, and having Hansard—so that there is a place where this is written down, to refer to for later and for people to learn, but also that accountability piece.

I know that we had talked about whether we would have people come virtually, whether we would do this in

person, so that was a choice that we made. But to the earlier comments of how to engage or invite, I think all of us are thinking, “Okay, that’s new information. How will we approach some of the next conversations that we have?” I, as Chair, am grateful for that because, ultimately, I sign my name to those letters. So we will have more of an opportunity to re-approach those.

The committee at this stage is looking at the renovation and restoration of Queen’s Park as a whole, as a footprint—the building and the grounds. We are still, as a committee, figuring out what that responsibility actually is. We gather information and members down the road will live with the next building and all of that. That is an evolving process in terms of the renovation/restoration.

Separately, but not disconnected, we have been asked to look at the statue specifically. The committee has yet to decide what to do with that information: if it’s a matter of a report shared back with the Legislature, if it is recommendations, if it is a matter of a summary and how that will look. So to your point of authority and decision-making, the committee has yet to decide what its voice will be in the process. We haven’t learned what we haven’t learned yet, so hearing from different groups, how we share their perspectives—and ultimately, this is a committee. Whether it’s the Board of Internal Economy, the Legislative Assembly, the government that ultimately will make decisions—so sharing specifics of authority, I think we are also in that process in terms of expectations at this point.

Are there members who have thoughts or comments at this point? We can engage with Mr. Holt. Mr. Holt, can you hear—

*Interjection.*

**The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Oh, I’m sorry, Mr. Rae. Just a moment, Mr. Holt; not yet.

Mr. Rae.

**Mr. Matthew Rae:** Just building off of the Chair’s comments earlier, as she mentioned, we have the very large project of the Queen’s Park restoration, and that is an evolving process and everything that is included within it. If either of you—I know Terri mentioned she has worked in that area and that building.

Obviously, if you walk into Queen’s Park right now, there’s a lot of old white men on the walls. So, obviously, it’s a discussion we’ve already had at a very high level on some of these areas. I know we have currently one Indigenous member, Sol, serving in the Legislative Assembly. He has sat at this committee table, subbed on for the members of the opposition. His very preliminary advice has been very beneficial, as well, in some of those deliberations.

Around Sir John A. itself, as the Chair mentioned and as Terri may know, the Board of Internal Economy really is essentially the power who will decide. So whether it’s a report or the recommendation, Jennifer’s comments on how you set up the working group were, at least from my perspective, very beneficial, because most people think, “Oh, it’s like a city committee and they just appoint all the people or there is a nomination process.” But I appreciate

you pulling out where you went to the local Indigenous groups, the Indigenous groups in the area, and asked them, through their processes, to select individuals to serve on the committee. I think that’s something very beneficial to recommend to the Board of Internal Economy, because they are the ones—as was made very clear to us in the letter, we do not decide what is the end state. So I do appreciate Terri’s comments around the process, to use that language, on the committee itself.

Queen’s Park and our system of government, British government, is very old and very rigid, and so I think your comments are well received by the committee. Even just outside this committee meeting, some of the suggestions like name tags—that’s true; even at Queen’s Park, I think it’s only for ministers and deputy ministers when they present estimates. I’m trying to recall the last time I saw a name tag. I think it’s something very simple, a beneficial aspect of that, and your comments are very well received around that, in how we can improve that, because obviously this is not going to be our only meeting. There will be many.

**0950**

I know the Chair looked at me, as one of the younger members of the committee—the Queen’s Park restoration will take probably decades to complete, just physically. As we’re seeing with Parliament Hill, it’s taking a very long time, which is understandable. So none of our committee members are doing this for ourselves. We all know that. Most of us won’t—I don’t even plan to be here when it’s done, potentially, so we appreciate that long time horizon around that.

I have one question just off the top of my head, for Jennifer. I know you mentioned it was good at the highest levels of the city government side. How was it received in the community at large? Like, “This is the process we’re going to sort of go with. This is how we’re setting up the working group at the Kingston city level.” Just sort of elaborating a little on that, if you can.

**Ms. Jennifer Campbell:** Yes, absolutely, and thank you for the question. To say that it was all easy and everyone was pleased would be inaccurate. I would say that, again, because our committee evolved through a process of conversation, there were many opportunities for community to engage in the conversation particular to Macdonald at the time. We were engaged in a public consultation called Your Stories, Our Histories, of which Sir John A. 360° became the subset.

A part of that which I think set us up for receipt of those committee structures to be better understood by people who might otherwise have been more critical was that we engaged community with open invitations to what essentially became learning opportunities, whether it was coming to the Grand Theatre in Kingston and hearing various historians, Indigenous thought leaders, speak about what Macdonald is and was and how he might be respected or not or represented or not within the Kingston community. We did a lot of work with community to try to educate and bring people to the conversation in a way that would allow for a greater understanding of why we

had to have and displace some of those processes we would normally follow.

I would say the community response to the committee was positive, quite frankly, on the whole. There were, of course, some who said, “Why? Why would an Indigenous representative have any specific right to that committee over any other community member?” But I don’t want to overemphasize that. I think those criticisms were certainly heard but were not the majority voice.

Obviously, this committee is not here to discuss the politics and the feedback around removals or statues being taken out or put into storage or being removed by a crowd. I think when the statue went into storage, we heard a lot more from community members who were opposed to some of the structure, who questioned where the power of decision-making had lain. It lay with our council, to be clear. Our council, though, was provided with a breadth of information from a number of community sources.

I’m not trying to dodge the question. It’s more complicated than simply saying community felt really good about it. I would say that community was educated and brought concern forward in a way that I think allowed much of any concern to be addressed, but I am certain that if you reached out to the community as a whole, you would get people who would come forward who would say, “I was unsettled by the fact that power was assigned to specific non-Kingston residents, nations, First Nation groups who were outside of the jurisdictional boundary of Kingston.” But again, I think that those would be a minority viewpoint, at least from what we heard in feedback.

**Mr. Matthew Rae:** Thank you.

**The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Okay. Other members at this time?

In that case, Mr. Holt, the floor—or, rather, the screen—is yours.

**Mr. Hal Holt:** This process is new to me, so I’m not sure how I can contribute to what you’re asking for. Do you want me to just elaborate a little more on my experience with the renewal project?

**The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** I think that if you have thoughts that have come up while you have been listening to the discussion, we would be glad to know them. At this point, the committee, I think, wants to do a good job in the work that it’s doing, and that work is unfolding.

So if you could imagine being a part of this committee, what would—do you have words of advice? Do you have things that you think we should consider? You have taken the time to be with us today. Give us what you would like.

**Mr. Hal Holt:** I think Terri-Lynn touched on this: I think dialogue is so, so important, because for me, on the Bellevue House renewal project, there were many Indigenous people both on the committee—but also Parks Canada people. I think it’s important to have dialogue, to have people—for example, I know I’ve got all kinds of unconscious biases, and I want to learn how I can advance EDI. By just interfacing with the awesome Indigenous people—both Parks Canada staff and the other committee members—it was a learning experience. I used to joke

with people at Parks Canada that I’m getting more out of this than I’m putting in, which was probably the case. I’m rambling here.

I think dialogue is so important, because when Indigenous people and non-Indigenous people are face to face and dialoguing, it accomplishes a whole lot. In my case, my eyes were opened to a whole new world of Indigenous culture here in Kingston. Unfortunately—and I’ve said this before—one of the things that bothered me way back, since I was a child, was the then sort of persona non grata, “out of sight out of mind” attitude towards Indigenous people. And by the process of the Bellevue House renewal project—for me, just dialoguing and interfacing is so important.

I’m not sure that’s feeding into what you’re looking for here, but I was—in the process, we had the Bellevue House renewal project to get Indigenous and non-Indigenous people talking to each other. It had a two-way effect. I think trust builds up on both sides. Knowledge builds up on both sides. So the key to it is dialogue—which was forwarded through the process of the Bellevue House renewal project. I’m not sure if that’s answering your question or not, but that would be my general take.

I’m not sure this is relevant to what you’re doing, but one thing that has always concerned me—I’m involved in various EDI initiatives—is how you also involve the other parts of our population. In Canada, we have many, many areas of—how should I put it—unconscious biases and areas where this dialogue should come into play. It’s not just with Indigenous people, but we’ve got Asiatic, Indian and the list goes on and on. We’ve got a very multi-diverse population now, and in my humble view, everyone should somehow have input.

**1000**

For example, on the Bellevue House renewal project, we had one Black person. So you see the [*inaudible*] population—just with the dialogue that comes about from the process, that Black person learned, as they should, more about Indigenous culture. From the same token, I think members of the committee, being more familiarized with Indigenous people, would have benefited from what’s being said by somebody who is Black.

I’m rambling here, but certainly on the Indigenous part of it—I keep repeating it; I can’t think of anything else but dialogue. It’s so important. And interfacing—as Nelson Mandela once said, people who know each other can’t hate one another. Anyway, I’m not sure if that’s useful or not.

**The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Thank you very much. I think ending on a Nelson Mandela quote is always a good move. We appreciate your perspectives and your experience in that.

I’m looking around the committee table, and I see Ms. Hogarth.

**Ms. Christine Hogarth:** First of all, thank you all for being here. Terri, thank you for your education this morning. I appreciate that.

My question is actually for all of you. As we begin our dialogue, using some of your words, are there some best practices or something where you would have thought, as

you went through the process, “I wish I would have thought of that earlier”; something that we can learn from when we’re starting our conversations, that we should say, “Don’t forget”; or a group or just anything? I don’t want to put words in anyone’s mouth, because I want to hear from you, but something that you said, “I wish I would have known this when we started to get the ball rolling,” and something, maybe, that you feel you should have done or missed that we can learn from today.

**Ms. Jennifer Campbell:** I mean, I think it was somewhat embedded in what I was sharing earlier. I think understanding the roles that people play in whatever group, ultimately, you may see or anyone may see be brought forward for part of these dialogues, because I think we didn’t recognize, at least in the city seat and even perhaps when the Bellevue House committee was being formed—I certainly didn’t recognize how important it was to understand who was there as part of their job and who was there as part of community. And what does that do in terms of the dialogue that can happen at those tables and how people are able to engage in those very challenging conversations at times? Personal sentiments versus what I am employed to represent—in my own example, having to give honour to that.

And how do we create safe spaces in those conversations? This is being recorded and I understand why, and I understand open governance and I understand many things, but we also know that sometimes the conversations are very vulnerable, and people need to feel safe in those spaces. We often talk about cultural safety. I think we didn’t spend enough time in our early conversations as the city particular to conversation on Macdonald. We thought about this, but I think we could have done more in terms of providing the right kinds of cultural supports in some of those conversations. But I also don’t think that we did the best of jobs in considering the way that people were being brought to that table in terms of their own capacity to speak into the conversation as openly as they may have wanted or needed to.

And then I would also just re-emphasize the time, just the time it takes, and understanding that, as Terri has shared, sharing food, building understanding, being in ceremony with groups and honouring the diversity of ceremony that would be at a table requires a lot of time, and I mean significant amounts of time. You could spend an entire day just getting to know each other and using that as part of the relationship-building.

A very specific comment, and not something that the city did but I do think the Bellevue committee did an excellent job of, is considering, again, who is there as part of work and who is there as not part of work, but also—not to monetize this, but thinking about the compensation that would be appropriate to offer to those who are not there as part of their jobs, who are giving their own time to sit at those tables. I know many who were there as part of work had to decline those offers, as we would and as we should. And I don’t mean to suggest that people who are there because they are paid are disinterested or without heart in those conversations, but it is still an expectation of

work. But for those who aren’t, I think Bellevue House and Parks Canada did an excellent job of actually offering monetary compensation—again, not to essentialize that, but an acknowledgement that you are giving your own time, energy, heart and, quite frankly, your own trauma in some regard into those dialogues. So I would have done that differently and would do it differently at the city if I could.

**Ms. Christine Hogarth:** Did you want to comment, Terri?

**Dr. Terri-Lynn Brennan:** Oh, sure. Yes. There’s never going to be a right way, especially in a community like Toronto, where you have hundreds of different representative nations and languages. But to show, again, your humility in trying to do a process that is built into being done in a good way and being respectful can be seen and felt to build relationships and eventually build trust.

As Jennifer said, and I was going there, the one thing that I demanded at that initial coffee meeting was that, at every stage of our process, every community member was paid for everything they did. So for a virtual meeting, they were compensated. For the focus groups that we had in the very beginning, everyone was compensated. For everything that came after that, they were compensated. Paying for knowledge is extremely important. I have not been offered anything for my knowledge today; that’s wrong. That’s wrong. You’re getting something from me that I would charge a consultant for, some money, to tell them how to redo what they’re doing when it comes to building Indigenous relations.

On that note, Chris, I do want to get my parking passed before I leave today, just saying.

And that is very important in today’s day and age. There’s a lot of extraction happening. A lot of Indigenous elders and leaders are invited to do welcomes and do land acknowledgements. Well, first off, land acknowledgements should not be done by Indigenous peoples; it’s our land. We acknowledge the land all the time and in our own ways. The people who should be acknowledging the land—and it’s not just about acknowledging the land. It’s acknowledging what are you doing to save the land, to nurture the land and put it back into its healthy format and recognizing the land. When you hear a land acknowledgement, you’re usually just hearing about the nation that—the land you’re on, but that’s not a land acknowledgement. That’s just saying recognition of whose land you’re on, which you do need to know. But it’s about, what are you doing to save the waters? What are you doing to nurture the regrowth of native plants? What are you doing to leave a footprint that is not going to deteriorate this planet any longer? That’s a land acknowledgement.

We didn’t open with a welcome. At every meeting that we had at Bellevue House, there was always an opening, and if the weather was convenient or we had all our parkas on, we still went out onto the land—because being on the land is the most important place for Indigenous peoples to be—and we stood in circle, and someone did either an Anishinaabe welcoming greeting or the Haudenosaunee thanksgiving address every meeting, because we were

then starting in a good way. And much like I said, “skén:nen’kowa séwa:kwe’kon,” we were ensuring that everyone was coming together in a good way. People weren’t thinking about what they were going to do on the weekend. People weren’t thinking about their children at daycare that morning. People were coming together to actually have a conversation about something that they were coming together to do.

#### 1010

These things are important to know, but as someone who’s not Indigenous, you won’t know them, and much to Jennifer’s point, you don’t know what you don’t know. But then it’s also, how do you know what you know? If you’re reading about Indigenous history from people who aren’t Indigenous, that’s a problem. The only people who are going to tell you Indigenous history are the people that have lived it. People that are going to show you Indigenous history are the people that live it every day and know how to bring that to you.

I believe I was brought to this conversation, one, because I knew Hugh. We had worked together previously, and they knew of my connection to the community, much like Jennifer has suggested. I won’t go into the details of my time at the city of Kingston and the time before Jennifer joined us, but I did, off the side of my desk, a community social inventory—I hate to use that word. I shouldn’t use that word. But I basically went around to get to know the committee and what their relationship was like with the city of Kingston. This was in 2015.

And the reason is, as I sat in city hall, I saw a whole lot of Indigenous people—but I knew they were northern Cree folks—walk by my window every day. And I was going, “Why?” These are folks that are flown down from the northern communities of Ontario because of the health care services that are available in Kingston, and so we always have a huge population of folks that are down for cancer treatment or rehabilitation treatments who stay for months on time down at the Confederation hotel, actually just here, because they have an arrangement with the hotels. These people come down here. They don’t get their traditional foods. Nobody speaks their language. They’re literally going between the hotel and then the food vouchers that they get at Morrison’s cafe and then to the hospital. What kind of a community is that? We’re small compared to Toronto. You’ve got a task. But where is the community in helping that? And so that is what started the first dialogues project that then eventually led to the work that came after with the city.

The city had been trying to make initiatives even before I got there, but to help spur those things is important, and so asking someone in the community to help you do the right thing is important. None of you are going to know what the right thing is. You need to have someone who can guide you, and in the city of Toronto, that means a bunch of people. You need to reach out to consultants. I would certainly start with the First Nations that are associated with the city first to get their input on who they think or could recommend to help support a project which you’re taking on, and then have a coffee conversation.

When I meet people, if I meet a prospective client, I don’t want to know about the project first thing. I want to know about their integrity. I want to know that if I’m going to support them, are they literally going to follow through with that or are they just going to say thank you, check the box and put it on a shelf? And 95% of the time, it’s check a box, put it on a shelf.

