

HANSARD

NOVA SCOTIA HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

COMMITTEE

ON

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Wednesday, January 31, 2024

COMMITTEE ROOM

Funding for Museums and Historical Sites

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Public Accounts Committee

Hon. Kelly Regan (Chair)
Nolan Young (Vice Chair)
Tom Taggart
John A. MacDonald
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Danielle Barkhouse
Hon. Brendan Maguire
Susan Leblanc
Lisa Lachance

In Attendance:

Adam Harding
Executive Director, Performance Audit Team

Kim Langille
Committee Clerk

James de Salis
Administrative Support Clerk

Gordon Hebb
Chief Legislative Counsel

WITNESSES

Department of Communities, Culture, Tourism & Heritage

Justin Huston - Deputy Minister

Stephanie Smith - Executive Director, Archives, Museums and Libraries

Susan Jeffries - Acting Executive Director, Culture and Heritage Development



HALIFAX, WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 31, 2024

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

9:00 A.M.

CHAIR
Hon. Kelly Regan

VICE CHAIR
Nolan Young

THE CHAIR: Order. I now call the Standing Committee on Public Accounts to order.

My name is Kelly Regan; I am the Chair of the committee. This is a reminder for all of us to place our phones on silent, and I'll ask committee members to introduce themselves, beginning with MLA Young.

[The committee members introduced themselves.]

THE CHAIR: And I will note that officials from the Auditor General's Office, Legislative Counsel Office, and Legislative Committees Office are in attendance as well. On today's agenda we have officials with us from the Department of Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage with respect to funding for museums and historical sites.

I'm going to ask the witnesses to introduce themselves.

[The witnesses introduced themselves.]

THE CHAIR: I would invite Deputy Minister Huston to make his opening remarks.

JUSTIN HUSTON: Good morning, everybody and thank you for inviting us today. As you know, I'm pleased to be joined here by Stephanie Smith, Executive Director of Archives, Libraries and Museums, and Susan Jeffries, Director of Culture and Heritage Development.

Today we will be updating you on the department's work supporting museums across the province. Nova Scotia is home to many museums, and our museum landscape is complex. CCTH - or the department - funds the provincial museum system: the 28 sites known collectively as the Nova Scotia Museum. The Department also funds 63 community museums, as well as the Black Cultural Centre for Nova Scotia, Joggins Fossil Centre, and we also provide funding to the Mi'kmawey Debert Cultural Centre project. Beyond this, there are many more community museums, private museums, and national historic sites, such as the Halifax Citadel National Historic Site and Fortress of Louisburg National Historic Site.

Anybody who has ever visited a local museum or historic place - I'm sure you all have - knows that they are sites that are just more than tourist attractions. They connect different generations, help bring our community together, and teach visitors about our province. This is true across all of Nova Scotia, of course, but it is particularly true in rural Nova Scotia where there are often few alternatives to learn about our history or experience arts and cultural programs.

Our *2019 Nova Scotia Visitor Exit Survey* - these are tourists who are coming to visit the province - reveals that over 15 per cent of all visitors to Nova Scotia included a visit to a museum and/or historic site during their stay. With a total of 2.3 million visitors to the province, this translates to approximately 370,000 visitors engaging with a museum and/or historic site as part of their Nova Scotia experience. That is significant.

Museums and historic sites play a crucial role in showcasing the diversity of our province and supporting communities such as African Nova Scotians, Mi'kmaq, Gaels, and Acadians in staying connected with their cultures and heritages. Above all of this, these institutions serve as vibrant hubs of economic and cultural activity, supporting the tourism and screen industries, providing local employment opportunities, and supporting small businesses and local community groups.

In short, there are many ways that museums and historic sites support their local communities which is why this department has made it a priority to do more to support them. It starts with ensuring that there is an adequate funding base. In the 2023-24 Budget, we allocated an additional \$7.2 million in annual operating funds for arts, culture, and heritage organizations. This included \$5.1 million more for arts, culture, and heritage organizations, including community theatres, museums, events, festivals, multicultural community groups, and a boost of \$2.1 million for locally managed Nova Scotia Museum

sites. This increase in funding - the first since 2008 - is intended to address salary increases and operational pressures at museum sites across Nova Scotia. We are helping 180 cultural and heritage organizations and 17 provincial museums remain on strong financial footing, especially with respect to staff retention and the ability to pay the bills. Equally important is that we are working closely with the sector, having conversations about developing diverse revenue streams to ensure long-term sustainability.

I don't want to leave the impression that money alone is enough. Many of these museums and heritage sites depend on the active support of local volunteers and the pride of entire communities. You can't reduce this contribution to a balance sheet. But what stable funding does do is provide these organizations with the ability to invest in their communities and plan for the future with confidence.

We've also been addressing gaps and redundancies in Nova Scotia Museum's interpretation, expanding stories to be more diverse and inclusive, and providing a \$100,000 interpretive renewal fund to Nova Scotia Museum sites. For instance, we are providing funds for an interpretive renewal project at The Historic Acadian Village of Nova Scotia. We're also supporting the North Hills Museum in developing content before the Congrès mondial acadien 2024. Then there's the African Nova Scotian Seafaring Project, a collaborative effort between the Fisheries Museum of the Atlantic, the Black Cultural Centre, and the Black Loyalist Heritage Centre that raises awareness of the untold story of African Nova Scotians' seafaring experience. These are all fantastic examples of how we're helping the Nova Scotia Museum sites tell a wider range of stories in ways that are both diverse and inclusive.

Funding for museums and historical sites allows Nova Scotians to serve as stewards to our remarkable shared heritage and ensure the lessons of the past are never forgotten. This leads to stronger, more robust communities with more dynamic cultural life and a stronger appeal to visitors from home and abroad - or as I like to put it, while funding museums and heritage sites may seem like preserving the past, it really is an investment in a brighter future for all of us.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide opening remarks. I look forward to answering any questions you may have.

THE CHAIR: Now we move on to the questioning portion of the meeting. Each caucus will have 20 minutes for the first round, and then we'll divvy up the remaining time. We will begin now with the Liberal caucus.

MLA Maguire.

HON. BRENDAN MAGUIRE: Good morning, everyone. Great to see you all.

The Art Gallery of Nova Scotia - let's start with that right quick if you don't mind. We know it's closed for renovations, obviously. What's the cost on the maintenance and upkeep on the Art Gallery, and just a timeline on when we can expect it to open in its original site?

THE CHAIR: Deputy Minister Huston.

JUSTIN HUSTON: I don't have the breakdown of the maintenance cost. I can provide that for you. Are you looking for the annual maintenance and operating cost, or for the work that needs to be done, or both?

BRENDAN MAGUIRE: I'm looking for the cost of the work, sorry. You know what, we'll do both, if you don't mind.

JUSTIN HUSTON: Sure. We can follow up with you with that information for both.

The timeline that we're looking at right now is mid-May for that work to be done and for the museum to be reopened. We can provide updates on that as needed, but we're certainly keen to have that open and ready for the primary tourist season.

BRENDAN MAGUIRE: Obviously at one point I think there was talk of building a new art gallery. Do you know - because I don't know off the top of my head - what was the price of that? I know there was some cost that had ballooned because of inflation, and I think COVID had an impact on it and all that. What was the cost at the time when the project was put on pause, compared to the original cost?

JUSTIN HUSTON: I may have that here. If not, I can provide that as well. Essentially, I know that the cost - the quotes that we got in were at least 25 per cent higher than what the initial budget was earmarked for. In my head, I think I have \$137 million. (Interruption) Okay, good, I read my notes correctly - \$137 million was the estimated budget, but when we got back estimates, we were looking at 25 per cent over at the time.

Like everything, costs are escalating, and given some of the other priorities of government, they decided to put a pause on the project, but that will continue.