So, I want to have a conversation and know a little bit more about you, always, in my first meeting. That’s why I asked where you’re from. If we had more time, I would say, “Where were you born? What is the land that actually is part of your DNA?” Because if you were born there, then the water, the food, the air from that particular land space is in you, in your genetics. I’m a biologist, just saying. It’s true. That is part of who you are too.

And then we would talk a little bit about that, because when you start to talk about childhood, conversations become really interesting. People then open up and they let you see who they are a little bit—if you’re lucky, a lot, and that’s what happened at that first conversation with Elizabeth. I knew right then that this was going to be an interesting conversation and journey, but I had no idea what was in store, because when I was brought in, I was brought in to do focus groups, but what ended up happening is I became involved with every aspect of Bellevue House after that. I was asked to support the management plan. I was asked to support all the interpretive planning and text panels. I was asked to support all of the storyboards. I was asked to do public conversations about what was happening at Bellevue House. I helped organize the community consultation group.

It was a process that went with me integrated into everything, and that’s what you also have to keep in mind: that you’re not just bringing Indigenous peoples in to sit around a table and talk to you. If you want to do it right, you need to have Indigenous peoples not just at the first table but all the way through to the end and involved in every aspect of the process. It’s not about a community consultation. I hate the word “consultation” because it means that basically you’re consultants. You’re taking in information. You’re extracting information, but what you do with it could be nothing, much unfortunately like your committee giving it off to the next level of government. That is a problem and there needs to be more pushback on that.

As a final note, I have been and have created a report on my first-hand account walk-through with Bellevue House. It’s at the editors but it might give you some more basic understanding of how to go about a process that could be respectful in doing this project, and I outline—I write in story. I don’t write reports that are bullets; I actually tell you a story. It might be available, but you have to ask Parks Canada for that.

The other thing I want to leave off with is I brought two wampums. I’m not sure if any of you know what a wampum is or have had the pleasure of knowing the wampums. Whenever Indigenous or non-Indigenous people get together or Indigenous and Indigenous groups come together in any formal capacity, which this definitely

is, we bring our treaties, and that's what these are. These are treaties.

The Dish With One Spoon is a treaty that was made between the Haudenosaunee and the Anishinaabe to share this land and its resources in a sustainable way. This was created just prior to colonization.

This treaty, which I hope you all get to know eventually, if you don't already, is the Two Row Wampum Belt Treaty, created in 1613 between the Mohawks of the Haudenosaunee confederacy and the Dutch settlers, the pilgrims, that came in from the west, down in what is now New York state.

It's the first treaty that we know of between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples and it represents the fact that the Mohawks let those people move into their community. We were nice enough to let the Europeans stay—and keep you alive through the winter, help with your food rations, show you where healthy water was and all of the places to catch more food—but we would each stay in our own vessels. The Dutch would stay in their ship, the Indigenous would stay in their canoe, and we would live together within peace, respect and friendship, not interfering with one another, ever.

We all know what happened with that treaty, but these still exist as treaties. These are laws. These are our laws that nobody respects anymore or understands. We want to get back to that Two Row, which is really the agreement that Indigenous peoples made with everybody in this room. If you all live in the southern area of the corridor of Lake Ontario, the northern Great Lakes, then you're all also applicable to share the land as part of the Dish With One Spoon.

But we have spent way too much time in the European ship. We have been pulled into that ship for all of the reasons of colonization, as you all know. We want to go back to our canoes, not because they're smaller, but because they're safer and they allow us self-determination and sovereignty. You're welcome to visit us in our canoes, but we are going back there, and in doing so, everyone needs to understand how to walk that path of equity to get back to that relationship-building process based on friendship, respect and peace.

1020

Thank you. Niá:wen.

**The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Thank you very much, Terri.

Members, we saw many things yesterday, those of us who were able to visit Bellevue House: the interpretive displays, some of them hands-on, whether we're talking about the written panels—there was a video display that shared the voices and perspectives of people who have been, I think, engaged in the Bellevue process. Specifically, Grandmother Blue Skies—we took the opportunity to watch her video in anticipation of meeting her this morning, so if you'll share with her that we did appreciate watching the video and hearing her voice in that space.

On a personal level and unattached from the presentation itself, the technology and opportunity was something that I thought will be interesting with the vision of Queen's Park—the physical building and space—if there's an

educational component, whether for school visits or visitor centres. Whatever that future Queen's Park looks like, there will be interesting opportunities for sharing voices, perhaps capturing voices from now or historical perspectives—and move it into the future. But as you said, it's an evolving process.

Even looking on the face of it, the interesting technology and opportunity—I can't speak for the whole committee, but it is an overwhelming opportunity to imagine the future of Queen's Park. And it is not only where it is situated, in what's now known as Toronto—but is obviously of interest to folks across Ontario, so connecting with them is not a small endeavour.

Mr. Hsu?

**Mr. Ted Hsu:** I was particularly interested in one of the remarks from Jennifer—I think, Terri-Lynn, you also alluded to it—which is that it was important to make it clear to participants how decisions were going to be made and where their comments and time and energy were going to go.

Again, maybe you feel comfortable answering this question—maybe you don't; it's okay. I actually don't know how decisions are going to be made, based on what this committee hears. I see, just from the body language of the Chair, that that's a valid point. I'm wondering if you would advise us or not to go back to the Board of Internal Economy at the Ontario Legislature, which gave us this mandate to go and collect information—if we should go back and ask for a clarification on what will happen to the information and how decisions will be made. So it's an open invitation kind of question.

**Ms. Jennifer Campbell:** Far be it from me to direct your work and how you want to relay it back to other committees, but I think in the spirit of what we've learned and what has been learned through the Bellevue House process—from my relationship to it, at least—having that clarity is very, very important. If this group doesn't have clarity of ask in terms of what next steps are meant to be—it's kind of hard to define right now. I appreciate that it's somewhat iterative—you're hearing ideas; your report back to that group is likely to say, "We've heard that you need to pay attention to the following." Perhaps that itself presents the opportunity—that we've learned some things in this conversation today.

Also, moving forward, I think it would be fair to make a recommendation from my seat. If it were me, I would think around how they would like to engage the public and who is ultimately going to make that decision. I think that that would be a requirement for true community engagement moving forward. Again, if the answer is that group, that's an answer. I'm not suggesting there is a specific answer that has to be found, but there has to be an honest engagement with that answer so that people who are engaging can actually understand what their information is going to be used for and what purpose it serves and why they themselves may want to participate in that dialogue.

**The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Terri?

**Dr. Terri-Lynn Brennan:** A better question, back to your reporting space, is to what benefit are the communities, especially Indigenous peoples, we're engaging going

to get out of this process? Because if they're just going to make 200 bucks, then you need to be clear about that. Are they feeding into something that's going to be a bigger project? Then that needs to be said too, and then feet held to the fire.

There's different ways that questions need to be asked. Language is my big thing right now. And I certainly ask my clients, what benefit is it to me to work with you? And in this case, I don't say compensation. Why should I expel my knowledge into your system if it's actually not helping my people? Thank you.

**The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Thank you.

And a further layer that we also recognize is the secretariat is a body that has been created through an act in the Legislature for the restoration and renovation side of things, and so leadership of that or our connection as a committee too—there are layers, not only of decision-making but of responsibility. And so, quietly sitting here, I wonder about, at the very least, sharing Hansard with folks at the secretariat to know what we've been up to, but also to have those broader understandings even of what we have learned today and will be learning. That's for the committee to decide at each step, what on earth to do with what we've learned, so thank you for the reminder there.

And to your point about compensation: That is something for us to take back, because in terms of the rigidity of structure or the potential or opportunity, I am sitting here without any knowledge on opportunities or restrictions or—there would be those who have those answers, but it is something for us to have heard today, with interest.

Are there comments? Yes, monsieur Sarrazin.

**Mr. Stéphane Sarrazin:** Thank you for the presentation. It's really an eye-opener for me. I mean, I've been in politics since 2018, and having a discussion like this one today is really special.

All the effort that was put into this Bellevue Macdonald house makes me wonder about reconciliation as a whole, with the country. It makes me wonder if it's going to happen. There's so much subject, and it makes me realize that everything is about money, when you think about it.

Right now, I'm sure our government—we're all here for the same reason: We want to offer the best service possible for our constituents. It would be nice to build a hospital every day and provide better service in every area of the province, the same thing with the schools. But at the end of the day, you know how it is. We're looking at the federal budget, the deficit and the provincial budget, so it's really hard. And I wish we would have all the money in the world to do all this, but at the end of the day, we're being caught by reality and it's really hard. I'm trying to figure out how we're going to be able to reconcile with all the things that have been done. Yesterday, we were talking about the railway, the pieces of land that were, I guess, taken from the First Nations. It makes me wonder. We're going to be discussing that in probably 40 years from now.

And I know—I come from a small town, in Alfred. In the early 1990s, there was a commercial. It was called an industrial school that was built. It later became—I guess I would call it like—what was the exact term? Like a reform

school. There were Indigenous kids, First Nations kids there. As we speak today, it was really close to a residential school. They're still investigating to see if there were any First Nations kids missing there. It's a really complicated matter, and I can just imagine around the whole country how complicated it is.

**1030**

But like I was saying, at the end of the day, we're all here to do the best we can to reconcile and to provide better services for First Nations. I just wanted to let you know that's what we do. I'm hoping to have more discussions. I think we could spend a lot of time having discussions with First Nations people and it's really nice to see that. Thanks for being here.

**The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** As I look around the table—Mr. West.

**MPP Jamie West:** I was making notes and moving things around. It's been very helpful from what we heard here in trying to get this right.

Something I was curious about: There has been so much focus on Indigenous consultation, especially at Queen's Park, after finding the bodies at the residential schools. There is still an unofficial monument of children's shoes around this statue; I know it's been hoarded in a box. The caretakers have a photo of how they're formed and are keeping care of the grass and everything, so it doesn't become overgrown, and trying to be respectful of that as well.

I think earlier, it might have been my colleague MPP Rae who had said, "Out of sight, out of mind becomes a format," or one of my other colleagues. But it wasn't until Bellevue House that I was reminded of other issues: Chinese Canadians on the railway, for example; and women's groups. There's that active slide where you're moving the slides back and forth about what the good things were and the other context of, "He wanted women to vote, but only certain women to vote," and that sort of thing.

And so, in your consultations with community, were there other people that were asked to come for that feedback as well? Because I'm not speaking for everybody, but for myself, my boundaries were, "Who are the people that we want to talk to who believe that the statue should be there and reasons why, and who are the people who have a different background on it, but particularly Indigenous people?"

When you had your working groups that were formed out of your community groups, were there calls out to Chinese Canadians, women's groups, anything like that? And I'm probably missing others; I just got the cheat sheet from the presentation of the Bellevue House.

**Dr. Terri-Lynn Brennan:** Yes. We had a Chinese Canadian who was on our committee, as well as—Hal mentioned—a local Black academic was on the committee. Both of them provided their own visible stories. I think it was in the bedroom or in the spare bedroom; there was an interpretive panel there where they each stood and told their own stories there, as well. There was a Métis colleague who was also there to speak about that.

Another thing that was very important was to talk about gender disparity, so we tried to also focus on women's challenges and issues, but then also, within the European context, Irish Canadians and how they were treated upon first arrival and seen as the lowest class of people, if you will, within white society. So there certainly was an acknowledgement to try and broaden—and, I mean, French. Everybody was kind of given an opportunity to participate and to share their thoughts and feelings. Our conversations were certainly not just limited between Europeans and Indigenous, by no stretch of the imagination.

But we also have to be careful that, given this community, and much like you'll find in Toronto, pan-Indigenous issues came up a lot. In this community, the Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee share this land, and we are as different as Peruvians to Finnish. So the understanding of the fact that we are also two country differences became just as important too, to understanding the variety of the different nations that were represented at the time in the 1840s.

**Mr. Jamie West:** In terms of looking for the committee, were you searching specifically for people in those roles or—

**Dr. Terri-Lynn Brennan:** Yes.

**MPP Jamie West:** Okay, so it wasn't happy circumstance. Okay.

**Dr. Terri-Lynn Brennan:** No, we definitely were intentional in acquiring those voices, absolutely.

**MPP Jamie West:** And then the final thing I was thinking about, and I don't know if it's a question or more just open thinking: In hindsight, I feel like coming here, we were looking for—or I was; I won't speak for everybody—almost like the secret recipe of what did they do at Bellevue House, and let's steal that idea and get a head start. I think from the conversations today—I know there's more work to be done, but it really is apparent how much work there is to be done, because I think, similar to Kingston—it's specific to the community in Kingston, but it's the birthplace of the first Prime Minister, so it's nationwide as well.

So we end up, I think, at Queen's Park, that—it's a statue in Toronto but at a place that represents the entire province, where people from every corner of the province come together. It's a monumental challenge, I think, in order to see how we can best have everything reflected. I like Jennifer's comment about how this is a process, it's not the finish line. It's a much bigger project, I think, than I had thought of originally.

**Dr. Terri-Lynn Brennan:** But remain cognizant of the fact that you are on particular land that did have origin stories defined by just a couple of nations, so they should be the co-leaders in how that wider conversation goes about Toronto.

**MPP Jamie West:** I appreciate that. Thank you.

**The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** I am going to—oh, okay, Jennifer, yes.

**Ms. Jennifer Campbell:** Thank you, and I won't take long. I just wanted to offer a comment back to that, because I think it's an incredible and challenging space to be in. I just want to acknowledge that and put it on the table. It's

challenging within Kingston. As I alluded to and commented on earlier, this isn't just a narrative around Kingston. It's not just a narrative around Bellevue House. It requires involvement and communication through all levels of government about what we're talking about when we talk about nationhood.

Those are conversations that you and anyone who you inform through whatever reports and relationships will grapple with, and the reality of the size and scale of that I just don't think can be under-represented in your report. We certainly look at a municipal level. We were looking to Bellevue House through Parks Canada, through direction from higher levels of government, as well, about Canada's first Prime Minister. It's not the city of Kingston's job to narrate or decide what is the correct way of telling that story, and I would say it is not your job or the job of any committee that follows you, per se.

That's where I was commenting about how this is an unfolding process and that does require different things at different levels, but I also did just want to comment to something Terri mentioned regarding pan-Indigeneity and the assumption that specific individuals can represent the voice of an entire community. I don't want to speak on behalf of Terri, but Terri is here today and she's shared her connection to the land and community, but Terri is not here as a member representing the voices of her community, and I am not here representing the voices of all Kingstonians and nor are you, even as elected representatives, necessarily representing all of the voices of your constituents.

I think we always have to come back to that. When we talk about, what about Chinese Canadian history? Well, there's no one person in this country who is going to be the authority on what you may want to consider in that space, which only increases the complexity of the ask, and that, I think, goes back, Madam Chair, to your comment on the various voices that are represented within Bellevue House through video, because there is going to be disagreement even amongst community on what ultimately gets decided, and I think that's one of the challenges: How do you honour that difference of opinion while also moving this forward? So I just want to acknowledge the challenge that you've all been asked to start to think toward and the complexity and the budget challenge. It's real; it's absolutely real.

I just want to thank you, as well, from my seat for allowing me the opportunity to reflect on what Kingston has contributed to this dialogue, and happy to avail ourselves to you in the future should it warrant.

**The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** I'm going to interrupt the conversation and acknowledge that the folks from Parks Canada have arrived. On our agenda, it was sort of set into two halves this morning, but that's not necessary, so Terri and Jennifer and Hal, by no means do you need to leave. We are happy to have Parks Canada present.

I also am looking to the committee—is there interest in having a five- or 10-minute recess to respect our biology, or do some members have to quickly check out of the hotel



and then come back, or have their parking passes validated? I'm looking for direction.

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** So moved.

**The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Mr. Bailey is an enthusiast of the recess.

The folks from Parks Canada—sorry; we know you just got here, and now we're taking a break.

Anyone who would like to stay to engage in the next part of the conversation—well, members, you have to.

What time is it now?

*Interjection.*

**The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** So at 10:50, can we come back? Okay.

We're in recess.

*The committee recessed from 1041 to 1054.*

**The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** The committee for procedure and House affairs is back in session.