BRENDAN MAGUIRE: Obviously it's understandable - I mean, I graduated high school with Grade 10 math, so forgive me for not knowing 25 per cent of \$137 million. I'm thinking it's probably around an extra \$30 million or \$40 million - somewhere around there. Obviously, when you're spending close to \$200 million - I don't want to say on a luxury but on an art gallery - I think it's understandable. The repairs and renovations that are being done to the art gallery - what will be the time frame and the life extension of the art gallery due to the maintenance and repairs?

JUSTIN HUSTON: That's a good question. It is a historical building, so there are probably other factors that go into it, but they are going to be replacing it with, I believe, a steel roof, which has quite a long lifetime, new windows. The key is around - particularly for safety - the fire suppression system. That was the key aspect, which requires the full overhaul and the closing down of the gallery. They have to bring out all the sprinkler systems and pipes and replace those. I think once those are in, if those are the factor, that's quite a long lifetime - decades. Again, it is a historical building so there are other aspects of upkeep of any historical property.

BRENDAN MAGUIRE: A steel roof this close to the ocean? Does that make sense? I don't know. You obviously know where I live down in Herring Cove and Sambro area. I don't see many steel roofs, and the ones that I do are not in the best of shape. Maybe things have changed a bit, but I don't know. That just struck me as kind of strange that you're putting a steel roof this close to salty air and water.

JUSTIN HUSTON: Even though I did work as a roofer for two Summers, I am not a specialist on roofing systems. That's a question for the Department of Public Works in terms of their upkeep. The Department of Public Works is responsible for upkeep. It is a provincial asset, so we work with them in partnership with them, and they're the ones that are managing those renovations.

BRENDAN MAGUIRE: I did roofing one Summer too. It is brutal in the Summer, absolutely brutal, so I've got a lot of respect every time I drop by and see those people up on the roofs working. It's not an easy job.

One of the things that you touched on was historical sites and I just want to go local for a quick second. Something that I've been advocating for quite some time is a federal historic site. I do know that sometimes we see federal, municipal, and provincial co-operation on these sites. I'm sure you've been to the site many times. I'm sure everybody around here has. York Redoubt National Historic Site, for example, is falling apart. It really is. Everything's shut down. The buildings - when we were younger, we used to go into those buildings as part of our school trips - all shut down. The tunnels - everything's shut down. The walls are falling down. It's not in the best of shape. I will say, in fairness, I've reached out to my MP, Andy Fillmore, several times on this one.

Even though it's a national historic site, does the Province get involved and reach out to their federal counterparts and say, We have some sites here that aren't doing the best. Can we expect money and funding for this?

I think sometimes with sites like York Redoubt, it's because it's out of sight, out of mind. If this was Halifax Citadel National Historic Site or - forgive me, I forget - what's the island there? Georges Island National Historic Site. Everybody sees it so I think we rush to invest to make sure it all looks great, but there are a lot of sites - national historic sites - around this province that are falling apart. From a provincial standpoint, not that you

need to any more work, but do you consider reaching out to your federal counterparts? Have there ever been any conversations about York Redoubt in particular?

[9:15 a.m.]

JUSTIN HUSTON: To answer your last question, no, I haven't been involved in any specific conversations around York Redoubt, although we do have conversations with our colleagues at National Trust for Canada or Parks Canada. Certainly, that is something that I will raise with them, given that you've flagged it here today.

We will typically have conversations around how we work better together in terms of some synergies or how we capitalize on some of the work that they're doing in some of the federal parks or historic sites and align with either our museums or heritage sites or interpretive programs. It's an ongoing dialogue. It's certainly something that I can raise specifically around York Redoubt and the future for that, and the future of federal investments. Again, I would encourage you - probably the best path, because it is a federal site, is working with your local MP.

BRENDAN MAGUIRE: Yes, and I have. I know that you frequent the area sometimes. Next time you're down there, just take a pop in and take a look around. I think most people would be a little surprised at the shape and the condition of York Redoubt right now. It's sad, but I also understand that it's federal. Just something I wanted to put on your radar. Maybe next time you have a conversation with your federal counterparts - and I'll continue to do the same with my MP - you could reach out and talk to them about that.

What's the budget for provincial heritage sites this year and last year? Do you know?

JUSTIN HUSTON: I want to just - we don't actually have provincial heritage sites, and that's, I think, something I wanted to make sure we were clear about here today. Heritage sites are historic sites. Those are federal, but we do have a Heritage Property Program. In that budget, there is roughly \$200,000 annually that can go toward helping properties that are registered as a provincial heritage property - which is different from a municipal registered property - that they can apply for funding to help offset costs and maintain that heritage status.

BRENDAN MAGUIRE: Obviously I think we can say COVID-19 had an impact on tourism and part of our tourism is our museums. Do you collect data on the sites and how many people have visited? Do we know the year before COVID, and then during COVID, and then now that we're out of COVID, what the numbers look like?

JUSTIN HUSTON: Let me respond in a general sense, and then - well, let me start with your last one. We don't have that data here today, but we can - not all sites, but for

some sites, we can provide - what I would say is 2019 is your best year for that, pre-COVID, and then we can look at what our last visitation was over this season. I'm not sure if we have the data yet for this year, but generally speaking, we are seeing a significant rebound. I think you've seen some of the media around - I think it was either today or yesterday - around the Halifax airport and that percentage or the number of flights that are coming back. We're certainly seeing that in the tourism sector as well. We're close to it, but we're not yet at 2019 levels. Certainly, the return is looking very positive, and I would hope or suspect that next year, we will be at or exceeding 2019 levels.

BRENDAN MAGUIRE: Excellent, because we do know how important tourism is to Nova Scotia, but really, I would say, in particular to some of the rural areas of Nova Scotia.

Obviously, you have really good staff and a lot of knowledge in the department. What has been the plan? What do you feel has - obviously, people are back again, and we're out and we're doing things. What has been the plan from the department to increase tourism and to get back to pre-COVID levels?

JUSTIN HUSTON: Great question. There are a couple of aspects there, and one would be, I would say, more macro which is around - we are working very hard with folks like our federal colleagues, Destination Canada, as well as our Atlantic colleagues, around marketing Canada, Atlantic Canada, and Nova Scotia as a destination. Part of the challenge coming back from COVID is everybody kind of went and stayed home. Everybody changed their pattern of how they are travelling, where they're focusing. Across the world, really, and particularly across North America, everybody's been, for lack of a better word, competing to get back out in front and help remind people about what a great place, in our case, Nova Scotia is to travel. That's an aspect of it.

Transportation and flights have been a key issue as well. That's some work that we're doing. As well, working very closely with the airport and other partners in Atlantic Canada.

A key part of our tourism strategy has been looking at how we focus on supporting communities and regions to highlight the best of what they have to offer to travellers. That has been a key focus for this government, looking at how we support local organizations, businesses, and municipalities or direct marketing organizations in regions to highlight the best of what they have to offer, as I said.

Seasonality is another key issue. We know that from July to September we're pretty good, but it's those shoulder seasons and ideally off seasons where we know that's where we need to grow our visitation. We're doing that through things like our event strategy, where we are specifically focusing on trying to attract events not during July and August - although it's great, because we need those too - but how do we look at bringing events to

rural communities in March or February? That's where we're looking at making a lot of our investment there.

Then there's the other aspect, I would just say - not to eat up your time - is around digital literacy and helping businesses and organizations have a presence online and have platforms that are what the markets want to see. As everybody knows now - no one's looking at the Yellow Pages anymore and trying to figure out where to go. You pull up your phone. You're in a new city and you look and see, "Best Restaurant" and then that's what comes up. We need to help our businesses that provide amazing products and services be visible to those visitors who are coming to the province, and be able to provide programs and services in the way that they want.

BRENDAN MAGUIRE: You're showing your age when you say the Yellow Pages. (Laughter) I got the Yellow Pages in the mail a little while ago, and my son was there with me. I pulled it out of the mail, and he said, "What in the heck is that?" I said, "Well, let me tell you about a simpler time."

I will say this: you did some great stuff with the A for Adventure guys and girls. Fantastic stuff. I think where it really was special is what they were able to do around the Winter stuff. For the first time ever, I was seeing stuff coming out about: What can you do in Nova Scotia in the Winter? It actually made me want to go camping and tenting in the Winter. I called one of the guys up and said, "Let's go," and he said, "I don't think you could survive the Winter." (Laughter)

I think you did some really good stuff there, and I think that really helps, especially the social media stuff. There was the Fortress of Louisbourg National Historic Site stuff, where they really promoted and showed, but I think the Winter stuff in particular - I don't think people really see that. That kind of opens things up a little bit. I know it's not your department, but I think there's potential for collaboration between yourself and the Department of Natural Resources and Renewables where our parks aren't open in the Wintertime. They're open, but they're not, if you know what I mean.

I'll give you Long Lake Provincial Park, for example. It's gated. It's closed. You pull up, and you're just like - it's not welcoming. I understand from a maintenance standpoint and all that, but there is a really big opportunity for snowshoeing and cross-country skiing. I think when we talk about Winter destinations, we think of Jasper, and we think of B.C. and Alberta, and things like that. We think of skiing, and we think of outdoor activities. I think that is part of tourism in Nova Scotia that - I don't want to say, "is missing," but I think we just scratch the surface.

When I was seeing the social media stuff with the A for Adventure guys, it was fantastic. And then, I don't know if you remember, but the Peggy's Cove picture that they did, which was amazing. When you walk into my house, the first thing you see is that picture.

I think that really goes a long way to promoting. I had people reach out to me from all across Canada, and some people from the States, saying, "Is that how you guys play hockey? I really want to come to Nova Scotia now to see this stuff."

I think it's easier to draw people in in the Summertime - the beauty of Cape Breton and Nova Scotia and all over the place - but are you looking at really putting some more emphasis and doing some more of that digital advertising with groups like that? I mean, it doesn't have to be them, but they did a great job - but others like that, to really promote and show the energy that we can have here in Nova Scotia in the Wintertime?

JUSTIN HUSTON: Good questions. I'll answer that, and I'll use it to pivot to another area too.

Yes, absolutely, that is something that we're focused on. In terms of showing your age as well, the difference now around where we invest - we invest in social media influencers. The new era of marketing is where we will pay folks who have a lot of followers on Instagram and they will come and they will experience a Winter experience like A for Adventure, or there are others who might come from the States who have a big following in our target markets in the northeast U.S., for example. So we'll work with them. We'll bring them up and set them up, and they will experience a package. They have to have a certain number of posts and a certain number of likes and follows. That's how the world is working as well.

Winter is absolutely a focus. One of the things we're looking at - to your point, we are looking at exploring some pilots around Winter park openings. As you can appreciate, not every region or park is equal in terms of what they can - there are things that the locals would like - I think of Long Lake Provincial Park is an example, and there are others. If we're trying to expand tourism, there needs to be a bit of an ecosystem of services that surround that: accommodations, restaurants that are open in the Winter. Part of that comes down to even things like Winterizing and energy efficiency. It's a big piece, but we are looking at that.

The other thing I would say in terms of growing tourism - this one I'll pivot into - is that we are also making conscious efforts to be more inclusive and diverse in who we represent in some of those social media ads. We want to make sure that people understand that Nova Scotia isn't just tartans and Summer scenes of sailing. There are diverse communities here that have been here for time immemorial in the Mi'kmaw, or for 400 years in terms of African Nova Scotians, Acadians, Gaels. That we can demonstrate that Nova Scotia is for everyone, and there are huge target markets that I think we can really tap into because of that.

THE CHAIR: MLA Maguire, just under one minute.

BRENDAN MAGUIRE: I think there's a lot of opportunity there, and we all want our parks open in the Wintertime. But if we're going to do it, you're going to need the amenities around it.

Another question that we can't really get into right now, but I just think of a place like Long Lake, for example. It's in my backyard, that's why I'm using it - and Crystal Crescent Beach Provincial Park, and things like that. I think there's a lot of opportunity there. There are no amenities at all at Crystal Crescent Beach. There are no amenities at all at Long Lake Provincial Park. Is there a potential for a public-private partnership to bring those amenities to those facilities?

THE CHAIR: Deputy Minister Huston, 10 seconds.

JUSTIN HUSTON: The short answer is likely, and those are conversations that we will continue to have within our . . .

THE CHAIR: Order. Time has elapsed for Liberal questioning. We'll now move on to the NDP. MLA Leblanc.

SUSAN LEBLANC: I have a couple of questions from your opening comments and a couple of other things first, and then I'll get back to the Auditor General presentation. The first thing I want to say is I want to commend the department on the decision to designate the Nova Scotia Art Bank Program purchases to African Nova Scotian and BIPOC artists this year. I think that was a very good idea, one whose time has come, and I know I've seen on social media some backlash - if that's the right word - to that decision. I just think that's really super unfortunate that there's been some backlash, but I think it's a great decision.

I wanted to know moving forward if there has been some thinking around - as after this year, is there a way to designate a certain amount of money for BIPOC artists so that equity continues on and then we don't get back to the situation where we have to retract and do what we're doing this year?

JUSTIN HUSTON: If I could, I'd like to ask Susan Jeffries to address that question.

SUSAN JEFFRIES: I'm aware of the backlash - I have certainly seen that. Overwhelmingly, though, people were supportive of the idea of doing that this year to increase representation in the collection. I think this year will be interesting to see what comes forward and the artworks that we are collecting. There would be absolutely no reason why we wouldn't consider designating future monies from the Art Bank to that, but that would be something that we would look into following this year to see what kind of support we get from the community with this new idea of designating the collection.

SUSAN LEBLANC: Great, thank you. I also wanted to ask - in your opening comments, Deputy Minister Huston, you talked about the \$7.1 million increase. Five and change has gone to professional arts organizations, cultural organizations, \$2.1 million is for museums. I know that in the cultural sector - the arts sector, at least - that process of figuring out how to allocate that new, much asked for - historically asked for - money is still in process. I'm wondering if you could speak a little bit about where we are with museums? If there is \$2.1 million allocated to operating museums, how has that money been dealt with? As we go into the up-coming budget session, will it be a clear - will how that money is being spent be clearer in this upcoming budget?

[9:30 a.m.]

JUSTIN HUSTON: I'll answer that generally, and then I'll hand it to Stephanie if there's more detail or if I miss any key points.

I think that is a real issue that you've identified, not necessarily in a bad way, but it is real that we are going through that process. It's helpful to understand that in terms of some of the arts and culture funding, but I think what you're referring to is some of the community museum sites, which we are going to be actually - probably next week, money will be going out toward those organizations.

The key was that we wanted to make sure dollars flowed this year, but the challenge, also, as folks in that sector would know, is that funding has been frozen for so long and the number of sites has been frozen for so long. What we wanted to do was make sure that we were putting out money this fiscal, but that we have a process in place for going forward that we're able to look at assessing current funding levels. Maybe there are museums or sites that receive very little or none, but it's only because historically they weren't in the earlier batch. We want to have a process where we're able to look a little bit more fairly and equally across.

I'll hand it to Stephanie who can talk a little bit about some of those percentages, and why some receive more than others.

THE CHAIR: Ms. Smith.

STEPHANIE SMITH: The \$2.1 million is specifically for the provincial museum, our locally managed sites. That money has been disbursed. We allot that into allotments through the operating season, so that's been taken care of.

On a community museum side, that's where we've had a bit of a lag because of the process that the deputy minister just mentioned. The good news is that the whole administrative side of that is being reviewed and we've worked, and we're really committed to getting funding to those sites out to them as early as possible so that they can get up and running. Because of lack of funding, their operating seasons have been shorter,

so with this new funding, if we get that to them at the start of the season, they can hire their Summer staff. We're very much aware of it, and we're very committed to addressing it.

SUSAN LEBLANC: Is there a timeline on that? The (b) part of that, speaking of what we were just talking about with Winter tourism and that kind of thing, are there any sites that are being identified as getting more funding so that they can have longer seasons?