Just to recap, we are in Kingston, Ontario, and grateful for the opportunity to meet with folks we met with yesterday at Bellevue House and during our tour of Kingston, as the committee is working on gathering information around how best to represent Indigenous perspectives and viewpoints at the installation of the Sir John A. Macdonald statue at Queen's Park—also mindful of the fact that we are also working on the renovation and restoration project of Queen's Park. While we're considering ways in which Indigenous representation and viewpoints can be reflected at the statue, we are really glad to hear from the folks who have undertaken different but connected work.

#### PARKS CANADA

**The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** So we are glad to welcome folks from Parks Canada here today. If you would like to take the opportunity to introduce yourselves and share a bit—this is not a scripted process, so we're happy to have a discussion, if members of the committee have questions or want to engage at different points. That's generally how we work. I will hand it over to you.

**Ms. Valerie Martin:** My name is Valerie Martin. I am the interpretation coordinator officer at Bellevue House, and I was the acting visitor experience manager from August 2022 to 2023, during the period of some of our consultations and engagement with the community advisory committee. I'm glad to be here today. Thank you for having me.

**Mr. Hugh Ostrom:** I'm Hugh Ostrom. I'm the national historic site superintendent for eastern and central Ontario, so that's a swath of Parks Canada sites that stretch from the Quebec border to Lake Huron. My purview is some 20 national historic sites in that area. I work closely with Tamara and Valerie and other managers like them across the province in the interpretation of historic forts, historic houses, historic people—so the people, places and events of national historic significance in Canada's history, as determined by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada.

**Ms. Tamara van Dyk:** Thank you very much for the invite today. I'm Tamara van Dyk. I'm the site and visitor

experience manager at Bellevue House, so I oversee the operations and the visitor experience, everything that happens there. I'm very proud to be working with Hugh and Valerie. I arrived on the scene in January 2020, when we began the exhibit engagement and development, and I have been working on it with Hugh and the team since. I'm very happy to be here to share our experience.

**The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** I know that the members of the committee who were able to visit Bellevue House yesterday appreciated your time and attention and were glad to be joined by Hugh as we did that.

We had an opportunity this morning to learn from Jennifer Campbell from the city of Kingston and from Terri-Lynn Brennan, who had been involved in the community advisory committee. Of course, you're aware of that. We heard many things from them. The committee was interested in finding out about the process. We are undertaking important work and would like to do that well. So we'll hand it back to you to share whatever you think would be useful for the committee, for us to know as we are beginning this work.

**Mr. Hugh Ostrom:** I'll start things off.

When we were doing the tour yesterday at Bellevue House, we started in the visitor centre, which was Parks Canada at Bellevue House's first foray into broadening the story of Sir John A. Macdonald and adding layers to the pieces of the story that many of us have learned in high school or through civics class or otherwise through our lives, but that not all of our visitors would know because a good number of people who come to Parks Canada places are not educated in our system—tourists or otherwise. So we're trying to create an environment where people can learn and people can approach subject matter that we share that's nationally, historically significant, wherever they are in their journey of learning and understanding about Canada's history. We're very proud to have the opportunity to share and commemorate these people, places and events that have helped shape the nation, and we're very cognizant of the government of Canada's obligations to do so in a way that is inclusive and not prescriptive.

#### 1100

Our process started in 2016, eight years ago, with the initial review of the visitor centre and how we should present Macdonald for Canada 150, the sesquicentennial in 2017, knowing that Bellevue House has long been a place of celebration of Sir John A. Macdonald and that that was not how all Canadians viewed him. Our then field unit superintendent Katherine Patterson was very cognizant of Chief Dan George's Lament for Confederation in 1967 and how he represented the ills Confederation had imposed upon his nation and his community, and that we, 50 years later, definitely needed to address some of those concerns that Parks Canada has not been great at addressing. And we're not alone in that. There are many places in this country that are still struggling with our history and the complexity of our history. So this project was really a start for us, collectively, at Bellevue House, in this area of Parks Canada, to start on a journey of learning how we can be more inclusive in our storytelling.

Valerie or Tamara, is there anything you want to add to that—sort of the first steps?

**Ms. Tamara van Dyk:** No. That sounded good, Hugh.

**Ms. Valerie Martin:** I don't have anything to add to that just yet, specifically, but I would like to add to Dr. Terri-Lynn Brennan's answer from earlier about the comment that was made about consultation with groups that were non-Indigenous groups.

We did have members from diverse communities sitting on the community advisory committee. However, the project managers for the exhibit renewal also consulted with the Ontario society for Black history, that reviewed the exhibit content, as well as the president of the Chinese Canadian association, so they were involved in consulting on the work and on what was eventually produced for the exhibit. In fact, it was the president who appears in a video at the site that you can watch, speaking to the experiences of Chinese Canadians and the impact of John A. Macdonald's legacy. So, yes, it did involve community members speaking their personal viewpoints on the community advisory committee, but we did consult formally with outside organizations as well.

**The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Mr. Bailey.

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** You did a great presentation yesterday.

I've got a question I'd like to raise. We talk about all the contributions and everything of Sir John A. Macdonald. One of the main—driving that railroad across the west to secure British Columbia and, probably, contributing to Confederation. Has anyone ever addressed the issue of, what if that railroad hadn't been built? Would someone else have come along and been the Sir John A. Macdonald by a different name, to have done that? The Americans had their eyes northern—into western Canada. So if Sir John A. Macdonald hadn't come along and built the railroad, would someone else—would we be looking at a whole different complexion of Canada today? I've been wanting to ask that question for I don't know how long, but no one else has ever raised it, so I'm going to be the one to raise it.

**Ms. Valerie Martin:** I don't think that we can answer that question. However, I think that Bellevue House—

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** Speculate, speculate.

**Ms. Valerie Martin:** I cannot speculate on history, unfortunately; I wish I could.

While we can't give you an answer here or give the public that kind of answer, we can certainly provide a space at Bellevue House where people can ask those questions and engage in dialogue with each other. I think that's what the site essentially is doing—allowing a space for people to ask those kinds of questions, and from their own personal experience share how they've been impacted by that legacy, or perhaps if that legacy had been different.

**The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Mr. Hsu.

**Mr. Ted Hsu:** I'm going to put aside the question I was going to ask, just for a second, and add something to what you said, Bob.

Thank you very much, first of all, for taking us on the tour yesterday and answering all the questions and having

the long conversations. It was very much appreciated. This is something that I spoke briefly with you about yesterday—which is, in reading some of the panels and just talking to people, we will say, “Sir John A. did this. Sir John A. did that.” Maybe it's hard for a place like Bellevue House or any kind of public thing to get too much into politics and politicking, but the reality is that Sir John A. was a politician. He was getting criticized from the opposition, and there was a lot of public pressure, and he was worried about votes and raising money and things like that. A lot of decisions were made in that context—and it's not Sir John A. waking up someday and saying, “I'm going to do this.”

This brings me back to something I was looking at, which was about the Chinese head tax. I don't think that Sir John A., one day, decided, “We're going to bring in a lot of Chinese to build this railroad.” A lot of the business interests, the businesses, wanted to bring in labourers, so they brought in people from China. And then after the railroad was finished, it wasn't Sir John A. who woke up one day and said, “We've got to stop the Chinese from coming in.” There were unions, in fact—I'm sad to say—that were not happy with all the Chinese labourers taking a surplus of labour, since the railroad was finished, and they were not happy with all the Chinese there, so there was a lot of pressure on Sir John A. to reduce the flow of Chinese coming in.

Just for the record, I'm not saying to change anything at Bellevue House, but I think it's good to not just pretend that Sir John A. was out there doing things—it's in a political context. My own personal view, as somebody of Chinese descent—if you blame Sir John A., it's like you're absolving or you're ignoring the collective blame for whatever happens. We do live in somewhat of a democracy in Canada—with somewhat of a democracy back then—and so the blame can't all be on the Prime Minister. I just wanted to get that on the record.

Hugh—again, yesterday, really great conversations. You mentioned that during the process of deciding how to renovate Bellevue House and what the experience should be like in the new Bellevue House, a number of people quit the process. Without naming names or saying exactly what happened, I was just wondering if you could, for the record, tell us why that happened—was it worth trying to avoid that?—maybe just to guide whatever process is taken going forward to decide what happens to the Sir John A. statue at Queen's Park.

**Mr. Hugh Ostrom:** That's a good point. The scenario that we were talking about there was specifically the renovation of the visitor centre and the early steps, but there were also people who came and went from the community advisory committee as the process evolved and the house renovation was conceived and planned and written.

**1110**

Part of that was due to personal circumstances, and we recognize that when we're asking a community to come together and share their stories with us, they're doing it on their own time and their own ability. And yes, we compensate them for that time in terms of honoraria for coming,

and we'll provide a lunch. But still, it's people taking time out of their day to participate and share their perspectives, and that can be taxing and it can be challenging depending on what's going on in your own life, so there was fluctuation in the committee itself.

But when we talk about the team leaving the agency during the initial visitors' centre work, that was, like I mentioned at the get-go, sort of our first foray into how to interpret these things. We are learning. Hindsight is great. We put incredible pressure on people who are part of the team to accept perspectives that they may have been challenged by.

What we try and do now is we're working very much with, "Where are our visitors, where are our staff members in their journey of learning, so they can be comfortable and feel like they are not alienated by the stories we're talking about at Bellevue House?" We're not assaulting their beliefs. Initially, we were not that kind and forgiving in a lot of ways, because we didn't recognize that our team is a cross-section of Canadian society and people come with their different experiences. They come with their own perspectives, their own ideologies, and when you are in some ways forcing team members to accept things that they may not agree with, that can be really challenging for them.

Asking Indigenous people to represent Indigenous perspectives while wearing a Parks Canada uniform is an incredibly difficult thing to ask someone and something we shouldn't have been doing. This is one of the painful learning experiences we had that led us to, "We really need to work with outside perspectives, not people in uniform but community members who want to share their perspectives with us," rather than forcing someone in uniform to share that perspective. "Forcing" is probably a hard word because we weren't, like, "Your job is on the line," but we were asking people to do things that were probably not what they wanted to do.

**The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Thank you.

Ms. Martin, you had been next on the speakers list.

**Mrs. Robin Martin:** Thank you for being here with us today. I was wondering how this project started. Was there an assignment? Who was it given to? When was that? Like, how did you get started on this process? Just for purposes of comparing it to what we're up to, I think that could be enlightening for us.

**Mr. Hugh Ostrom:** I can take that one again, because I think I was the one of the three of us who was here right at the get-go of it.

In 2017, the sesquicentennial, we had redone the visitors' centre and we had Canada 150—free entry. Thousands of people came to Bellevue House and it was considered quite a successful season. Even the feedback on the visitors' centre was really positive about laying out history in ways for people to engage with it based on their own experiences.

Opening weekend 2018, the day before we were opening, we had received an engineer's report on the condition of our roof, because we had a roof project underway, and the engineering report said, "You can't let visitors into this

building because it's not safe to do so." So we very quickly closed the house and started to look at what work needed to be done to make the house safe for visitors, and that work entailed removing all of the contents of the house to allow us to pull up the floorboards, to consolidate the ceiling from above. And so, we started having the conversation: "Okay, if we're taking everything out of the house, do we want to put everything back exactly the way it was? We'll never get another opportunity to start from scratch again."

So a structural issue was ultimately the start of this process in terms of, "We now have a clean slate to do whatever we need to do with the site." We had obviously planned to do it bit by bit as budgets and whatnot allow you to do—no idea where that would have got us. Would we have been able to make the strides that we've done and done all the things in the same time span? Probably not. So it was somewhat fortuitous that we had to close the house, vacate it, evolve its goods and then take the time to look about what we wanted to put back in it.

**The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Mr. Rae?

**Mr. Matthew Rae:** Thank you, obviously, to Parks Canada for the tour yesterday and coming this morning as well. I think we mentioned: Yesterday, when we were in the morning at Bellevue House, we walked around Kingston as well and met with the city of Kingston on, obviously, Sir John A.'s footprint. On the tour it was mentioned that he only lived at Bellevue House for a very brief moment in time, so we've seen some of his other residences and where his family lived throughout Kingston.

We visited the very beautiful city hall that you have here as well, and we met with the mayor. Obviously we asked the mayor—had a very brief discussion around the Sir John A. statue in Kingston—what his thoughts were around—there's always a lot of discussion—what do you do with the Sir John A. statue? Where could it go, potentially? I know there were discussions with the potential cemetery where he was laid to rest; that has not gone through. He's also mentioned Bellevue House.

I was just wondering, what are your thoughts around potentially hosting that? Because, in my personal opinion, I think you've done a very good job balancing those stories and Sir John A.'s influence on Canada. It seems you already have the footprint to tell those stories and the potential then to—because this committee has the very large challenge of how we tell that story, potentially, at Queen's Park with Sir John A. You already have that sort of structure. What are your thoughts around "hosting" the statue? I don't know the correct terminology.

**Mr. Hugh Ostrom:** I would say that Parks Canada is not really in the business of putting up statues in places. I think that there are places for statues and that there are places for interpretation of them, and I know that you folks are obviously struggling with your own statue at Queen's Park and how you interpret it.

When you look at the picturesque grounds around Bellevue House and you look at the interpretation around the Italianate villa and the reasons for designation, Macdonald's life at Bellevue House is part of that story, but part of that

story as well is estate living, the idea of being out in the country, the fresh air, the Italianate splendour of the grounds. The statue doesn't really have a place in that, as a monument or as like, in some ways, a shrine to Macdonald. Bellevue House doesn't really stand as that. It's a place of commemoration, to have the conversations about it. Statues can be that, but I don't believe it would fit well with the interpretation that we have at Bellevue House.

**Mr. Matthew Rae:** All right. I was just wondering—wasn't trying to put you on the spot.

**The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Ms. Martin?

**Mrs. Robin Martin:** Just out of curiosity, would we have a Bellevue House, would Bellevue House be something that Parks Canada had in its 20 sites that you're responsible for, without the fact that Sir John A. Macdonald lived there—for a very short period of time, but did live there? Isn't that why we have a Bellevue House?

**Mr. Hugh Ostrom:** Again, we're speculating on Parks Canada's history and how it came to be. We know some of the history of how the house came to be purchased in the 1960s and how it became a place to commemorate Macdonald. There was a great debate at the time where to commemorate Macdonald and how to. But, at the same time, Bellevue House is a unique piece of architecture, particularly in Kingston. There are not a lot of Italianate villas in the limestone city. It was a great example of a rare style of house from the 1840s in Kingston, and it's entirely possible that we may have had the house without Macdonald there as well—as we have many regency cottages and other historic homes across the country that are not necessarily associated with significant people from our past.

**The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** If I may add myself to the speakers list—

*Interjection.*

**The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Oh, sorry. Ms. Hogarth.

**Ms. Christine Hogarth:** No, you go ahead first, if you wish.

**The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Sure.

We had the opportunity to learn from Dr. Terri-Lynn Brennan this morning, and some of the discussion was that the structure of committee and the structure of the legislative systems don't allow for a lot of either flexibility or instinctive engagement with other groups who come from different—when I use the word “system,” I use it loosely, but different protocols.

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When you engaged with community and Indigenous partners and were beginning that work, or as that work unfolded—can you kind of look back at that time or that process and share with us at, I would say, the beginning stages of a process? It will not, I don't think, mirror or have the opportunity to follow what we have heard unfolded with the Parks Canada process. But do you have words of wisdom or do you have thoughts that you would share with us as we are at some point in our process?

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Hugh Ostrom:** Did you want to take this one, Tamara?

**Ms. Tamara van Dyk:** Sure. Sorry, there was a lag.

Yes, some of the biggest lessons learned—it was nicely put that it unfolded. The biggest lesson learned was to give a lot of time. We wanted to make sure that you take the time to listen, take the time to reach out and ask who to engage with, starting with community leaders. They can identify—I'm sure Dr. Terri-Lynn spoke to this, but taking the time to find the people or to identify liaisons or community representatives to help along the way, taking the time to listen and consider, as well as demonstrating that you've listened, so returning to the table and saying, “Let's clarify. Can we have a conversation? Can we circle back and maybe find a compromise?”

It's also being really open and transparent about how you clarify things and understanding each other's limitations. Many of the voices who came to the table understood that we were a government agency, that we would have the final vote or say in how things went, but we did take the time to ask. We took the time to listen.