STEPHANIE SMITH: Because of their operating pressures that they were facing before they got their increase, they were mitigating that pressure by reducing their seasonal. Now that they've got more funding, they'll be able to have a longer season. But the vast majority of them are quite small organizations, and it's very difficult for them to be open in the Winter, especially in rural Nova Scotia. We do have larger sites - Ross Farm Museum is open, Highland Village Museum is open. We have sites across the province that are able to some Winter programming.

It's great to have Tourism in our department now, because we work very closely with them updating a lot of social media. The Compelling Tourism Communities Initiative has been really fantastic for the Black Loyalist Heritage Centre, for example, and Highland Village. It's putting them in a much better sort of market-ready position to bring people in year-round. We're really excited about that, and there's no question that the funding increases have helped with that.

SUSAN LEBLANC: I still didn't hear about a timeline. I feel like since MLA Leo Glavine was minister, we've been talking about the review of community museums. That's several years. I'm just wondering if we know when this will be completed, and we can go forward.

JUSTIN HUSTON: Sorry, MLA, we weren't clear. The funding for this fiscal should be flowing as early as next week. In terms of the review process - we're not talking about an overhaul of the CMAP system. This is around kind of the process or just around, how do we allocate fairly the additional funding that we receive? That will be happening early in the fiscal year so that the community museum sites will have that funding very early in the season so that they can plan the season accordingly.

SUSAN LEBLANC: Thanks. Two more quickies.

We know 15 per cent of visitors went to a museum or historic site last year. Do we track any revenues on that? Some of those museums and historic sites charge an entrance fee. Some collect donations in a little glass box or whatever. Do we know what the revenue is?

The other question is in terms of those museums and historic sites. Do we know in terms of the funding Nova Scotia allots to them - do we have a per capita spend? Is it, like, five dollars for every Nova Scotian that we put into museums?

JUSTIN HUSTON: On that last question, I'm not sure. I don't think we do.

STEPHANIE SMITH: No.

JUSTIN HUSTON: We don't have a per capita spend. I'll share with you some information. We can certainly follow up. I think we can provide you some more detailed information in terms of the actual breakdowns. There's a national museum organization - I can't remember the acronym - and they essentially look at that for every dollar invested into a Canadian museum and historic site, it equates to about a four-dollar overall return in terms of GDP. We're investing a dollar in maintenance or salary, and that spinoff creates an additional four dollars. That, in terms of the overall impact - sorry, remind me of your first question.

SUSAN LEBLANC: Oh yes, we've been tracking the revenues from museums and historic sites.

JUSTIN HUSTON: Yes. We can provide you - particularly for the Nova Scotia Museum sites that are directly managed - we can provide you with a list of that. For the community museum sites, the 63 that are on our system, those are run by communities, so we wouldn't know exactly how much revenue they bring. They will report to us annually, so we could have that, but we don't have that as readily available.

I will say that one of the pieces that we look at, particularly around revenue, is that there is a balance for us around revenue so that we can reinvest back into the museum system, but also with affordability. We know that museum sites are a great source if anybody here has a young family. A little plug: We've got a new dinosaur exhibit that's going to be opening soon at the Museum of Natural History. That should be an exciting one and we'll have probably record numbers of attendance.

We also keep our attendance quite reasonable and quite low relative to federal sites, for example. I think if you look at the Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21, I think it's \$15 for an adult to go visit that site and I think if the Museum of Natural History is \$6 ...

STEPHANIE SMITH: \$6.30.

JUSTIN HUSTON: It's \$6.30. Part of this is keeping museums affordable for all Nova Scotians. With affordability right now as probably the biggest issue in the province, we think that's very important.

SUSAN LEBLANC: This is exactly my point. I'm asking about these numbers because I would love to know if there's an analysis that shows that it's worth making museums free. I've said this before at various times: If we want people to come to our province, if we want people to get out - there's social value but there's also an economic

value. I know that there are plenty of arts organizations across North America and the U.K. that have decided to make their entrance fee free. The revenues on merch sales, advertising and all of those other things have boosted the budgets like you would never expect. Because of the number of people coming through the doors, because there is no cost, it's economically sound. That's why I'm asking these questions. I would love to know if there's an analysis being done.

The last thing I want to ask about before I pass it over to my colleague is in terms of heritage property designations and that kind of thing - this is a very specific question, but in Dartmouth North, there is a lot of land where the historians of Dartmouth think that there's a historical African Nova Scotian church foundation, but this is a teeny-weeny little place. It makes a lot of sense that this is what this foundation they've found is. They're trying to figure out: if it is the historic church from that community, how do we protect it and how do we not develop that little parcel of land - because there's development going on all around it. I'm wondering if the department weighs in on anything like that. How does that get decided? Who figures it out?

JUSTIN HUSTON: I'm going to hand that specific question to Susan Jeffries, but in response to your earlier part around the analysis, we have been looking at different models. I would say we have days that are free, for example. I would also say that we've done some surveys with people who are using the museum system. What we're also seeing - the cost hasn't been an issue, and in some cases, when something costs a little bit - it's like when you put something on Facebook Marketplace. If it's free, no one buys it. If it's \$20 on it or \$5, people are like, Oh, this is a deal. There's something about people putting a value on something where even if it's nominal, they see more value in it. That's something that we've been seeing with some of our research and analysis.

I agree with you. Affordability is absolutely key. I'm just not sure that in all cases, free admission - now, I would also say that locally managed sites, in some of the sites, there's flexibility, and so some do things a little differently. We are able to learn how other folks are approaching it, and every region is a little different. We're seeing successes in different ways. That's in answer to that question. I will hand it over to Susan Jeffries in regard to that question around the historical property.

SUSAN JEFFRIES: I am vaguely familiar with that lot of land that came into our department from a concerned citizen, I want to say maybe a year and a half ago, about its origins, and some research was needed to determine what it is and what it isn't. I can get you some further details as to what we did to assist with discovering that, but generally speaking for that sort of thing, whether it's a property or a piece of land, we would work with the municipality to understand what research might be available about the property and its ownership. Ultimately, to make a designation would be done by the owner of that property, and they could decide whether they want to apply for municipal registration or provincial registration or both.

It's my understanding with that particular property, the inquiry was made but we haven't had any discussions since that initial inquiry. I can find out if there's been any more traction on applying for that particular piece of property.

LISA LACHANCE: I'm actually going to stick to the issue of heritage properties. I'm also going to try and fire off some questions in the brief time that I have.

One question I have was around the Heritage Property Act and how the department reflects what it learns, what you learn in providing support and that sort of thing into policy making and thinking about the Act. Is the Act still relevant? Is it doing what it's supposed to be doing in Nova Scotia? I certainly hear from lots of constituents who are concerned about our provincial Heritage Property Act. I would be interested to know about that.

You might not get there in the next couple of minutes, but then the other question I have was around some of the heritage property programs that the Auditor General had highlighted in their report, and about demand uptake, unmet need, and whether the funding is adequate in those?

JUSTIN HUSTON: I'll let Susan speak to some of the program specifics, but in terms of your question around the Heritage Property Act, there are no plans for us to look at a review of that Act. For example, the Act seems to have worked well with the recent - I mean, it was reactive, but to the demolition of Reid House. We had powers under that Act which were exercised and I think served as a deterrent for anybody who does not want to respect that Act.

I guess in short, we aren't planning any Act review or policy review at this time.

SUSAN JEFFRIES: I'll just jump right in. Regarding program supports, we mentioned the Heritage Property Program which has a \$200,000 budget. We've had enough budget to meet the demand of that program this year. There are two ways - or two parts - of that program. One part of it is an applicant can come in and ask for support for conservation advice. That would be a property owner who maybe has some structural concerns and wants to work with a professional to find out how they can repair or address that issue.

The other part of the program that we . . .

THE CHAIR: Order. I'm just having a signal here from MLA Lachance, who I think would like to ask a question.

MLA Lachance.

LISA LACHANCE: Pardon me. I might just sneak in another question. I do have a description of the two types of programs in the Auditor General's presentation. I'm

wondering if those current amounts, though - the extra \$10,000 over 10 years, and the up to \$5,000 for the Conservation Advice Program grants - are those still felt to be adequate ceilings?

[9:45 a.m.]

SUSAN JEFFRIES: They are. Keeping in mind that we only pay for a portion of the work that comes in for application, to date that has been adequate. Certainly, on the Conservation Advice Program side, \$5,000 is deemed to be a requisite amount for the kind of work that they might need to do. The projects that come in, we do just pay a contribution of that \$10,000. We do understand that construction costs are rising, but to date, we've been able to meet the demand through that cap that we have on the program.

LISA LACHANCE: Maybe I'll just foreshadow a question for the next period of time. You mentioned expanding different sites and working with different communities in all sorts of ways throughout the department. My colleague, MLA Leblanc, talked about the Art Bank, making a designated acquisition. I'm wondering what capacity and how the department undertakes a general scan of Nova Scotian communities, and how communities are changing and what's to be saved, what's to be highlighted, and what becomes our heritage. In particular, I think I'd just reflect that at a time, there was actually some pretty solid . . .

THE CHAIR: Order. Time for NDP questioning has currently elapsed. We'll come back.

Now we'll move on to the PC caucus. MLA Barkhouse.

DANIELLE BARKHOUSE: You mentioned this earlier, that there was a freeze on operations increasing. The government increased operations for arts, culture, and heritage organizations. What impacts are you seeing for this sector?

THE CHAIR: Deputy Minister Huston.

JUSTIN HUSTON: That's a great question. There are a few things that we're seeing that are very positive. Part of this is that these sites located across Nova Scotia are cultural hubs for their regions. They anchor a lot of other activities and businesses in those areas. One of the emphases was around salary increases. Those didn't keep pace with other salary increases or inflation, and so staff attraction and retention has been key. You've got a specialist who's a museum specialist in rural Nova Scotia - they are going to be possibly attracted away for another job. So people are able to retain those specialist positions. That's one.

The other one is around the ability to think about when they're able to make ends meet in the on season. They can look at: Can we extend by two weeks? Can we extend by a month and remain open longer?

The other is around looking at ways to modernize interpretation. That's both in terms of quality as well as content, speaking to issues that MLA Lachance started to raise. What I think is really going to be interesting to see is the next couple of years, because these locations and these sites just received the funding. I think they're able to start planning now strategically about how things are going to be different. That's what we're looking forward to seeing.

DANIELLE BARKHOUSE: I agree with that 100 per cent, that it's going to take a year or two to see, and also that some of these museums are hubs. For example, the Ross Farm Museum is a hub for the community. If anybody is looking for something to do, February 3rd and 4th is Winter Frolic. They're open all year round - homemade ice cream, stuff like that - snowshoeing. They are a beautiful museum.

How is the Nova Scotia Museum's increasing accessibility and inclusion?

JUSTIN HUSTON: I'm going to hand this one over to Stephanie Smith. I think she can speak with the most detail to this.

THE CHAIR: Ms. Smith.

STEPHANIE SMITH: Under the Accessibility Act, the Nova Scotia Museum is a prescribed public sector body. That means that we have to have an overall accessibility plan for all 28 sites. I'm really pleased to be able to say that we do now have that plan. It's on our website. In order to make that a reality, staff worked with representatives from museums across the province and the disabled community and organizations representing people with disabilities. We have that plan in place and it outlines accessibility in a very broad sense: everything from the physical accessibility to the online experience to interacting with the collection and the programs that are offered, even how accessible our sites are via public transportation, for example. Now the next phase is we continue to work with the Accessibility Directorate, and Halifax staff are working closely with Ross Farm Museum staff and other rural staff so that they can have site-specific plans developed.

DANIELLE BARKHOUSE: Excellent. Another question: How is the Nova Scotia Museum incorporating planning for climate change into the operations and programs? Peggys Cove is in my constituency and that is definitely an area that might be hit or is going to be hit, maybe. I'm just wondering what you guys are doing to incorporate that.

JUSTIN HUSTON: I will hand it over to Stephanie here in a second but I would say that our department is taking climate change adaptation very seriously. As a department that manages, I think, 240 provincial assets across the province, many of which are located

in small towns along the coast, we know the impacts of storms like Hurricane Fiona that have resulted in closure or a need for major repair. Part of our work is disaster planning but it is also how we make repairs and how we build to ensure that we're ready for the next 50-, 100-year storm. There are processes that we have in place. We're one of the leading departments working with the Department of Environment and Climate Change around climate adaptation planning. I'll let Stephanie speak to that a little bit more.

STEPHANIE SMITH: We've been working on this for quite some time now. I think it was about 10 years ago that the Fisheries Museum of the Atlantic had a major stabilization project take place where it basically lifted that old fish factory higher up off the wharf and put in new pilings. This is all to deal with rising sea levels. Ross Farm Museum is now geothermal-energy-supported. Our brand-new facility at Highland Village Museum - the welcome centre that they built there - is passive - I'm not sure what that . . .

JUSTIN HUSTON: Passive solar.

STEPHANIE SMITH: Passive solar. It meets, actually, a very high standard of what we used to call LEED standard. It's now Passive House, I think they call it. All of these preventive measures - the Department of Public Works has been extremely supportive in helping us get there. That puts us in a much better position to deal with climate change. As the deputy minister says, we have a strategic plan that we're working on with our sites, developing emergency response and disaster plans to be proactive.

We really are so fortunate because we're embedded in rural communities. For example, when the wildfires happened, how can you plan for that? We were actually able to get some artifacts out of the Black Loyalist Heritage Centre, triaging with local people to get some of the artifacts safe to Halifax. There are some things that we benefit from those really close working relationships and other things are more longer-term, infrastructure-based initiatives.

Finally, another thing that might not be top of mind is the education role that museums play with respect to climate change. Up at the Museum of Natural History, we have exhibits there about that. We're working closely with archaeologists looking at archaeology sites at risk in coastal areas. That's a huge concern for rural communities. So a lot of work is happening on many different fronts.

DANIELLE BARKHOUSE: I truly appreciate that response. I know about Ross Farm, of course, because it's one of our "pride and joys." I thank you but I'm going to leave time for my colleagues and pass it over to MLA Taggart.

THE CHAIR: MLA Taggart.

TOM TAGGART: Thanks for being here, folks. I want to make sure I understand things right, but where I'm really going with this is the difference between operational

funding for community museums and provincial museums. First, I want to make sure I understand it right. The operation of provincial museums is fully funded by the Department of Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage. Is that correct?

JUSTIN HUSTON: It's a good question, and it's helpful. Our system is somewhat complex. I kind of spoke to that in my opening remarks.

We have a number of sites. We have 28 sites that are part of the Nova Scotia family of museums; 11 are government owned and operated, and then the remaining are government assets. They're provincial assets, but they're managed by a local organization. Ross Farm Museum would be a great example of that - it is a provincial asset, but it is managed by a local organization or society.

Then in addition to that, there are what we call community museum sites. There are 63 in our system. That funding - only a portion of their funding or their operating comes from the Province. Those are typically smaller sites, and those are all run by community. Those are community assets or they're private. They are not owned by the Province. So there is a bit of a difference between the different sites across - and we have probably more museums in our system than any other jurisdiction, I would say definitely in Canada, but probably in North America.

TOM TAGGART: If I could just say, I'm glad we do. I think certainly we have a really rich heritage here, and still have a big story to tell, really.

I believe I heard that the \$2.1 million that you spoke of earlier for provincial funding was strictly for those particular provincially owned or managed 28. Right?

JUSTIN HUSTON: Those are for the 17.

TOM TAGGART: Can you give me an idea, a ballpark - and I'm sure that when we talk about the other whatever it is - 68 or whatever - museums around Nova Scotia, there's difference in magnitude - you know, size and visitors and all that sort of thing. What kind of funding do we provide to them in terms of operating funding? I'll be frank - I'd like to see more of that, is where I'm going with this.