One of the things that I mentioned yesterday to a couple of folks in conversation was creating a space. We talked about having people in a circle. We actually incorporated traditional openings in a way, so we would have an opening to provide a comfortable, safe space for the voices at the table. Those were some of the things that unfolded as we began working more formally with a community advisory committee, and some of that was through the stage of the working circle. Working with the Indigenous working circle, they helped us to establish some protocols or guidelines to help as we developed the CAC, the community advisory committee.

But the biggest thing is, when in doubt, at the end of the day, if you've asked for the guidance and the input, if you've engaged with the community and they've given their advice and then you go back to the table, don't be afraid to allow for the time to return to them and say, “Hey, did we get this? Did we capture this? Are we saying this the way you suggested?” Like Valerie Martin said, we circled back and had people review the content before we did the final approvals or sent it up for final approvals.

**Ms. Valerie Martin:** I think I would add, as well—

*Interjection.*

**Ms. Valerie Martin:** Oh, sorry, Tamara.

**Ms. Tamara van Dyk:** No, that's okay. I think that's what I planned on—

**Ms. Valerie Martin:** You try to avoid mistakes, but you will make mistakes. But I think one thing that was a big learning process for our entire team throughout the process was language and terminology. We had long conversations and moments of collaboration with the community advisory committee and within our team, as well, about language use in debating whether we were going to use “perspective” or “viewpoint” and how we would approach the project. I think that being cautious about our words and the terms that we used throughout the process was a really important learning lesson for all of us,

and it actually worked to bring us closer with our community advisory members, and that was something that took a long time. It was something we worked over for a couple of years, really, and I would say that that's key to those relationship-building moments.

**Ms. Tamara van Dyk:** One more thing before we move on whatever—Valerie just reminded me—be engaged early. Don't be afraid if you don't have a plan. Right now, again, we were in conversation yesterday. It's like, when do we engage? Basically now, as you're building that strategy. So, for the record, engage now. Find the community representatives, the liaisons, the people that will represent the community members or the greater nations that you would like to work with. Get those people on board now and start building it together. That will also secure that connection for longer-term, trusting working relationships.

That was the last point.

**The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Thank you, Tamara.

Ms. Hogarth?

**Ms. Christine Hogarth:** Thank you all for being here. I'm really saddened that I missed the tour yesterday, but I had a riding event I could not miss—and I love history, so I'll have to come back and enjoy.

I guess my question—and you may not have the answer to this, but maybe send us in the right direction. The actual Sir John A. Macdonald statue: Through our research or through legislative research, our statue at Queen's Park was a community project, and it was fundraised by people of the community to purchase that statue. I understand your statue is in storage, from our last speaker. I'm wondering if you know the history of the statue, how it came to your community. Was it a fundraising event from the community? Is it owned by Canada, the government of Canada? Is it owned by the community? Is it owned by the city? Do you know the history of the statue itself?

**Mr. Hugh Ostrom:** I do not know the complete history of the statue. It was a city statue, I believe, that was donated to the city. Now, I'm doing a little speculating here, because it was at City Park. There was a national historic site, or national historic person plaque, an HSMBC plaque, about Sir John A. Macdonald on the pedestal that the statue rested on. But the statue, as far as I know, was city property, and I don't know how it was funded. I know it was one of the earliest statues of Macdonald that was erected in Canada after his death, but I do not know much more than that.

**The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** I was asking our research team, but we were wondering the same in terms of the timeline of our statue. Does anyone remember when it was installed?

**Mr. Ted Hsu:** I think it was very soon after his death.

**The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Very soon after his death—so there had been something else on the grounds initially. There had been a fountain, and then, to Ms. Hogarth's point, a community initiative to have the Sir John A. Macdonald statue shortly after his death. I don't know whether we're alone in that in terms of statues

of Sir John A. Macdonald across the country, but it is interesting to know the history.

**Ms. Christine Hogarth:** Maybe if I can ask leg. research to do some homework on that.

**Mr. Nick Ruderman:** Certainly. I'm happy to look into the Kingston statue in particular and its history, absolutely.

**The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Tamara has got her hand up. Tamara?

**Ms. Tamara van Dyk:** I just have it on my heart. I've had a couple of conversations, of course, with visitors and people. I just wanted to share a couple of comments from conversation with Indigenous folks and other visitors in their perspective, so it's a visitor perspective on statues, specifically a couple of Indigenous visitors. Obviously, we get in these conversations at the site, but a couple of general comments were—when it came to statues, the general visitor had said, "We like the statues, but we wish they were eye level." That was one of the things that some of the Indigenous folks have shared, that they wish they could look Sir John in the eye. So I felt that was a very interesting statement.

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The other statement that we've collected with comments is, "If you're going to have Sir John A., have representatives of minority communities. If you're going to share one statue, why not recognize other significant historical figures?"

So those were just general visitor Indigenous-based comments that I've had in conversation, that I felt would be appropriate to share at this time.

**The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** It is interesting; at Queen's Park, we've had presentations from our experts at the Legislative Assembly who have shared that we have a number of statues and monuments and commemorative plaques that are from different time periods and different—we have a really interesting collection.

Hugh, as a history buff responsible for heritage spaces and places, please feel welcome to come to Queen's Park and wander around and read some of the plaques and see the statues and whatnot that we have—because it is an interesting question of, what was the priority at what time, and how were things purchased? Who owns them? What story do they tell now?

We also have a monument to the Northwest Rebellion. It has been interesting to have initial conversations with Métis community members on how they see that, for example.

So there's a lot going on at Queen's Park, as you can imagine.

As someone who used to lead field trips with students, I appreciated at Bellevue House that there was a range of information for folks, to meet them where they were. But I also saw objective facts which—as someone who had been a teacher, but also just someone who doesn't like being told what to think, having the objective presentation is interesting to, as you said, spark conversations, but also to consider what was good, what was beneficial, what was problematic, all of that. I think, even around this room, that

folks would interpret different moments and different information differently, as individuals.

So, it will be interesting for the committee to gather information, share with the Board of Internal Economy or with our colleagues at the Legislature, or figure out how best to be responsible for what it is that the committee is learning.

Mr. West?

**MPP Jamie West:** I know you were here at the tail end of the previous speakers. I had mentioned coming here to steal the secret recipe of what to do or to get a head start in the process. I want to recognize all the work that was done in Bellevue House to find that balance or to find what reflected your community. I know several times on the tour, not just at Bellevue House, but yesterday on the tour of Kingston, it was repeated that this is just part of that journey, that it's not the finish line; it's just where you are right now. It was a really interesting balance of that whole narrative of the father of the nation and the first Prime Minister and the things that were accomplished, but also what were the criticisms or—whatever the most appropriate word would be—and how do you have that whole story? It has always been reflective of the public.

A lot of the site is interactive, and the idea of, “What do you think” or “What do you like to see,” was something I hadn't really considered before—it has always been, “How do you tell that story?” It's a complicated story and, as MPP Hsu said earlier, a lot of it is political. Things are more complex than whatever happened to be written down that day or—you're in an environment, as well. I thought the idea of, sort of consistently through it, “What would you like to see and how do you feel about this,” made a lot of sense because it felt more like, instead of telling people, it was just sharing information and letting them think about how it fit. I was wondering if that came along organically or if it was suggested out of the community consultation group. How did you stumble on that idea? Or is it just because Parks is interactive?

**Ms. Tamara van Dyk:** It really did somewhat organically happen, but we do find the best technique—as I mentioned on the tour, we positioned ourselves as a place to have a conversation very early on, because working with Valerie and Hugh and their vast knowledge and background in history, it always just felt like as we talked about the facts and the things that we have that are concrete and the primary sources, and as people were coming at us sometimes really hard and quick—literally, people were frantic when they came on site: “Don't erase Sir John. Don't erase history.”

Early on, when we all arrived and took on the Bellevue project, that was the biggest piece as interpreters, as people that are trying to help people in their journey. It really was obvious the best way to do that is to ask why. “Why are you feeling that way? Where are you coming from? What's your history? What's your perspective or viewpoint, and how can we help you?” The best way to do that was to ask the questions, guide them along, take them by the hand.

We went back and forth with how to position the site. It kept coming back to how we are a place for conversation

about the complex, complicated history and diverse history around Sir John A. Macdonald, and we are looking to complete that story. That is literally how it started to unfold, and we formally made those decisions last year and built that as the way we wanted to present ourselves, because we are just there to help guide them. We're not necessarily the experts, but we are people who can provide them that safe space to explore, and the only way to do that is through conversation.

Valerie?

**Ms. Valerie Martin:** It did to a certain extent happen organically, but we did use a specific thematic tool to shape the way we formed the exhibit, and that's something called “dialogic interpretation.” The idea is that when you ask questions, you don't necessarily ask questions that have a right or wrong answer. We ask questions that do not have a right or wrong answer, so you're not asking somebody about John A. Macdonald's legacy; you're asking them about their personal experiences of that legacy. In that sense, there cannot be a right or wrong answer, because it is their personal experience of that legacy today. So that was shaping the way the exhibit was formed to a certain degree. We didn't use it throughout the experience, but that was kind of the thematic approach that guided it.

And then, also, we have at Parks Canada a framework for history and commemoration, which is available online. It shares techniques and tools or historical thinking concepts that can be used for producing inclusive histories through engagement and collaboration approaches. Those did shape, as well, how we approached producing the content for the exhibit.

**The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** You have mentioned a few things that I think the committee—well, we appreciate all of your input. But as you have mentioned, language is important. We had heard a lot about language and how the interpretation of that language even affected how today's meeting began. As a committee, we are interested, I'll say, in being successful in having engaging conversations going forward.

It is interesting, because we have appreciated, Tamara, that you have said a few times, in other words, that it takes the time that it takes and to allow time. A committee does have structure and timelines, and with various projects or undertakings, there are expectations, some that we as a committee are aware of and others that we will find out as the process unfolds. I had heard you say, “Don't worry about having a plan,” but in reality, we will ultimately have to produce something, whether that's a report, whether that's a summary, whether that's a series of recommendations or a mix of all of the above.

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So bearing that in mind—and you yourself are here as part of a government agency—what would be useful advice for us in either setting expectations or sharing some of that? How can we either communicate that or engage, having a frame around us to some extent? Do you have thoughts that we can learn from, please?

**Mr. Hugh Ostrom:** I can share that I shared with the Clerk, Christopher, that we have our terms of reference for

how we form the community advisory committee. That has been shared as a document for the committee to look at it.

It's a very simple terms of reference, but it lays out the expectations of who would be on the committee, the expected terms, how often we meet. In a lot of ways, that helps anyone who is willing to participate. It provides a framework for them to know what expectations are of them in terms of their time from their personal lives to be part of that, what compensation they'd be—"If I have to travel for two hours, am I compensated for that? I'm taking time off work to do this. What does that look like?" Those things are important to make sure you're connecting with communities that might not otherwise have the resources to just be part of that.

I think Tamara's comment about time is entirely accurate. We would have a two-hour meeting scheduled and we've got this budget and we're doing this, but then at one hour 45, some really great idea comes out and you just start having a conversation about it. Well, okay, we're not going to our 2 o'clock meetings now. This is just going to carry on.

And that happens fairly regularly, where just the progress that we were making as a committee, the ideas that were being shared, the discussions—because remember, our committee is also made up of people from different communities, so very much like any other swath of Canadian society, there are different opinions on that committee. We had some really good discussions about what needs to be said, how does it need to be said, how can we engage with people without kind of hitting them with a hammer and scaring them away from this—because, in the end, we are still a tourism site.

We wanted to be able to connect with people from many different places and the guiding piece for us in that whole document, I think, was shared with us from the Indigenous working circle very early in the process. It was a quote from Murray Sinclair that was very simple in that we have "to recognize that the image of the man has not been complete" and that we must make that image complete. Now, I'm not going to say we were successful in that, because I think we still have a lot of work to do and so do a lot of other places. We kind of talked about that yesterday as an advisory committee to continue the work that the exhibit development has started, but now we have to continue to evolve that as people's understanding, expectations, the way they interact with exhibits, the way—when we learn new things, our interpretation will need to evolve as well, and in some ways, that is very challenging with a monument because it is a permanent object.

To recognize that our understanding of things is consistently changing means that a lot of the work we did at Bellevue House was—not disposable but something that was very simple to change, that a lot of the work that we do there is not on panels but it's interpretation. It's those dialogic conversations with visitors. It's sharing the transcripts from debates that Macdonald had and other politicians to kind of highlight the way people thought at

the time and engage people in different ways that they otherwise wouldn't get. Like, if I wrote a panel that is Macdonald's speech and put it on the wall, maybe 1% of our visitors would read that. Is that a great way to engage them on those challenging subjects? Or is it better to sit down and have a conversation with them, play an audio clip of an actor reading that line and have those conversations so they can start to understand the context of those decisions as well? It is very difficult to do that in a static monument.

I don't envy your task in a lot of ways, because we have a large tapestry to work with—a 3,000-plus square-foot house, and it's not all there, right? There are still pieces to add to it; there's still work that needs to be done. There are still interpreters and people on-site that have those conversations that fill in the blanks to an extent, and we will still have to continue to work on that.

The statue in Kingston was kind of a flashpoint in a lot of ways for the Kingston community with Idle No More and protests and Macdonald's birthday celebration, which was part of this community for many years as well. We had very conflicting views, and they were present at the statue, and there wasn't space in the statue to have those conversations.

You know, Macdonald's gravesite at Catarqui Cemetery has been a long-time site of vandalism because it has commemorated Macdonald as only a founding father of Confederation and doesn't provide any of the additional context. So people that are, you know, less than happy with Macdonald's legacy and have personal family connection to traumas have taken that out at the cemetery. We don't have space to commemorate Macdonald there. So we are working with the cemetery to help redirect people to Bellevue House for further interpretation, because there is not space to do that, and it's not, I would say, even really appropriate to try and interpret that in a cemetery.

Taking on these different perspectives and working around one monument is, as MPP West said earlier, a monumental task. I think it will be a challenge to make sure that there is that space for those different voices at that location.

**The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Thank you.

I see Tamara wanted to jump in—okay, and then after that Ms. Martin and Mr. Bailey. Tamara?

**Ms. Tamara van Dyk:** Great. Just to circle back to having a plan, the timing and that sort of thing: In general, knowing what you need to accomplish, like Hugh said, having those terms of reference, a clear understanding or clear outline of what you need to accomplish, what the task is, sharing the steps along the way—that greater plan, of course, we need to have.

The early engagement piece is always the piece that I find teams struggle with. You feel like you need to have more of a structure or a basic plan or a basic idea of what you want to do before you engage, but much like you're pulling in committee members now, treating the external partners, external folks that you would like to include in the process—that's kind of what I meant by you don't have to have much of a plan about the actual content or

direction you're going to go with how to use the statues or to do the task you are doing.

So having the bigger picture, yes, of course, but definitely calling people in to help build that initial structure is where you will get a lot of appreciation or a lot of folks—because you guys are right at that phase. You're so lucky that you're in these early stages of looking at what you are going to do. It really is, honestly, in my opinion and from my experience, the best time to bring in those external voices and partners to help you build a more detailed plan. They will understand. If you share timelines and so on, then they will understand. But it also just may identify how many meetings you're going to have, the timing you're going to have, and the pressures that may be on that committee. As you're welcoming those voices in these very early growth stages, you will be able to share all of that and just have that open-heart, open-mind approach and inclusive approach as you go forward.

I'm very excited for you, actually, with this process because it just means we're going to engage with a lot more folks at a provincial and government level, and that's what they're hoping for, that equal treatment and not so much—I just had this conversation the other day with an Indigenous member, and they said it's nice to see that it's not a parent-child relationship, but more of an equal relationship where they're involved in the decision-making and they're not being told how things are going to go.

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**The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Thank you, Tamara, and I appreciate your enthusiasm. I know that the committee members approach this task from various places, and while we are in some ways at the beginning of this process, I know that members of the committee and myself are getting a lot of calls from media and interested parties of “Why is it taking so long?” So we have multiple pressures and expectations, certainly.

Ms. Martin, and then Mr. Bailey.

**Mrs. Robin Martin:** Thank you very much. I had a question just about—and I know because you've mentioned this at the site; Tamara did or you did, Hugh, I can't remember—how you select what other things are going to be offered as part of the presentation in some of the tour of Bellevue House and maybe in the interpretive centre or visitor's centre as well, because, inevitably, if you add a particular thing and not another thing, you're steering the dialogue in a direction. I know it's really hard because you said this is something that was discussed and you struggled with and hummed and hawed about. I guess the other thing to ask, because you could do that at Bellevue House, is whether those things ever change over time as we have an evolving understanding and dialogue etc.?

**Mr. Hugh Ostrom:** Well, I can start the answer and maybe my interpreters here can help answer it afterwards. This is the first year Bellevue House has been open to the public. We opened Victoria Day weekend this spring, and we've already kind of recognized there are some things that work better than others. So our advisory committee that will continue to help us, we're just putting together

terms of reference to—the community advisory committee has ended because the exhibit has been completed, but we're in the process of creating a new ongoing committee. Some of the members of that will likely be members from our initial CAC, but we'll open the floor and hopefully find other members as well to help us guide those conversations as we go, recognizing that we have some experience with what people now come with, and start to have those conversations with us: what they're looking for, what information we don't have for them. We're fully aware that this will continue to change.

One of the pieces that was identified as missing in our guest room video display is that we don't have a member who speaks to the French Canadian experience in Canada. That is something that we're working to add into the guest room so those perspectives are shared there.

There is not a perspective of the Scottish immigrant in Canada. We have the Irish immigrants in Canada. Dr. Wilson shares some of that perspective. But we're also working to add a Scottish—the “right type” of immigrant, as it was known at the time, and what were their perspectives.

It's very different trying to continue to evolve this process. I think that, traditionally, Parks Canada sites have been, “This is how it was in 1967, so this is how it was in 1987, so this is how it was”—right? But we're now in a world where we're trying to adapt to the pressures we face from public expectations, which are changing as well.

Valerie, do you want to add anything about how we interpret and continue to evolve interpretation?

**Ms. Valerie Martin:** Sure. You know what? I might hand it over to Tamara, just to begin. Sorry, Tamara.

**Ms. Tamara van Dyk:** No problem, Valerie. Valerie and I have always worked like this.

So I will speak to the fact—and I mentioned it yesterday. As Valerie mentioned, we've got guiding documents from national office. The public document of the history for framework and commemoration helped us to narrow things down.

The site itself: As mentioned, we went through a management planning process, and in the new management plan, it really narrows down the field of the targets or the content that we have identified are the key pieces that we should be sharing at the site, and it provides us with a guide to where to start and how to build those programs.

Also, as Valerie mentioned earlier, we follow the place for conversation, and we're looking at how we can target the large themes of the site. As we mentioned, we have Macdonald; we have the house and underlying themes such as wealth and privilege, upper-class families. Using the framework and using the management plan and looking at the pieces that were identified by the community advisory committee as key, important pieces that would launch or spark interest, we are then building on those.

The speaking notes that we have within the house—that was a gigantic task. It involved the community advisory committee, and it involved walking room by room with the committee and then with the team members to capture—as well as historians like Parks Canada team members, historians, curators, people of interest who had been



working on the house. We literally went room by room and asked, “What should we be talking about? Now that we have the exhibits, what are the next themes? What are the next pieces of content?” Then, that led to, “Which are the really interesting pieces that we could develop into a program?”

Of course, the place for conversation spilled over into a dialogic program that has a specific structure. That’s where Unpacking Macdonald was developed, and that’s a full-on program that—please come back to Bellevue House; we’d be happy to walk you through it. As Hugh mentioned, it has those next steps of dialogue or ways to engage people by using primary sources, audio, props, and that front-door, back-door activity where I handed you a number and it made you think about who you might be—and then asking you who you think you are. Playing with that history content and taking people out of their real, everyday lives and putting them into the shoes of other people are part of those tasks, in the way that we’re starting to expand and share, and how we identified it was with a lot of asking questions of the CAC—also, over the past four years, asking and listening to our visitors and the questions they’re asking. When we gather all that at the end of the season, we can look at: “These are the big themes this year. Maybe we need to consider how we’re going to present that and then look at the future using the CAC, using the team.”

Valerie?

**Ms. Valerie Martin:** Ultimately, you need to make a choice in the end about what you’re going to interpret at the site. Our choices must be informed by our management plan, as Tamara mentioned, and the key strategies in that plan and the What We Heard report, from our consultations in the management plan, as well as respecting the decisions we came to with the community advisory committee.

Broadly speaking, I think with the management plan and the community advisory committee, we have agreed that we would interpret John A. Macdonald’s evolving legacy through making sure that we tell Indigenous-inclusive stories; making sure that we don’t tell the story of one group at the expense of others; making sure that we tell all aspects of Macdonald’s legacy and that we create a space for open dialogue. All of those things shape the choices that we make when we interpret the site, whether that’s through the exhibit or through in-person interpretation. There’s a lot of complexity there because, unlike at your place, our site is interpreted by young people, predominantly, who we employ to give tours and run programs. There is an element of safety and security that we have to consider in the choices that we make, because at times it’s not feasible to ask a young, university-aged student to tell such a complicated story and have these potentially conflictual conversations with the public. So that informs the way that we make our decisions about what stories we tell and what stories will be presented in the exhibit content.

**Mrs. Robin Martin:** Could we have access to the guiding documents that you mentioned, just for the committee’s use, perhaps?

**Mr. Hugh Ostrom:** Yes. We can share our management plan. The Framework for History and Commemoration is a publicly accessible document, as well—

**Mrs. Robin Martin:** And if there is a recording of what your themes are, that would also be maybe helpful so we can understand how that—

**Ms. Valerie Martin:** The themes I mentioned are all in the What We Heard report, which is linked to the management plan, so you can access it online as well.

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**The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** When you talk about a place for dialogue—Queen’s Park is full of dialogue.

I just want to draw folks’ attention to the time. If members have some final thoughts that they’d like to concisely share, have those at the ready.

Mr. Bailey?

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** This has been one of the most interesting experiences I’ve been involved in—the whole restoration committee and the knowledge that I’ve gained so far, and of course the visit to Kingston and everything that we see here.

I’ve got to ask this question: You must dialogue with your American counterparts—I don’t know what they call it there.

**Mr. Hugh Ostrom:** The US National Park Service.

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** I shouldn’t ask you this question—I’ll make it a comment. Is it Canadian insecurity that’s making us take a look at all this stuff? I’m thinking of the Washington memorial, the Jefferson Memorial. Are the Americans going through this same kind of dialogue, where they’re reinvestigating something from 200 or 300 years ago, with all its shortcomings, or is it just us here in Canada that are taking—it’s not fair to ask you this, but I’m going to get it on the record anyway, because that’s the way I feel.

I’m going to ask the researchers to look into what’s going on next door with our largest neighbour. I’ve just been sitting and listening to all this, especially today, but—

**Mr. Hugh Ostrom:** I can say that, from what I know of what the US National Park Service is doing, they are doing some considerable work on enslaved peoples and the experiences that they had at the hands of the creation of the United States, from pre-1776 and early colonization of the United States through the American Civil War, and there’s a lot of content that is starting to be developed at US National Park Service sites to tell those stories, as well.

**The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Tamara has her hand up.

**Ms. Tamara van Dyk:** Just a quick comment: The sites of consciousness we had joined over this process, as well, and—it’s the international coalition of sites of consciousness. I attended one of their meetings, and they are pretty much where we are, from what I understood, if not a little bit further ahead. They’re very used to sharing complex, controversial and detailed pieces of history that have the same kind of complexity that we ran into, so they would be an interesting one for you to reach out to. I only attended one meeting, and I was shocked and excited at

the same time by the amount of information and experience that they have and that they've been going through—just to add to Hugh's point.

**The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** I'm going to follow up on a question that had been asked by Ms. Hogarth. The Queen's Park Macdonald statue went up in 1894. Thank you to research for the quick answer on that.

Ms. Hogarth, is there anything further that you wanted him to look into? This is the Queen's Park—you had asked about Kingston?

**Ms. Christine Hogarth:** Yes. I feel like we're the caretakers of a historical piece. I'm just wondering how Kingston's statue of Sir John A. came about. Was it a community project? And who was the caretaker? Was the city the caretaker? Who actually is responsible for that statue?

**The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Research, do you need more information than that to—

**Mr. Nick Ruderman:** No. Absolutely, I'd be happy to look into that.

**The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Does the committee support this request? Okay, just checking.

Mr. Bailey just asked about American approaches similar to what we're doing. Tamara just mentioned—correct me if I'm wrong—sites of consciousness, that might be—

**Mrs. Robin Martin:** Sites of Conscience. I just looked it up.

**The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Conscience. Thank you. This is why we have dialogue.

But Sites of Conscience: So if research would perhaps, within the scope of what we're interested in, maybe other approaches—have I captured that?

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** Yes. Thank you.

**The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** And is the committee interested in that? Okay.

Nick, you've got what you need?

**Mr. Nick Ruderman:** Absolutely—happy to provide that as well. Thank you.

**The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** I am going to look to the committee for—is there someone who has an additional thought?

One of the things you mentioned repeatedly you said emerged as a clear driving part of your process has been when you recognize that you positioned yourself, Bellevue House, as a place to have a conversation. Certainly, Queen's Park—I mean, that is what we do all day, every day, is provide a physical space inside for conversation. But it is an interesting question of engaging with the public and how we might consider our position in what Queen's Park is meant to accomplish in terms of sharing the history on the grounds, because there's inside the building, and there are the grounds and monuments, and as we have learned, often it was a public priority or public fundraising project that built anything on the grounds. So it is food for thought for us to even figure out what Queen's Park's role is in terms of that sharing with the community.

That was just a thought for me, but I'm going to hand it back to Parks Canada—as I'm looking at the time—if there's anything else that you are inclined to leave us with

at this point, recognizing that we appreciate we can circle back and continue connecting with you and value your time yesterday and today, and hopefully going forward.

**Mr. Hugh Ostrom:** I was just thinking while you were talking that I have a question for you as the committee: Queen's Park has regularly over the years had temporary exhibits placed in Queen's Park as an opportunity for Ontarians or anyone who's visiting Toronto to come and learn about specific things, like—I know at one point in time I was talking with my colleagues at Bethune Memorial House about creating an exhibit for Henry Norman Bethune to be placed at Queen's Park. Do you have interpretation? Do you have tours? There's an opportunity to train people that are giving tours of Queen's Park to start having these conversations with visitors and talk about the statue and talk about the other, I'm sure, eclectic collection of monuments that are around the site. It's an opportunity to do something maybe that is not a permanent fixture at a statue but an opportunity to have a conversation that can evolve over time depending on how visitors are coming to the site.

**The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Thank you. Any other final thoughts before we—

**Ms. Valerie Martin:** I'll just mention the value of engaging organizations like Inclusive Voices in helping you with your consultation process and your relationship-building. Dr. Terri-Lynn Brennan took on that role for us and was key to that process throughout. And then, just as we discovered as well, it's a story that's much bigger than Macdonald, and to certainly expect that.

I see on your online installation or your representation of the installation online, across the park, there is, I believe, an eastern white pine that's there. I can see that with what's written online. I don't know what the installation is on the ground, but it does speak specifically to settler history, not to the Haudenosaunee, and I can see that becoming an issue and much larger, if you're going to be talking about Macdonald and not addressing that kind of history within the park itself.

So, yes, just engage the right people, and it's going to be bigger than the statue, that's for sure.

**The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** I see Ms. Martin had her hand up.

**Mrs. Robin Martin:** It's really just a comment. Hugh mentioned Murray Sinclair, that we have to recognize that the image of the man was not complete, and we have to make it complete, but then went on to say that our understanding is constantly changing, and it's actually not complete. I just don't think any representation or understanding of any person is ever complete. Also, we don't have all the information and it's not all there, so there's something unfinalizable, if that's a word—you can't do that.

**Mr. Hugh Ostrom:** You can't complete it, no, but you can strive to.

**Mrs. Robin Martin:** I like the idea of having a conversation and dialogue about history, but I don't like the idea of defining people, and I think I just want to say, personally, what makes me uncomfortable about any representation is what isn't there and, I guess, where I'm being

steered with what is there. I find it uncomfortable. I don't mind having the conversation, but I feel like I'm being given a certain representation. Maybe that's inevitable, but it does seek, maybe, to tell a story which isn't the whole story, because it has to, because you're selecting things.

In the philosophy of history etc., there are no such things as objective facts, because it's all interpretation, so it is very challenging to do that. But I specifically find it harmful, perhaps, when it's a person, because I don't want people to be defined in that way.

Interestingly, I'm just reading something about literature, about how a novelist might write about characters and how if you want the character to be a real character, they're just going to define themselves with their words, their dialogue, and we can't really do it for them. That's where my brain is right now.

But I find it uncomfortable. I know maybe that's part of the deal, but it means that it's not necessarily, for any person, the right perspective or the one that they would have or that we would want to see, because it has to leave things out or it has to put things in that steer you. Just a comment.

**The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Thank you, Ms. Martin.

Tamara?

**Ms. Tamara van Dyk:** Just my final pieces: Personally, the biggest lesson—and Valerie said this many times—is we're not always going to get it right, and it's not to get it right; it's just to have that open space.

Personally, there were many times that throughout this process, as well as many other engagement projects—you have to really come with a really open mind and be prepared. Sometimes you never know what people are going to say, and it's going to be a very personal growth as well. You all know this from working with people, but just be prepared that this will be—because it's such a personal viewpoint for many people, it will provide you with a lot of lessons and a lot of teachings and a lot of personal growth as you go through it too. So I wish you well.

I have to go, unfortunately.

**The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Tamara, we at the committee appreciated the time yesterday and today, the work that has been done, and we will be grateful for the terms of reference, the various thoughts and recorded thoughts that we can access. We will figure out how best to interpret the interpretations and the learning and what to do with that as a committee. Thank you for being a part of this process. We are all grateful that we have been able to engage so clearly with you. Again, thank you very much.

If there's nothing else, then I will remind folks that we resume at 1 o'clock with further presentations. We will now adjourn—ha ha, just kidding. I'm just kidding. We will recess.

*The committee recessed from 1214 to 1306.*

**The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** The Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs will again

come to order—a reminder that we are in Kingston, Ontario and that we are here because of the committee's study on the renovation and restoration of the legislative precinct, and as we had this morning, we are continuing to have conversations in response to a request from the Legislative Assembly of Ontario's Board of Internal Economy. We are considering ways in which Indigenous representation and viewpoints can be reflected at the Sir John A. Macdonald statue installation on the south grounds at Queen's Park.

We had an opportunity yesterday to visit Bellevue House. We also appreciated the opportunity to do a walk around the city, learning about Sir John A. Macdonald's legacy and local connections, but also the building history of city hall, of the Frontenac courthouse, because we also always have an eye on the renovation and restoration part of the work that we're doing as a committee. So we have been able to have different conversations since we've been here.

This morning, we engaged with other members of the Bellevue House Community Advisory Committee and folks from Parks Canada. I had a conversation with Mr. Durant, who we have already talked to, and we have had very engaging conversations as a committee. Mr. Durant and I had spoken, and just briefly, it might be helpful to say that this committee is doing, at this point, information-gathering, I think it's fair to say, and has appreciated learning about the process for representing Sir John A. Macdonald's—the statue, the legacy, all of those pieces.

We have a statue at Queen's Park. We've been asked, as I said, to figure out or to gather information about how to represent Indigenous viewpoints and perspectives at the installation. That was a task given to us by the BOIE, the Board of Internal Economy. Beyond that, the committee, at some point, will figure out how to interpret that information and whether we share it in a report, a summary—if we come up with recommendations and share that either with the Legislature or directly with the Board of Internal Economy. So we are part of a process, as well, and may have questions and may or may not have answers if you have questions.

#### BELLEVUE HOUSE COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

**The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** We're happy to have you here today. Thank you for taking us up on our invitation. I will ask you to please introduce yourselves both for Hansard, the official written record, but also for committee members. This will be perhaps a back-and forth or a conversation as opposed to a strict format.

I will start with our online guest.

**Ms. Tabitha Renaud:** Thank you very much for inviting me. My name is Tabitha Renaud. I was the director of the Murney Tower Museum as well as the president of the Kingston association of museums, which is an alliance of about 30 museums in the Kingston region. I have a PhD in history and worked for about a decade in the Kingston museum community, so that is the capacity in which I'll

be speaking today, essentially. Thank you very much for having me here.

1310

**Mr. Vincent Durant:** Hi. I'm Vincent Durant. I've been on the board of the Kingston Historical Society for six years now, four of those years with Tabitha. I'm also the past president of the Kingston Historical Society. During my tenure as president, I sat on the advisory committee.