Don't get me wrong. I'm not being critical. I understand challenges with the funding and that sort of thing.

JUSTIN HUSTON: I'm going to hand it to Susan Jeffries who can give you an example of some of the funding that we provide to the community museum sites.

THE CHAIR: Ms. Jeffries.

SUSAN JEFFRIES: At the time that we received our budget increase for museums, there was a set-aside amount for community museums, and that was \$650,000. That is in addition to the current operating funding that the 63 museums receive through my division, but now going to AML for next fiscal. That was approximately - almost shy of a million dollars - \$946,000 – collectively, with the increase, we're at about \$1.5 million in support just for community museums.

[10:00 a.m.]

I think your question was also asking about the various types - amounts of funding, I believe?

TOM TAGGART: I'm mostly interested in operating funding. I've got to tell you, one of the challenges there is that a lot of these museums - the one I'm thinking of in particular is an outstanding museum in Tatamagouche - Lillian Fraser. Anyway, I don't have the right name, so I won't get into that. They are typically run by community residents, and those community residents are aging. It's more and more difficult all the time for them to do the work that's required. Operating is becoming a challenge. I really want to be specific on how much money goes to actual operating. I know there are different little pots here and there for this repair and those kinds of things, but how much money into operating them, if there is any?

THE CHAIR: Mr. Huston.

JUSTIN HUSTON: It's a good question, and unfortunately, it's a difficult one to pin down because it really depends on the site itself and the complexity around that. For example, certain sites may be open only on weekends, others open all Summer long, others just short periods of time. Some may have a building or a large facility that needs to be maintained. Others have programming that they run through. On average, we provide a relatively small portion of their overall budget or expenditures, and we've looked to increase that - in many cases, we've been able to double that over the last funding.

As I said, we are going to be getting that funding out very shortly to those groups, and we will be working with them and talking with them as we start to develop our process for the new funding formula to make sure that we are helping to meet their needs. I want to be clear that the Community Museum Assistance Program was never intended to fund these museum sites fully. It was always a way to augment or support local groups so that they could then - and part of the work that we are looking at doing we do now but we're looking to also expand is around how can we work with some sites that are well positioned or are interested as local groups in terms of diversifying their revenue streams and looking at ways that they can bring revenue in?

For example, maybe there are sites that folks are excited about renting for weddings. Maybe there are others where it could be used as a retreat for businesses and

organizations that might want to get away to do strategic planning. Those are examples. Some might be well suited to turn into a vacation rental on a weekend and stay in a lighthouse. I'm just - I'm making that up. I don't know. (Interruption) It could be.

I think there are opportunities out there, and we know from working with our tourism colleagues that authentic experiences are what people want. You can't get more authentic than staying in a historical property or visiting one.

I think for a long time, we haven't always placed the value on these sites. I think there's an opportunity, whether it's through charging admission or these experience things. We're very excited to work with some of these sites, but to your point, I think there's also an opportunity to engage some of the younger generation in how this - and it's a win-win because if we can look at capitalizing on their understanding and knowledge of what people are interested in experiencing, I think that can help transform some of these locations as well.

TOM TAGGART: I'm just going to hand it over to my colleague, MLA Sheehy-Richard. I think I have a special museum. I know everybody thinks that. You folks will certainly be hearing from us through Courtney, I guess.

THE CHAIR: MLA Sheehy-Richard.

MELISSA SHEEHY-RICHARD: Really interesting, important subject, I think, trying to make sure that we preserve this heritage in our communities. I think we're all really passionate about it and excited to see. I think you said the \$7.6 million, too, with the increase. I'm just wondering: You hear often that departments do jurisdictional scans. If you could speak a little bit about how the Nova Scotia Museum model compares what we have here to other jurisdictions in Canada?

JUSTIN HUSTON: I'll start out with a high-level response, and then I'll ask Stephanie to fill in the blanks. The short answer is that one of the things that makes Nova Scotia unique or special is our decentralized and family approach to the museum system. In some jurisdictions - and Stephanie can tell you which ones - they have a single provincial museum. That is typically in their capital city, and that's where everything is and where everybody needs to go. Starting in the 1960s and 1970s, Nova Scotia really adopted a different approach where we saw the value of the different assets across the province, and we looked at having a more distributed approach. I think some other jurisdictions are doing that, too, and Stephanie can speak to that a little bit.

As I mentioned earlier, I think we have one of the largest numbers of museum sites that we support which is great in terms of our visitors and for locals alike.

STEPHANIE SMITH: Most provinces would have a stand-alone provincial museum that's usually a Crown corporation model, and with a staff, a CEO, answering to

a board. You find in the Maritimes - well, in Newfoundland and Labrador, and in Prince Edward Island, a similar setup to what we have here in Nova Scotia.

In the 1970s, you had a museum boom. You had all these sites joining. Then things kind of petered out in the 1980s. Shand House was the last one. Then there was a hiatus, and in 2000 we brought in Historic Acadian Village of Nova Scotia and Highland Village, and then in 2016, the Black Loyalist Heritage Centre. Those last three were initiatives to really address what was lacking in cultural diversity in the system. I've had the privilege to work in the system for a couple of decades, and I really see that the ability to have these sites embedded in communities is a real strength of the system.

For what you were discussing earlier, to be able to work together with government staff in Halifax and work on these major projects like new buildings and programs and extending the tourist season - we're stronger together. I do find that if you look at some of our government-operated sites in the rural areas, they are a little more isolated, because they don't have that local board and that group of volunteers working with us. It's a very strong model in a lot of aspects.

THE CHAIR: MLA Sheehy-Richard with 30 seconds.

MELISSA SHEEHY-RICHARD: I guess I'll have to wait for Round 2. I was just going to - I think you touched on them, that there would be challenges and strengths associated with it, I assume. I don't know if you have anything to add in 10 seconds.

JUSTIN HUSTON: More to come on that in the next round of questions.

THE CHAIR: Okay. We'll now move over to the second round of questioning. Today, everyone gets 14 minutes.

We will begin with MLA Maguire. You have until 10:21 a.m.

HON. BRENDAN MAGUIRE: The one time I don't have 14 minutes' worth of questions. (Laughter)

I want to get back to really taking advantage of our sites across Nova Scotia. One of the things you talked about was facilities on site. I'm assuming - correct me if I'm wrong - you maybe talked about a pilot project or looking at certain areas where we can open them up during the Wintertime. Obviously, everybody wants the park or the museum or the historical land or site in their area opened up during the Winter, but you need the facilities on site.

I want to touch on that a bit because we did run into some things. I know it's not you, but I think there has to be some collaboration between departments. This year we had a young lady come from B.C. back home to Sambro. She wanted to open up something at

Crystal Crescent Beach Provincial Park for food and drinks and different things like that. She went down there and opened up. She had a trailer. You can just imagine, within a couple of days enforcement was there, and they told her she had to leave. There was this whole process, and we were going back and forth. I can honestly say that they dragged their feet like I've never seen before. Unfortunately, right toward the end of the year, they told her that she couldn't get a permit.

We've run into this in particular - I'll use Crystal Crescent. We've run into this over and over and over with Crystal Crescent. If we want to be able to, for the Department of Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage - if we want to be able to bring people in - and for those who don't know it, Crystal Crescent is just a beach. We have the lighthouse there - the oldest operating lighthouse in North America. There are all kinds of different things. There are the trails and all these things. But we don't have any facilities there, and it's so hard. It's like pulling teeth.

I think there has to be a plan in place. I don't think it's just my community. I think there are other communities. I think it's a bit unfair that some of these areas are going to be potentially looked at for year-round because of the facilities and the investments that were made by this current government and past governments, and then we have Crystal Crescent Beach and Long Lake. I'll tell you the story around Long Lake Provincial Park - because we didn't have those facilities there, we can't get those.

Is there a plan in place to look at what we have and maybe turn some of these beaches into like a Lawrencetown Beach Provincial Park, where they have facilities on site, and make it easier for P3 and private partnerships on these properties?