I've done historical research and did a biography of a former Prime Minister, a close contact of John A., Sir Charles Tupper. Also, I continue to do writing and research, and I have done articles and that on John A., so I was asked to be on the community advisory committee. All of the people you spoke with earlier, I know them through associations around Kingston and also on that advisory committee.

My background: I taught for 32 years at St. Lawrence College. I'm a professional accountant, and also my background includes a master's at Queen's in adult education—just a bit of the background on me.

I'm glad to be here. Thank you for inviting me.

**The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Well, then, I'll provide the historical context, Mr. Durant. The statue at Queen's Park was, I think, publicly funded and built, but the Queen's Park Macdonald statue went up in 1894, just for interest's sake.

It continues to be on the grounds; you had asked before we began. It is currently boarded up behind hoarding, and at the base of it there's an organic monument that has taken shape, with children's shoes. It's a process, and that's part of what we have been tasked with engaging in, is, as I said, representing Indigenous viewpoints at the installation.

So, anything that you have in terms of words of wisdom or imagining the work we have ahead of us that you think would be helpful, we would be very grateful for. I'll hand it back.

**Mr. Vincent Durant:** Okay. Could I just—these buttons now—

**The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** You don't need to hit any of those buttons. When you see the little red light on, you are audible.

**Mr. Vincent Durant:** I'm live, so don't say anything rude? No hot mike stuff here.

The statue that is in Toronto—I've seen it, but not since it's been boxed up. Are there interpretive plaques that are there yet, or is this part of what you may come to from the outcome from your committee?

**The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** At this point, it's our understanding that any plaque that is there is not interpretive. There is currently a sign with a bit of an explanation that was written by the Speaker of the Legislature, sort of saying that it is a—I forget the exact wording, but it's about being a process. That is a temporary communication that they have up.

**Mr. Vincent Durant:** Okay, right. That's what's going on at—if you look at the Spirit of Sir John A., the train down by the tourist bureau here, they have a sign that indicates exactly that: that this is a work in process; that we are moving forward. What they did at the statue that

they then removed in City Park—they did try to have the plaques.

My own personal view on that: When there was a protest and it culminated in the removal of the statue, I went down one evening and had a look. I thought, "Okay, let's take this from both sides here and let's have a look." So I read the plaque, and the plaque did try to interpret or reinterpret John A. I thought, this plaque, although it says good stuff and it was accurate—I am standing below a 40-foot statue, which screams at me much more than this plaque, and I think that that was part of the way people were interpreting things.

Bellevue House—you have been through it, I know, yesterday. I've been here since 1979, and when I first went through it, I certainly enjoyed looking at it as 1849 and what it would have been like. It was all John A. The reinterpretation—and, of course, Tabitha can speak even more on this—through the advisory committee, through the Indigenous component on that and through the incredible work by Parks Canada employees, is trying to give—they told you about this yesterday, I'm sure—a different interpretation or a more expanded interpretation.

So you saw the dining room, for example, and all of these things—the children's room and all of that sort of thing. They're trying to do something that is unique, and I think—I know that they've got their eyes on Laurier House at some point. In Toronto, obviously, you are looking at it from your internal economy group and from more the local Legislature—just to give you a little bit of interpretation there.

Tabitha, would you follow up, please?

**Ms. Tabitha Renaud:** Sure, of course. Yes. I think the work that was done at Bellevue House is a great example of what we can all learn from.

Essentially, just to recap what was done there: Vincent and I and others were part of a group of community members that were called together. The composition of the group changed throughout the course of, from my recollection, maybe a two-year period or so. But the composition changed—sometimes the group was larger or smaller. It was comprised of components to make it diverse, so that it would have people from different career paths but also different backgrounds so that there were a lot of different voices from the community. I do feel, most of the time, the majority of the community was Indigenous, and in this context, that's probably a good thing.

But we met probably every other month, sometimes in person, sometimes virtually, and we were involved from the very beginning of redoing every part of the house, including the grounds, where the land acknowledgement pieces would be. What happened was—they started with us saying "These are our ideas. This is sort of the proposal per each space. What does everyone think? How does everyone feel about that?" And it continued round after round, sort of, until we were to the point where we were reviewing the actual text and images of the exhibition pieces.

We tried programming that they were going to do in Bellevue House and we were able to provide our feedback at every step of this. We were given deadlines. "Please, if

you want, mark up this document and give us the feedback about how everybody feels about this text.” Personally, I want to say I felt very listened to. I can’t speak for others in the group, but I feel like I noticed that the things that I raised when I thought, “Oh, I don’t know if they’ve thought about this or they’ve thought about that and the optics of that”—I did notice that those things were dealt with, and so that was very good.

And yes, so that’s essentially how this committee operated. We saw how the design principles were even going to be, what things were going to look like. There was a really interesting part of the project in which—when they wanted to have artwork and thought we should have Indigenous artwork, what was done was, they said, “Okay, well, if we’re going to have artwork, in order to make this fair in the community, we will let Indigenous artists submit—anyone that wants to submit.” My understanding was then they arranged for a jury of people from the community—again, majority Indigenous—to then pick which pieces of art actually go in the house. I hadn’t seen that before as a museum professional and thought that was a really wonderful thing.

They gave us status updates regularly on the project and then, in the end, when they were writing up their official document about it, they asked us to make a statement about what the experience had been like for us that was put in the foreword of that document. And even towards the end, we had a day where we came in and had a special presentation from the young lady with the ribbon skirt, actually, which was a huge moment, I think, for a lot of people. It was wonderful that Parks Canada brought those folks there and had them see the house and see what they thought of the house. We were able to hear their story and listen to them. So I think really, really important work was being done, in general, on this piece.

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Sorry; I know it was very long, but that’s a very good example to learn from, because I think community consultation is going to be extremely important in whatever you decide to do. The importance of heritage in a community—it needs to be relevant to the community; it needs to speak to its community. I think you need to know what all parts of the community feel and just start from there.

**The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Not all members were able to go to Bellevue House yesterday, but most of us did, and I think we can appreciate the scope of the project—whereas at Queen’s Park, we have a physical, existing statue and are figuring out how that will be presented. Ultimately, as we talked about earlier, I don’t know that it’s for the committee to make a decision or even, perhaps, a recommendation, but we’re gathering information, and this process and the testimony that you were giving or we have already heard that’s being recorded can also be shared, and that’s an important piece of it. I think members had an appreciation for the work that went into it, and we’ve certainly heard about consultation and the ongoing discussion.

We have a physical outdoor space, so there may be an opportunity to do something outside. We also have a physical building. There was a suggestion earlier, or a question,

about if we did an exhibit or what a tour about the statues might be able to accomplish.

I guess you have been a part of this project but probably many others through the years, and public engagement.

Even thinking through the parameters that we have and limitations—some people engage at Queen’s Park. When the building is closed, they come to an open public park. They also may choose to come into the building. There are various ways to either tell a story or present the history of the building and the grounds.

Bearing that in mind, do you have thoughts that, if you were in our position, we may want to consider?

**Mr. Vincent Durant:** Tabitha, that was an excellent summary. By the way, it’s good to see you.

**Ms. Tabitha Renaud:** You too.

**Mr. Vincent Durant:** I think what Tabitha alluded to there, the artwork and how that was handled, and then the jury—I was on the jury when we were looking at the Indigenous submissions. Anything like that that involves the community—even the idea of having a community advisory committee from the get-go, and make it very public that you do have this committee, and make it welcoming. I found, as Tabitha did, that when I made comments—and I did. I used to be an editor; I love editing. So I would go in and away I’d go, and I would find that those comments—they didn’t always agree with me, and that was fine—pushback, forward and back. But nothing was ignored. And I think that’s what Tabitha said she found. So the idea that they weren’t fooling around, they weren’t trying to just snow us or anything like that—or if they did, they did a great job, because I didn’t notice that.

I would say that the “transparency” thing—I know that’s an overworked word, but the transparency thing is incredibly important.

I lived in Toronto for a while, but I don’t know the Indigenous involvement in Toronto. Here, we do know we have several First Nations reserves around, and so they were invited in. For example, our hospital works with people from the north. They fly people down here. A nearby hotel is used for people from Indigenous communities who have to come in here for the specialties. I don’t know how that all works in Toronto, but we do know that there is a strong Indigenous community here.

This issue related to John A., the statue—okay, that’s being dealt with, hopefully, by the municipal government. Bellevue House has been a sore point over the years. There were some renovations about, I’d say, maybe 10, 15 years ago. The interpretive centre, the information centre—they put some plaques up and that sort of thing. And then, this time they said, “Okay, we’ve got to go much farther than that,” and that’s the result of it.

**Ms. Tabitha Renaud:** Just to speak to assembling a group: It’s important to get a lot of different voices and balance in the group, I think, too, and the right expertise, as well. For example, when I worked at the Murney Tower Museum, actually, we hired Dr. Brennan, that you spoke to this morning, to help us create a land acknowledgement piece at our site. I’m not sure if she spoke to it this morning, but essentially, it was written in Mohawk and

Ojibway languages by an Indigenous consultant helping us to get things translated and everything properly done.

So I think that there are firms and there are resources in which you can get Indigenous consultation about exactly perhaps how some of these pieces should be done if you're trying to make an exhibition, for example. I would recommend having Indigenous languages. But again, I think that community piece is going to be extremely important: just inviting a lot of different people, hearing a lot of different voices about what should be done and, yes, keeping an open mind of what may go there instead to tell the fuller story, to balance it out, whatever winds up being decided. But yes, it would be great, perhaps, if it was a different type of thing.

I guess I should say, just personally—I'm speaking personally, not from anyplace I've ever worked before, but I do wonder if the era of honouring individuals perhaps is coming to an end. When I say that, I mean it does seem to be a thorny issue when we commemorate individuals and then find out so many of them, many years later—perhaps something has gone on. So perhaps maybe as we move forward with commemorations—I notice plaques are sort of going out of style, and perhaps that's for the best. Perhaps we should stop commemorating very specific individuals. But again, that's just personally my thoughts about it as we move forward as a people.

**The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Thank you.

I will turn to committee members. Ms. Martin, and then Mr. Hsu.

**Mrs. Robin Martin:** Thank you to the witnesses for sharing their time and expertise and experiences with us around this.

Tabitha, I wrote down—you mentioned that a majority of the committee that we're talking about that you were both involved in was Indigenous, and you feel that that was probably a good thing in the circumstances, I think you said. Can you explain to us why?

**Ms. Tabitha Renaud:** Well, I think because the specific questions that the Bellevue House project was trying to answer—they really wanted to hear from all the different Indigenous communities in the region, to hear how they felt, because I think people are in a lot of pain with residential schools and these pieces, right? And I think they wanted to make sure that they heard from the Indigenous community about how they felt about Bellevue House.

**The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Mr. Hsu?

**Mr. Ted Hsu:** I wanted to go back to a point that Vincent mentioned, which was also mentioned by Tamara from Parks Canada this morning. Tamara said that some of the feedback from Indigenous people about the statue was that it was just physically imposing, and they wanted to look Sir John A. in the eye.

1330

Vincent, as you said, it's very hard; no plaque or no display is going to get over the physically imposing nature of the statue, so I'm wondering if you can elaborate on that. Maybe you've heard other feedback on that issue. And I'm also wondering if you have any guidance about the process. Let's say you get a lot of people saying,

“You've got to do something about the physically imposing nature of the statue because that says something.” How do you go about proposing ways to deal with it and getting feedback on that?

**Mr. Vincent Durant:** It's very interesting. Thanks, Ted.

The consultation, the discussions, everything I followed fairly closely—what was going on at council, for example, related to the statue when they were trying to solve the statue issue. One suggestion, which I thought might have gone through, was put it out—John A. Macdonald is buried here in Cataragui Cemetery—in Cataragui Cemetery, where a hill goes down, put the statue down the hill, so then people are looking at the statue. I thought that was sort of a neat idea. Nobody else did, so we didn't do it.

The other thing is it was on almost a plinth below, so the foot of the statue started maybe six feet in the air. It was pointed out by Dr. Jennifer McKendry, an art historian of quite some note, that that plinth was part of the statue. You couldn't just take the statue and put it on the ground. Because a lot of people said, “Well, just put it there, and then we'll be almost looking at it.” Said no, it has to be—and so, it was so elevated that in some ways it almost—for example, in Queen's Park, you've got several statues of people up on horses. There's a reason they were on the horse, because they dominate. For good or for bad, that's why they did that with statues—put them up so that it's higher up sort of thing. It's why people wore top hats, that sort of thing. Tabitha is the historian; she can correct me if I'm wrong on any of this, which I might be.

But to get back to your comment, I did hear from other people, just in conversations and that, who said that, yes, they thought it was just dominating. Certainly, the Indigenous community made that quite clear as well, yes.

**The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Tabitha, go ahead, and then I see Mr. Bresee has a question. Tabitha, if you wanted to field that one as well.

**Ms. Tabitha Renaud:** I just wanted to circle back to the question that I was asked. Essentially, I think the reason that I personally felt those Indigenous voices were so important is because I think at the heart of what we're trying to solve here is how to address this pain from John A. with the residential schools and the starvation policy—the starving of people and these things that happened. There's an extreme amount of pain in our community on that, so I think, from my perspective, we wanted to hear from those voices in particular about this history and this commemoration, just to clarify what I answered before.

**The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Mr. Bresee.

**Mr. Ric Bresee:** Thank you to both presenters for coming forward today. Full disclosure: I've known Vincent for 30 years or so; he was my professor in college.

But my thought goes to something of a similar nature between what happened here in Kingston with regard to the statue and what I believe, if memory serves, if news reports served well, was happening with the statue in Toronto at Queen's Park. I know that for many years, there were events that led to, in many cases, red paint being splashed across the statue; in some cases, some actual

more detrimental vandalism to the statue etc. There is an artistic element to the statue as well as the historic and the patriotic, if you will, element to it.

I think there was a reaction to the vandalism that was taking place around the statue here in Kingston, and it really, I'll say, became very divisive. It split the groups on either side: the one that chooses to be patriotic with regard to Sir John A. and the others who recognize the damage and the pain, as was just referred to by Tabitha, that was going on.

My perception from the news reports—it was before I was at Queen's Park, certainly, but there's something similar going on with the statue on Queen's Park. Would either one of you be able to speak to, I'll say, the duration and the discussions that were taking place specifically around the vandalism?

**Ms. Tabitha Renaud:** Do you mean in the community? Because I don't recall that really being part of the Bellevue House discussions. But do you mean just—

**Mr. Ric Bresee:** No. This is about the statue specifically in City Park.

**Ms. Tabitha Renaud:** Yes, sorry. Do you mean discussions that were happening, like you would like us to speak to how the community was responding to that?

**Mr. Ric Bresee:** Yes, please.

**Ms. Tabitha Renaud:** Sorry; I'll think. I'll formulate a response. Thank you for your question.

**Mr. Vincent Durant:** As I recall, there was a lot of discussion back and forth, back and forth. There were concerns there was vandalism also at the gravesite of John A. Macdonald. I was the president from 2020 to 2021. I got selected, I was inaugurated as the president, and within a month the world closed down because of the pandemic. My son called me “the pandemic president.” So we had to go virtual, Zoom, all this sort of stuff. Every year on June 6, which was the anniversary of the death of John A. Macdonald, there would be a gathering at his gravesite. We didn't do it because of the pandemic one year, but when we did do it, we were very concerned, as they were at the grave—the Cataraqui Cemetery board was very, very concerned. There was vandalism, red paint, things like that.

As far as the statue goes, yes, there was some vandalism—and of course, in Montreal, where the statue of John A. Macdonald was toppled. So city council took the statue down. It is somewhere. They removed it. At the removal, Indigenous people had an encampment there. It was all very peaceful, very respectful, what they were doing. The morning that they did take the statue down, there was a small protest. It was just symbolic, “Don't take the statue down,” but then they did take it down and carried it away. I don't remember any overt violence or vandalism. There was red paint and that sort of thing, so, obviously, that's vandalism, but I don't remember anything more egregious than that.

Tabitha?

**Ms. Tabitha Renaud:** Yes, sorry. I was asking clarifying questions, because I'm trying to formulate an answer. From what I personally remember, the community was very divided about John A. in general, about everything to

do with John A., very, very divided, whether it was Bellevue House or whether it was the statue in City Park. I do think, of course, there would be a group that felt like even if it was—I guess it wasn't the right way to go about it. Obviously, vandalism is a crime, and it's not the right way to go about it. I think there's a group that felt that way too, of course.

But, yes, I do remember now that Vincent has reminded me that there was fear around the graveside ceremony, because that was a tradition. And just in general, a lot of the things—we have this really big 200-year celebration for John A., and there was a lot of interest in John A., and then after that, from different data collected, people were realizing that people were losing interest in John A. Regardless of other bigger important issues, we're losing interest in John A. in general and that sort of thing.

Sorry, my answer is all over the place here, but essentially, I do remember that people were divided by John A., and I think there was fatigue around John A. after his 200th celebration. I do think some events connected to John A. started to be attended less and less, and then it didn't help that there were fears about what might happen in terms of security at some of these John A. events. Sorry, not a great answer. I'll continue to think.

1340

**Mr. Ric Bresee:** One follow-up question is—and again, I'm testing my own memory here; I'm not challenging in any way. Do I recall that some of those events, whether it be the red paint or some of the—I won't even call them protests, but the Indigenous people making comment and present at the statue or at Bellevue House for that matter—does that go back a few decades? I seem to remember it happening in the 1980s and 1990s as well.

**Ms. Tabitha Renaud:** Vincent, do you know? I know that I only lived in Kingston for about a decade, but anywhere I lived, I don't really remember it a long time ago. But, Vincent, you would know. Do you remember it, a long time ago?

**Mr. Vincent Durant:** No, I don't. I do remember in 2015—which was the 200th anniversary of his birth, so there was a big event and Stephen Harper came, the Prime Minister, and a number of events going on.

I don't remember protests like that. I do remember exactly what Tabitha alluded to, with the fatigue that eventually set in, and I think it set in not just there, but, as Tabitha mentioned earlier in her comment, maybe the era of monuments has passed. As a matter of fact, it passed much, much earlier, in the 20th century. The era of putting people up on horses in Queen's Park and such just doesn't seem to fit now. Unless—no, I will not talk about Donald Trump, with putting his name on everything. I will not go there.

**Ms. Tabitha Renaud:** Vincent, what you're saying about—I do remember that that 200th, to try to circle back to the question about whether things happened in the past, I do feel like there was a lot of celebration around John A., but perhaps I was blind to other players or if there was any—I don't remember if there was any protesting. Maybe the group this morning had a better [*inaudible*] than me, but I don't really remember if there was any protesting. I

feel like there was such an emphasis on the celebration of John A., and then afterwards there was sort of a real fatigue, because we used to have a birthday celebration for him in the city—we used to have a lot of different things—and the attendance was going down on these things, and we started to change them and try to do different things instead.

As I was saying before, my opinion is the role of history— it needs to stay relevant to its community. Whether that means we don't do horse statues anymore—which I should add are an expensive thing to do that is hard to change, so there are many factors here. I don't know; I think the history needs to stay relevant to its community, and that's how museums—the most successful museums are the ones that stay relevant to their community as a community hub, and they listen to their community on a year-to-year basis about what their community wants, what their community needs.

And yes, a good question I was asked before about the composition of the committee, and yes, there is definitely a balance of voices needed.

**The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** I see Mr. Hsu had wanted to weigh in on this.

**Mr. Ted Hsu:** Just to say, my recollection from before 2015 was—and this is something that Arthur Milnes would point out. He felt that, if anything, Sir John A. was being forgotten and ignored before 2015, which kind of was motivating him to organize something for John A.'s birthday. So as opposed to protests, I would just say he was being forgotten and ignored.

**Ms. Tabitha Renaud:** Yes, interesting.

**Mr. Vincent Durant:** Arthur Milnes is a former journalist, and he is a friend of mine. He knows so much about John A. He makes me look like an amateur.

One thing they did do in 2015 was the city put together a website and they had 200 vignettes. I contributed 40 of them. I got paid, but they did 200 vignettes on John A.'s life. It was huge. Prior to that, just as Ted mentioned, he was sort of forgotten. When I moved to Kingston, I knew that John A. Macdonald was buried here. I could not get anybody who could tell me where John A.'s grave was. They said, "Up there, there's a Baptist church, and there's an Anglican church. I think it's buried somewhere around there somewhere." That, of course, was neglect that shouldn't have been, possibly, but then it went—so it goes up and down.

**The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Yes, Tabitha?

**Ms. Tabitha Renaud:** All I was going to say was something that I should have said before: Personally, I feel it's really important not to—there's this concern in our community in Kingston about erasing people, and I definitely feel that we should not erase anyone or anything from history. It's more about telling the fuller story of—so don't erase John A. but do what Bellevue House did and tell the whole thing, address everything, the good and the bad. The problematic stuff needs to be addressed head-on.

I just want to clarify that regardless of whatever I said, however it sounded, I never meant to suggest that—even if we stop commemorating people in that celebratory fashion where we put up a horse statue, I just mean

perhaps, as other people said, there are other ways to do this where there's a balance, where you tell the whole story.

**The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Ms. Martin.

**Mrs. Robin Martin:** Thanks very much for the comments. It was very interesting. I've been a student of history myself. We were talking earlier—Bellevue House tries to engage in a dialogical approach to people. I was just reading something which says, "The truth about a man in the mouth of others, not directed to him dialogically and therefore a second-hand truth, becomes a lie degrading and demeaning him."

I think we have this problem when we talk about historical figures or even people in our own society, for goodness sake, that we're not having the conversation with them. They don't get to defend themselves. And we have to be selective about the things that we include or don't include. We had the conversation earlier with Parks Canada about what they had chosen to include and how part of the process is having the dialogue and stimulating the conversation. But by not choosing to include other things, you are kind of steered into a selective perception, inevitably perhaps.

So I have a really hard time, because we're talking about individual human beings, and all human beings are flawed and make mistakes, every one of us. None of us are perfect. So maybe putting people up on a pedestal is not the right thing to do, but we do still need to get people to engage with history. I know I don't need to tell either of you that. I think that's very important.

My question is, in the circumstances that I've just outlined, how can we be fair to historical figures? How can we get our citizens to engage in a dialogue with historical figures that isn't necessarily holding them up to unrealistic standards for their day and age and that isn't distorted by somebody else's point of view?

**Ms. Tabitha Renaud:** Do you want me to go first or not, Vincent? I will say that is an excellent question, because when I did my dissertation, my PhD work, what I was doing was I was arguing for a deeper level of deconstruction between—I'll explain what I mean by this, but—the relationship at first contact between European explorers and Indigenous people in the 1500s. I studied how they communicated without words. I guess where I'm going about this is I realized that everything—it's an epistemological piece. Just assume you know nothing, start from scratch, deconstruct everything.

You're right; this real challenge with being fair—just go all the way back and break it down and then try to present the most balanced thing where you show both sides of the story, I guess I would say. You're right; it's very challenging, and it's not going to be a perfect process. It's not a perfect process to conduct the work of history, the historiography. It's not perfect, but we definitely have to try to just let go of all our pre-conceived notions, start over and try to figure out—we may never, as you have alluded to, know the truth of things, but we at least have to make an effort to try to break it down as much as we can and deconstruct it that way, I guess.



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**Mr. Vincent Durant:** Some of the comments that John A. made in the House of Commons that are recorded in Hansard are chilling. When the Indigenous community says, “Well, he was saying this; he was saying that; he was saying the other thing,” and people were—and I thought, “Okay, is this piling on? Cancel culture, all that?” So I went back and read—reread, because I had read it years ago—Hansard. And I thought, was he drunk at the time? Because we know he had a real problem with substance abuse. Was he joking—quite inappropriately, from our viewpoint, but was he joking? I don’t know.

When I studied his early life—and I’ve written on him and that sort of thing—he had a very smart-alecky approach to things. He got himself into trouble when he was in Napanee with a law firm there, when he was down in Hallowell, now Picton. I mean, he was young; he was late teens, early twenties, but things that put other people’s lives in danger, things like that. And he always had this side to him. So did he do a lot of the things?

Then, when you look and say, “Okay, what”—I mean, even the Pacific Scandal and then there was the dry dock scandal that was going on at the time of his death and they cancelled that whole thing; that was another one. So when you look at his whole life, just exactly what Tabitha is saying—if we try to interpret his life and say, “We’ve got people who are looking to historians and to Queen’s Park people to tell the story of John A. Macdonald,” how do you do that? I know that’s your problem, not mine right now.

But the approach, and I think Tabitha would agree, being taken, that has been taken and will continue to be taken, by the way—Parks Canada probably mentioned that the community advisory committee is morphing into a committee that will meet periodically and will continue on so that tweaks will be made. I like the approach that they took. I didn’t agree with it all. One of the caveats I had was, “Okay, what about the person who is coming through as a tourist?” It’s a huge tourist magnet in the summer-time—coming through as a tourist, someone who is from Asia, somewhere in Eastern Europe, wherever, and all of the sudden, boom, we’re laying this on them. Is it too much? I don’t know. As we go up the pathways and people are being asked to fill out cards at various points, and the cards will be laid out in the basement of the building, at some point, will people just say, “I’m out of here. I’m going to go look at something else”? There is that danger in the whole thing of what they are doing.

That’s why I want to emphasize that this is an ongoing process, and I think that if you’re going to be advising in Toronto, that’s the thing to say; one of the things to say might be that this is an iterative process. You’re going to be looking back all the time as you go forward and build that into the piece.

What I find is that then prevents the more litigious people from saying, “That will never work. We tried that before”—that sort of thing. I think it gives a more sensible approach to the whole thing, which is exactly what I think

Parks Canada is doing, and I think they’re doing that correctly.

**The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Thank you. I’m sure all members are having their own thoughts on what we have heard, but as I had mentioned before, the physical statue that exists, if it continues to exist, is there something additional on the grounds for that passive interaction with this statue, either a plaque or something that gives information for when the building is closed or for someone walking by? Is there a responsibility that Queen’s Park has? What does that look like?

I don’t think anyone thinks it’s beneficial to have an ongoing threat of damage to the physical statue. That is, obviously, a missed opportunity for learning and understanding, but not everyone will come into the building, were we to set up an exhibit, permanent or temporary. What could that look like? So imagining it through that.

You guys have worn multiple hats, but the heritage and historical respect and appreciation, also in connection to the broader community, what do you think would be something that we need to bear in mind? Because we have both that passive interaction, there’s a potential for a deeper—but I will say, a little tongue-in-cheek, Queen’s Park is not necessarily known for revisiting a decision on a regular, ongoing basis. Typically, laws are passed, hopefully after thoughtful process, and made in such a way that they don’t need to be revisited every 15 minutes. It’s more every 15 years, historically speaking. So I think everyone here wants to do things well.

**Ms. Tabitha Renaud:** So, sorry, you’re saying that what’s put there should be something that’s going to be there for at least 15 years?

**The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** No, yes, I don’t know.

**Ms. Tabitha Renaud:** Okay, fair enough.

**The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** We don’t know, and the committee may or may not be decision-makers in this process. We may provide something that helps someone else make decisions. We are glad to do the work, but I can’t speak for anyone else, but it is significant and, some days, overwhelming, right? It is, a committee member earlier said, a monumental task and it is indeed that.

Mr. West.

**MPP Jamie West:** I had a question, just for context—and I don’t know how long either of you or both of you have lived in Kingston, but in Kingston, is there a more fulsome understanding of John A. Macdonald? Because touring, mainly downtown, yesterday, everything is named Sir John—not everything, but you know what I mean. It’s a very common name for buildings and everything.

So are people in Kingston—Kingstonites; I don’t know what the right term would be—more immersed and have a fuller understanding of who Sir John A. is in terms of history and more complexity? Because I feel like, coming from Sudbury, we sort of have a baseline—I don’t know what grade of history, but primary school history—of, you know, “first Prime Minister, alcohol problem, built the railway.” It’s very high level and not really into the intricacies and complexities. So I’m just wondering if the

people here, if it's not a different process but a different perspective, because having grown up here, it's probably a more frequent conversation.

**Mr. Vincent Durant:** Tabitha?

**Ms. Tabitha Renaud:** I was going to say, as someone that moved to Kingston—I hadn't lived there, and then I lived there for about 12 years or so—I didn't know very much about John A. until I moved to Kingston. And then I, personally, from my personal experience, agree with what you've indicated here: that he felt very prevalent, and suddenly I learned a lot about him.

I'd like to hear what Vincent, as someone who lived there for a long time, thinks about that. I think it might be true, but I don't know.

**Mr. Vincent Durant:** Well, I came here in 1979, so 45 years ago, and I knew a fair bit about him before because of my research on Charles Tupper, and they were together in 12 campaigns and all that sort of stuff, plus my study of history. But the minutia I think that you're talking about, Jamie, is what people who live here a long time—do they know about John A. and that? Some, but there's an awful lot of myths about John A., just as—I was a tour guide for a number of years at city hall. People would say, "Is it true?" And I would say, "Oh, God. Here we go." They'd say, "Is there a tunnel that goes over to Fort Henry?" "A tunnel underneath? No." Somebody said, "Are there any ghosts?" And I said, "I'd love to make one up, but I'm not allowed."

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With John A., unfortunately, you will get some of that as well, plus, of course, the buildings—Macdonald this, Macdonald that, Macdonald the other thing. I think people have their facts, if they read the plaques, for example. He had a law office here. As you said, he seemed to live everywhere. He was looking after his mother and his two sisters, and he also needed a residence here. One of the sisters couldn't stand the brother-in-law, and so he wound up giving them different places, and all sorts of stuff. So it can be very, very fascinating to look at.

The Indigenous issue—the serious stuff is his policies and such. Some people say, "Leave it alone, because at the time, that's how everybody thought." Well, no, everybody didn't think that. Even in his own cabinet, people said, "No, it's a bridge too far. What are you doing?" Certainly, the opposition nailed him on an awful lot of things. Very complex, though, is the way I would look at it—and the way Parks Canada looks at it. That's what they're trying to do with Bellevue House.

In Toronto, you mentioned that there's a building. What building are we talking about there?

**The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Queen's Park itself, so on the—the Parliament, where we actually have the Legislative Assembly.

**Mr. Vincent Durant:** Is there a room or something dedicated to—is that what you're thinking, though?

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Vincent Durant:** Yes, there's a statue, and I've seen that.

**The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** At this time, we have various rooms in Queen's Park—we have committee

rooms that might have a theme in terms of art; we have different community-accessible spaces. Through the years, we have had specific exhibits that have maybe been part of the—the LG suite has focused on different things. The building has potential for some limited exhibition. That was actually a question raised by Parks Canada, which is why it came up today. We do have some spaces where we have Indigenous art represented. We now have some Indigenous art that has been installed, through ceremony, at Queen's Park.

All of that said, we are the procedure and House affairs committee, and one of the things on our plate is to gather information and share it with the Legislature about the renovation and restoration of Queen's Park, both the precinct and the property. Decisions will be made around how much change—it's a historical and heritage building, but is there something that can be changed within? Members who you see here, current members of the Legislature are also being consulted and imagining: Will there be an educational space? Can we have different office space? Will there be public interactive space? Will there be a gym? There's a future of the building, and potential, so I think anything that we gather, we're wanting to keep and kind of share forward, so to speak.

**Mr. Vincent Durant:** I know what it's like. I've been in the Mowat Block, for example. Of course, he was from here—he was a law clerk for John A.—but you're talking about in the Legislature.

When you said earlier—you mentioned a building, potentially, and I thought, did I miss something? Okay. Good. Of course, here, we were dealing with where he lived for under two years, but he lived there, and so that's significant—one of the places that he lived.

**The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Tabitha, you waved at me.

**Ms. Tabitha Renaud:** One of the questioners made a really good point about the flawed human being, and I got thinking about that. I wanted to say, one of the most striking things that I learned about John A. during the Bellevue House project, when they were trying to do this balance, in the material that was revealed in the house—John A., as a young boy, watched his little brother be beaten to death by a servant. I don't know if people know that. I'm not saying it's an excuse for anything. I'm saying that when we're talking about a flawed human being and we're—I think the questioner just raised the fact that we're talking about a human being here. Obviously, atrocities happen, and we have to sort this out, but perhaps I think what may be my impression of what they were doing in Bellevue House was, "Here's the good, here's the bad—flawed human being, how it fits into the story of Canada." I don't know if you want to take that approach too, but at the end of the day, if you widen it out—and this is the story of Ontario. This is the seat of government in Ontario. I don't know, but I do think that it—yes, I do think that showing the whole thing is important.