THE CHAIR: Deputy Minister Huston.

JUSTIN HUSTON: Thanks for raising the question and the issues. As you start out with, this isn't my department, obviously, so I can't speak in detail. This is something, certainly, that my colleagues at the Department of Natural Resources and Renewables could speak to in more detail. I can tell you, though, I will spend a little bit of time talking about the part of extending the season and having experiences like being able to access a park.

In the cases we're looking at, it is not necessarily around facilities at, say, Crystal Crescent Beach Provincial Park. It is ensuring that folks can park, they might have trash that they can throw their dog waste there, or something. It's also - let's say - a great example would be Summerville Beach Provincial Park. You've got The Quarterdeck Resort there, you've got White Point Beach Resort up the road, and it's something that everybody - I think locals know you can use the beach in the Winter. If you're visiting and you're off-season, and you see a gate closed and you're not from the area, you don't know that you can actually walk through there and it's there for maintenance. A part of this is how do we make some of those areas more welcoming and more accessible? Of course, that does not

come without resources required, even minimal, so those are conversations that we need to have with our colleagues at Natural Resources and Renewables.

BRENDAN MAGUIRE: Can I just touch on something? I do want to touch on something right quick. You talked about trash removal and things like that. When I first got elected in 2013 . . . (Interruption) One of the things that I always said about my community and the community that I'm from is that there's literally everything 5 to 10 minutes away from downtown Halifax. We've been able to partner with the group to create the McIntosh Run Watershed Association trail system. We've been able to partner with individuals to create those trails at Long Lake Provincial Park, which was like pulling teeth, to be frank with you. For those who don't know, Long Lake Provincial Park is not and has not had management by government. It's managed by a volunteer board that fundraises.

We have lakes, we have the ocean, we have beaches, we have trail systems - but when you talk about amenities and facilities - I'll give you a good example, another area you're familiar with, the lookoff in Herring Cove Provincial Park Reserve. We put trash cans there, and the great couple who lives down there - I don't know if you know who they are, but - Patty and Peter LaPierre were emptying the garbage, voluntarily emptying the garbage because the department would put the garbage cans there, but they wouldn't empty them. Then it became a bit of a burden. They're an older couple. If they're listening - they're probably not listening - but they're an older couple. People were putting TVs and different things there.

Herein lies the problem. Again, we go into these things where we need this garbage removal. Crystal Crescent Beach, for example, we need bathrooms and things like that. The bathrooms are there. What I've run into - and I know it's not your department - I think that what we do need is an overarching plan for our sites and for our tourism to say, Okay, if we're going to put garbage cans there, we should at least empty them. What I was told when we put the garbage cans there was, We'll put garbage cans there, but we're not emptying them. You've got to get HRM to come in and empty the garbage cans. I call up HRM, and they're like, We're not emptying the garbage cans. There aren't supposed to be garbage cans there.

I think what I'm hoping is when we think of tourism, and we think of culture, and we think of attracting people, a lot of times we think of rural Nova Scotia, and rightfully so. Some of the most beautiful places on Earth, but we've got some really good spots in HRM, and what we do is we run up against city council, and we run up against HRM, and we run up against councillors, and we run up against orders of government. When it comes to tourism, I'm wondering if there's a plan for collaboration so that we don't have Peter and Patty down there emptying the garbage cans because the city doesn't want to do it because they said that the Province should have never put garbage cans on a provincial site?

JUSTIN HUSTON: Good issue identification, good questions. Collaboration across is key on any of this stuff, and I think some of the challenges that you're facing - interjurisdictional stuff - it's what drives your average citizen crazy. It is certainly one of the things that we see. Collaboration is particularly important when we talk about things like trying to extend the season because as I mentioned earlier, it's a bit of a puzzle to make sure things fit. We want someone to come here and come in November, but we certainly don't want them to come and have a terrible experience, put up a review on Google or Yelp, and then that's counterproductive to what we're trying to achieve. The key is as we do some of these initiatives, how do we sit down with the right partners, make sure we get it right so that visitors and locals alike have the best experience possible?

[10:15 a.m.]

One of the things that is under way right now is public engagement around the development of a new tourism strategy, and the things that we've been talking about - season extension, Winter, diversity, how we access assets that we have, rural and in the city - are all a part of that conversation. That's happening right now.

BRENDAN MAGUIRE: I will throw a compliment on the record where I will say that we have a Premier now who has said that he wants to get things done - he's going to go ahead and get things done. That's been his M.O. and that's been my experience watching this government - that they are just going to get it done. I think this is something where, again, it's frustrating to individuals - we can't have a garbage can so now there's garbage everywhere because we can't get the collaboration.

I do think it's important that if we're going to continue and come out of COVID, and we're going to come out stronger, we've actually got to get past this petty jurisdictional stuff. That's what we have a lot in HRM. I don't know what it's like in the other places, but also, start looking outside the box a little bit, and looking at P3s and working with the private sector.

The one thing I think we're going to run into is - and I don't know if your department is looking into this or addressing this yet - again, I'll use my own personal experience. Long Lake Provincial Park and the lighthouse down in Sambro - that was all done by volunteers. The investment came from Peter MacKay at the time, but it was done by a group of volunteers we got together at the time of the Progressive Conservative Government. Long Lake Provincial Park was done under the former McNeil government. But it's a group of individuals who are getting older. The truth is that a lot of these volunteers who are sitting on these boards are getting older. It's Marjorie and Martin Willison who have been volunteering for 60 years now who are saying: We want to pass this on, but we can't.

I don't know if the department is looking into these things. The same with museum boards, the same with all of these things. It's not as pressing as health care. We know that.

It's not as pressing as some of the other issues out there, but I feel like this is about to fall apart. A think a lot of these volunteers are about to go away, and where you don't have people stepping up to do it, are you looking at maybe incentivising or talking to or figuring out a way that - the Long Lake Provincial Park Board is teetering. The Urban Farm Museum Society - luckily they have an influx of new people, but that urban farm was teetering. So what do we do?

JUSTIN HUSTON: I think the issue of volunteer burnout is certainly not unique to this sector, whether it's museums or tourism. We have various funding programs through CCTH that different organizations access around capacity-building and supports within volunteer organizations.

Specific to museums, we've done some pretty good work, I would say. I think we're leading jurisdictions in some of this work around EDI that we're doing with board training for museums. This is something that we've developed with the board of governors with the museum system. It's something that we are making available now across the system.

Why I wanted to bring emphasis to that is that part of this is: How do we attract all Nova Scotians to participate and be active in these volunteer organizations? Without a doubt, we need communities, we need volunteers to be engaged and driving this for a lot of reasons. It's not just resource. It's that they know their communities best. They're in touch with what's happening on the ground, and they know their areas best and what's important. We also want to make sure that it reflects the people who are in those communities.

MLA Maguire, your community has changed significantly over the past 30 years in terms of who is there. We want to make sure all residents feel like they are part of the solution. So part of that is making sure that they see themselves reflected in the work that's happening, and on the people who sit on those boards.

BRENDAN MAGUIRE: I just want to thank you for your work. I know it's not easy. It's one of those departments that sometimes might fly under the radar to some of the bigger - transportation, health, education, things like that. Just my 11 years or so in doing this role, you come to realize how important the department is and how many people, organizations, and places in Nova Scotia depend on the hard work that you do. I can honestly say that I've never had a negative experience with your department. I've always had positive outcomes. I shouldn't say "positive outcomes" - even when things couldn't be done, the department's always been straightforward. I do appreciate that. I just want to say that there are a lot of great people working in that department, and a lot of people depend on your department. Thank you for all your hard work.

THE CHAIR: Deputy Minister Huston, 30 seconds.

JUSTIN HUSTON: Listen, I certainly appreciate those words of support. I would agree. I think we have a fantastic department staff, second to none. I think what makes them so effective is that they work directly with community and listen to community, and like you said, whether it's positive or it's maybe not positive news, we're all working together for the same thing, which is a better Nova Scotia. I really appreciate those comments.