**The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Mr. Bailey.

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** We do have a building there, the Macdonald Block, that's named after the Prime Minister—Mowat, Hepburn, Whitney. So we do have a building,

actually. I was sitting here thinking when that question was asked, and yes, we do have a building.

**Mrs. Robin Martin:** Is that named after John Macdonald or Sandfield Macdonald, the first Premier of Ontario?

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** For John A., I'm going to say. I don't know.

**The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** You raise an interesting point and an interesting follow-up question—and as Chair and not a historian, I do not know.

*Interjections.*

**The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Okay. So I'm going to say to the researcher that I can get a—it seems like consensus of the committee that we are curious to know if our Macdonald Block at Queen's Park is a name-sake for the first Prime Minister or if there was another—

**Mrs. Robin Martin:** Premier.

**The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** The first Premier, perhaps, as suggested by Mrs. Martin.

Again, there is history to learn and history to share, and it will be an interesting task for us as a committee, or as the government, or as the Legislature.

Mr. West.

**MPP Jamie West:** Tabitha may have sort of answered this. I've been thinking about this. We heard—obviously, from these two panellists, but earlier today—about telling the whole story. Then, Tabitha talked about the flawed human being.

In some contexts in 2024, there is a lot of clickbait-type stuff where, if you're watching the US politics right now, depending on which candidate, they're the best thing in the world or the worst thing in the world, depending on who's writing it, and I don't think that's the intent.

When Vincent talked about being a historian and working on a historical novel or book, I was wondering about, in that context—I generally only get to read legislative documents now, but historical books generally tell the whole story. They tell the story of the childhood. They tell the story of—and they're not really weighted, and they're not really in that same sort of “gotcha” clickbait moment. It's “this is the story of this individual.” And it doesn't matter if it's a political leader or it's your favourite singer; it's just generally the whole story of, from birth to death—

**The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Biography.

**MPP Jamie West:** A biography, yes.

I think that as we look at this issue, because I think we all desperately want to get it right, we're concerned about telling the story but weighing it. As we tell the story, we start to—if we share this, we diminish this part, but not in terms of telling the story.

I like, as the Chair said, the biography of the individual instead of a narrative of the individual, if that makes sense.

**Mr. Vincent Durant:** Yes. The historical writing I tend towards, that I like doing, is historical biography. And you're right; the only thing is, every time you assert something about the person, you're leaving out other stuff. It's a human thing. If I'm telling you a story, automatically it's got a bias, because I have chosen—otherwise, I would bore you to death.

Don't you say anything—my former student here.

**MPP Jamie West:** He can still grade you.

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**Mr. Vincent Durant:** But the thing is—yes, it would just be endless, right? So that's a very good point.

Even what Tabitha alluded to, that his brother James was beaten to death—well, it was somebody who was supposed to be looking after him. He took the two brothers to a tavern. The little kid was being annoying to him. He pushed him down, hit his head sort of thing. Whether he was beaten to death—it had an incredible impact on John A.'s life, no question, as you would imagine. So many other things did as well. We can't put them all in.

But I do appreciate what you're saying, that if we say, “Look, this is”—the whole Indigenous thing, you must also look that they made him an honorary chief out west, that he did have relations with Indigenous communities. You also have to look at—there's a cartoon from the time by Bengough, and in it, Indigenous people are starving to death over here behind some teepees. John A. is giving a big bag of money—or no. Somebody is giving a big bag of money to John A. and he's saying, “Don't you worry about them; we'll get them out”—something to that sort of thing.

Then you look at who is Bengough, what was he writing, what was his paper, all that—of course, it was on the Whig side, but it doesn't mean that it wasn't also the truth. John A. famously said elections aren't won by prayer; they're won by money. And I'm in a room of politicians. You know that—I'm leaving it there.

So you're right. You tell both sides, but it's not—I don't think it's sufficient to just tell both sides. There has to be some interpretation because the impact of things like the legislation that was brought in has been many generations. The residential schools, the horrific abuses that went on after John A.'s time—do we get into that whole thing? How much blame is there to him? Or was he trying to—he said, “Give me a couple of generations and I'll make good little Europeans out of them.” Well, that was the intention. Was that the way everybody looked at it? Probably not. It's so fraught, isn't it? Good luck, folks.

**Ms. Tabitha Renaud:** I will say something about—because I taught methodology of how history is done and stuff like that, so I will say, in a lot of cases, there were more than two sides. There are many sides. And it's very difficult because, as Vincent said, we can't outline all 21 possibilities.

I should make clear that there's a lot of guesswork involved in history because what we have to do is go back to the original evidence, the original sources, and then I want to be very clear that they could be wrong still too, right? Because it's often what somebody wrote down, so that's why I'm talking about deconstruction. You have to try and break it down as much as you can to try to do the best as you can to figure out what you can. I reached, in my project, the conclusion that we just needed transparency about the process, about “Here's what the sources said. This is our conjecture around this.” And then remember, when somebody is writing a biography, perhaps they're

sympathetic to the person, perhaps they're not. There's interpretation. There's bias. It's very challenging.

So you're trying to figure this out and, as has been alluded to, it's always going to be a flawed, imperfect process to figure out our Canadian history, but I think we have to make that effort. We have to try. That's what I meant when I was talking about deconstruction, is that—yes, so anyway, I know we're talking about physical spaces here and a statue in physical spaces, but the messaging with all of this is going to be about Canadian history, which is going to be very challenging to figure out what to say and how and where.

**The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Thank you both very much. We appreciate the good luck that you are wishing us, as members of the committee and as members that serve at the Legislature, to be reminded that transparency of process needs to be at the heart. We have a lot of responsibilities to various folks, and I know that we want to do this well. But we are also a part of the process that we are figuring out, so stay tuned as we navigate this and as different levels of responsibility navigate it.

I'm going to just turn it back to the committee members. Are there any final thoughts? I know that we have had a thorough day of thought and thoughtful conversations. But while we do have Tabitha and Vincent here, is there anything that comes to mind that we want to make sure to get on the record today? Mr. Bailey, yes.

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** Just to support an earlier comment by MPP Martin about history: I don't recall the exact quote, but Mr. Durant, I know, will know for sure. Winston Churchill, when asked by a member of the press how he thought history would remember him, said, "They'll remember me well, because I intend to write it."

**The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** And, also, thank you for your time today and, obviously, for your investment and involvement in being a part of the Bellevue House project, which I think we have been grateful to learn from—our project being quite different in scope, but still significant in responsibility. We have your contact information, obviously, because you were invited to participate, but if the committee has any further questions for you, or if there's an opportunity to differently engage, we may reach out.

Anything else from committee members? In that case, Mr. Durant and Ms. Renaud, thank you very much for your time today. I'll release you, but not committee members. We have a little bit of business ahead of us while we're all here. Thank you very much.

**Ms. Tabitha Renaud:** Thank you very much for having us.

#### COMMITTEE BUSINESS

**The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** I'm looking at the time, and I'm just looking for direction of the committee that we'll just continue—thank you.

I understand that MPP West has filed a notice of motion with the committee which appears on the meeting agenda. Mr. West, would you like to move your motion for the committee's consideration.

**MPP Jamie West:** I move that MPP Ghamari be removed from the Standing Committee on Justice Policy.

**The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Is there any debate on the motion? Mr. Hsu.

**Mr. Ted Hsu:** I'd just like to ask what the reason for this is.

**The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Mr. West?

**MPP Jamie West:** It may be more appropriate just to share what was shared at the justice committee. At the justice committee, the MPP was removed recently as the Chair of the committee, and the conversation they had around it had to do with the fact that the justice committee, right now as we're sitting here and prior to us sitting here, is dealing with intimate partner violence.

As a member of the committee, MPP Ghamari had a long record—I'll just quote this: "She has a long record, and there are many allegations and recorded evidence of Islamophobia, xenophobia and other forms of hate against many minority groups who form Ontario's diverse community...."

"We want to make sure, when" people "appear before this committee, that they are presented with a welcoming and safe environment. We cannot have an MPP who holds hateful views about certain marginalized groups in Ontario, namely Muslim and Arab community members, or someone who affiliates herself with far-right extremists to create an environment where these difficult stories that are to be shared, which oftentimes intersect and involve religion, gender, culture, immigration—they have to be shared in a way that allows all of us to hear those stories, and they cannot be at any point held back from telling their truth and sharing their lived experience." That was the context that was shared. That was MPP Wong-Tam speaking to this at justice policy.

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I think that we have to provide a safe place for people to come forward to share their information at the committee, and that's why it was moved.

**The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Is there any further debate or discussion? Mr. Hsu.

**Mr. Ted Hsu:** So, if I could respond to that—thank you very much. I agree with those statements about creating a safe place for people to come and testify and really say everything they need to say. But I also just want to say for the record that I think that every MPP, especially independent MPPs, should have the chance to participate in the legislative process by being on a committee. I'm wondering if you would entertain a simultaneous appointment of one of the independent MPPs who is not on any committee to replace her.

**MPP Jamie West:** I'm not sure how to respond to that. I would be very open to that. I think that filling the committee makes sense. More to the point of this is that it was brought forward by community members who feel like they would be unsafe going to speak at that committee. So I think the focus is just ensuring that the people of Ontario, who we're supposed to be amplifying their voices, have the safety of coming. I think it would make sense to have another member there, but I can't speak on behalf of our

entire committee, and I don't think we even have a process designed for that yet, but I'm not against that idea.

**The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** I want to ask the Clerk a question, if I may. I know from the previous discussion that the committee has had and the changes made in the standing orders that this procedure and House affairs committee looks at the membership of committees. Is that something that we can decide either to remove, to add to—is there a decision-making ability while the House is not in session? Are there technical pieces for us to consider? I'm seeking input.

**The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Christopher Tyrell):** Under standing order 109.1(a), this committee has been tasked as part of its mandate to review the membership of all the standing committees that are not this committee. So the committee does have the power to—I mean, at this point, it's just a recommendation because it needs to be a report that goes to the House, and when the report is received by the House, it's deemed to be adopted. So the earliest implementation of any decision this committee makes on membership on committees will be the first day that the House resumes when the report is actually tabled in the Legislature.

That said, the committee does, yes, have the power to add, remove, change the membership of committees, to the motion in question. To Mr. Hsu's point, the current composition of the justice policy committee—there are currently two independents on the justice policy committee. MPP Mantha and MPP Ghamari are both members on that particular committee. Removing MPP Ghamari would bring the membership down to nine, and it would be—one, two, three, four, five—six Progressive Conservative members, two NDP members and one independent if she's removed from that committee.

**The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** I'm not sure who put up their hand first—

**MPP Jamie West:** I'm just looking for clarification from the Clerk.

**The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Okay. Further clarification—I see Mr. Rae's hand up as well.

**MPP Jamie West:** I didn't mean to—I just wanted to—is that the standard composition of committees, the six, two and one?

**The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Christopher Tyrell):** The standard composition, according to the breakdown in the House, is seven PC members, two NDP members. For each independent member who is added to a committee there is the ability to add another government member to that committee in order to maintain the balance.

**The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Mr. Rae?

**Mr. Matthew Rae:** I'm suggesting to the government members—obviously, they're independent members with independent minds. But the government members, I strongly encourage them, will be supporting this motion, as originally proposed by MPP West to maintain the proportionality that currently exists. As the Clerk alluded to, technically there are currently two independents on the committee as MPP Ghamari is now an independent in the Legislative Assembly. However, as the Clerk also mentioned, we cannot officially make any changes to any

committee until the House resumes in the fall to table said report. So we would support the original motion as moved by MPP West.

**The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Is there any further debate on Mr. West's motion? In that case, are members ready to vote? All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

Is there any other business to discuss today? Okay.

I'm going to ask the Clerk: With the decision that was just made by this committee and the letter that we sent to the government about currently assigned members of committees who have now been named as ministers, have we heard anything back? Is that information that we combine with this for that report when we return?

**The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Christopher Tyrell):** I have not received anything back. With the passage of the motion that MPP West moved, if the committee makes no further changes to committee membership, then the report will consist of just that. If the committee decides at a later date before the House resumes to make further changes to committee membership, then it would all go together in one report back to the House on the membership of the committees that are not this committee.

**The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** While I have the attention of committee members—there's no further business being raised by members? Okay. I will remind members that the committee will still need to meet again, prior to the House resuming, to complete those two reports for the House. One report is pursuant to standing order 113(b) regarding the assignment of ministries and offices to standing committees, which we need to complete due to the changes of some of the government ministries last month. So that's what I was asking about, but we will need to do that. The other is to make any other required changes to the memberships of the other standing committees, pursuant to standing order 109.1(a), which I believe we just touched on.

Will we ask the subcommittee to pick a date? The subcommittee had previously chosen Monday, September 16, as a good day to hold that meeting. I'm looking for direction from the committee at this time.

Mr. Rae.

**Mr. Matthew Rae:** It's held in my calendar, so I say we continue with that.

**The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** It is also held in my calendar, but while we've got everyone face to face and summer being what it is—Monday, September 16, then, hopefully is held in other members' calendars. If you will do a double-check, we will ask the Clerk to confirm that and send out a notice in that case.

*Interjection.*

**The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** I beg your pardon. The notice will officially go out the week before.

*Interjection.*

**The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Monday, September 16.

Do we have a time?

*Interjection.*

**The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** It's whatever time the committee chooses.

Mr. West?

**MPP Jamie West:** I think we had suggested 9 a.m., and I was going to ask for clarification from the Clerk: Would we have to break at 10 or 10:15 for question period even though question period isn't—

*Interjection.*

**MPP Jamie West:** No, no. That's what I meant. I wasn't sure if it was in the standing orders that we had to break or—no? Okay. I was looking for clarification on that.

**The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Are we fine to have a 9 o'clock start on Monday, September 16?

Ms. Hogarth.

**Ms. Christine Hogarth:** Just because of the horrible traffic on the Gardiner, I was wondering if we can push it to 10. It will save me an hour drive.

*Interjections.*

**The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** I am seeing consensus. In that case, I'm going to say to the Clerk, if you can share that, that 10 a.m. on Monday, September 16 is what we now have held in our calendars—the notice to go out the week before.

Is there anything else that members—can I just say as the Chair that the last two days have been a lot of information in, and a lot of thoughtful consideration and discussion. If you have further thoughts on this, either on how

we can continue the work or how to share what we have heard, please feel free to share that with myself and with the Clerk. There was obviously a lot of feedback, and if you do have thoughts, please share those.

Okay. In that case—Mr. West.

**MPP Jamie West:** Just to have it on the record: I took a lot of photos of the different quotes that were at Bellevue House, and I let our research officer know that I'd share them. I think the Clerk is going to set up a Dropbox or something, where if people want to share photos or anything that they had, instead of just being me, it would be open to everybody.

**The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Thank you for the reminder. Much as we had done at Ottawa, for those of you who went on that trip, there is a shared album that you could put photos in, remembering as well that the Queen's Park tour—a lot of those pictures were used, ultimately, in a report that we presented to the Legislature. So if you do have photos that captured something that you think is important, that may or may not go into a report. And also any photos that you share or that we share, you're welcome to have, so please don't share any pictures you don't want people to have.

Anything further? No? In that case, thank you very much, and this meeting is adjourned.

*The committee adjourned at 1431.*



## **STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS**

### **Chair / Présidente**

Ms. Jennifer K. French (Oshawa ND)

### **Vice-Chair / Vice-Président**

Mr. Matthew Rae (Perth–Wellington PC)

Mr. Robert Bailey (Sarnia–Lambton PC)

Ms. Jennifer K. French (Oshawa ND)

Ms. Christine Hogarth (Etobicoke–Lakeshore PC)

Mr. Ted Hsu (Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles L)

Mrs. Robin Martin (Eglinton–Lawrence PC)

Hon. Sam Oosterhoff (Niagara West / Niagara-Ouest PC)

Mr. Matthew Rae (Perth–Wellington PC)

Mr. Amarjot Sandhu (Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest PC)

Mr. Stéphane Sarrazin (Glengarry–Prescott–Russell PC)

Miss Monique Taylor (Hamilton Mountain / Hamilton-Mountain ND)

MPP Jamie West (Sudbury ND)

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