THE CHAIR: Order. Thank you very much. We'll now move on to the NDP caucus for questioning.

MLA Lachance.

LISA LACHANCE: I might just actually continue on the compliment and then kind of restate my discussion from earlier. Then there'll be 13 and a half minutes - no, just kidding.

Really, my question comes from feeling similar to MLA Maguire in terms of working with different community groups over the years and really having excellent interactions with the folks at CCTH around funding for community organizations and people really thinking outside the box, really feeling like people understood - like staff understood - the uniqueness of community-based organizations and about what they were trying to do.

For that reason, when I worked in government, I felt it was particularly important that there was a manager of LGBTQ+ issues, at the time. In particular, I felt that was really significant. On the one hand, the department is saying, "We're a safe space. We've got someone who knows about your community. They probably don't know everything, but you can come in and we can find a path forward." I think that's really important on the museum and heritage and tourism side as well. I guess I'm just wondering, in terms of your EDIA work, what expertise do you have within the department to do that work?

THE CHAIR: Deputy Minister Huston.

JUSTIN HUSTON: Thanks for that question. I would say I really appreciate being able to talk about this a little bit, because I think CCTH across the system is seen as a leader in this regard and has really been working to pilot and take different approaches, and then also take that opportunity to share with our colleagues across different departments.

As specific as - we have a position that is designated and just focused on EDI as part of our management team. That's her primary focus. That's what Aja Joshi does. We have different staff. For example, we recently hired a Mi'kmaw cultural liaison officer from Eskasoni who lives in Millbrook and is very tied into community and is to serve as that liaison and that portal into all our different programs that we provide to better connect with community.

Some of the work we've been doing - obviously we have ANSA; African Nova Scotian Affairs is part of the department, as well as Acadian Affairs and Francophonie, and Gaelic Affairs. There are pieces that we're doing there.

I would also say that we've done an overhaul - and I've talked about this in previous committee presentations - an overhaul of our grants and funding programs, where we essentially have embedded EDI from the ground level all the way through. It took us a number of - COVID slowed us down - it took us a couple of years, but working directly with first-voice, both in the department and in community, to help shape not only the programs that exist but what programs we might want to focus on. Another key aspect is that we wanted to make sure we were hearing from those organizations and groups that weren't regularly talking with us, because maybe they should be, and why aren't they - why aren't we tapped into and working with those groups?

I think we're doing a lot of great work. I know that's kind of a high-level response. I would like to take a second to plug that part of the work coming out of our work around making our grants and programs more accessible, both in terms of to different communities, but just in terms of your average Nova Scotian using them. We've developed - and we're going to be launching it in the coming weeks - a grant-finder tool. That will be of great interest to all MLAs and all Nova Scotians, for those who are taking the time to watch Legislative Television. You will be able to go onto our website and using a simple search engine, you'll be able to ask - it will lead you through a series of questions.

One of the things we heard back from folks was, I don't even know which door to open to go talk to. If you're not connected with folks who are already working in community - like you mentioned, we have good in-reach into community, but some people go in and they say, I know I want to hold this event but I don't know. This will walk you through, and there will never be a closed door. Even if something doesn't quite fit, there will be an access to a number or an email that people can access. We're hoping that our grants and programs will be even more accessible than they are now.

LISA LACHANCE: Before I hand it over to my colleague, MLA Leblanc, I did want to start plugging on the heritage side - continued assessment of where our gaps are in the heritage of our province that we're recognizing. Obviously, my expertise is more along the lines of 2SLGBTQIA+ communities, but I think there are other communities that are more and more important in our province, and we don't know their history. I think that's really important. As well, in terms of Pride tourism - something that I tried to plug many times before - honestly, we have these amazing Pride celebrations all over the province next to the ocean. Folks, this is a gold mine waiting to be explored.

I think somehow bringing that together: figuring out what the target markets are, walking people through what a couple of weeks could be like in the province, and then also working with tourism providers so that they're able to show that there are safe spaces, which I think is also really important. I've had similar conversations with folks who are

interested in African Nova Scotian history, and would love the added benefit of knowing that where they were going to stay, for instance, was a good environment. I can see that for other communities as well. I will leave it at that and hand it over to my colleague.

THE CHAIR: MLA Leblanc.

SUSAN LEBLANC: Yes to all of that. My constituency assistant is actually a writer and published a really amazing book about the queer community in this very specific time period of late 1980s, early 1990s in Halifax, and it's a fascinating read. She's since done walking tours of queer sites and queer historical sites in Halifax for various groups that come in. That kind of stuff is a gold mine, and it's wonderful for both Nova Scotians who already are here and also visitors and newcomers.

I wanted to ask about Cape Breton for a second. I have received emails and different correspondence over the years about Cape Breton, and also looked a little bit in terms of grant programs. In certain areas, there is a much smaller success rate. I'm assuming that's because it's a much smaller application rate from, in particular, arts organizations and cultural organizations in Cape Breton. I understand that there are staff tours that go up, but I'm wondering if there has been any more thought to the Cape Breton arts and culture strategy that exists, and the same thing with an African Nova Scotian cultural strategy. I know that there was talk of that happening. I just wanted to know if there's an update on that, and particularly the Cape Breton part.

THE CHAIR: Five and a half minutes - Deputy Minister Huston.

JUSTIN HUSTON: On the arts and culture or grant programs in Cape Breton, no, there isn't a plan to look at that specifically, but we do work with a lot of the key organizations that are there. Our staff - both regional and here in Halifax - are very tied into what they're seeing on the ground. I can tell you that for some of this, I know there is sometimes a perception in terms of the percentage of funding that goes through there. In some cases - whether it's arms-length, like Arts Nova Scotia or their staff review - we have criteria and ranking to go through, and sometimes it is based on just the number of applications that come in. We do look at that closely.

If you're ever curious around specific questions - I know we've been asked questions in the past from MLA Coombes, for example, and we provided that detail - we can provide you with a breakdown of where those are going.

On your second question, around African Nova Scotian cultural strategy, not specifically. Part of our mandate letter is around an African Nova Scotian tourism strategy. That work is starting to happen with Tourism and African Nova Scotian Affairs. I will say, though, that there has been a significant increase in funding toward African Nova Scotian cultural organizations. The African Nova Scotian Music Association got a sizeable increase

this past year, and the Africville Genealogy society as well. Those are some examples where we certainly do see the value.

[10:30 a.m.]

I will also note that, not unlike working with the Mi'kmaq, it's very important for the stories and for it to be coming from that first voice. That doesn't mean just working with staff internally. That is working with those organizations in community to see what their priorities are. We're trying to be as responsive as possible to those.

SUSAN LEBLANC: Thanks. I also wanted to get an update on the soundstage. I know that the soundstage is funded through - I'm pretty sure it is - CCTH, but I do know it's sort of being handled by Screen Nova Scotia. I'm wondering about the wetland it's being built on, for instance. I'm wondering if there are any sort of conversations between departments on that. To me, it looks like - aside from the fact that there's a giant wetland - a great location for the soundstage. Any comments on that particularly?

JUSTIN HUSTON: I don't have specific information there, although from some of those early discussions, I do know they are very aware of that site in terms of what the restrictions are relative to wetlands. Screen Nova Scotia would be the appropriate organization to talk to for that update. I know they are aware of that, and they are planning around that in terms of their future build and will take all that into account.

SUSAN LEBLANC: Just for the record, I've put "Winter Frolic" into my calendar for this weekend. I'm pretty excited to go snowshoeing. Thank you.

You may have already said this, and forgive me if you've given this number, but the amount of annual funding provided to museums and historical sites that are outside of the provincial responsibility - so those community museums - do we have a list of guidelines or a metric or whatever, a rubric, for application to that money? Are there specific things - requirements and responsibilities - for those community organizations to receive funding from that pot?

JUSTIN HUSTON: The total is now approximately \$1.5 million that goes toward those community museum sites. The short answer is yes, there is sort of a screening criteria or information that we ask. As I mentioned, we are tweaking that a little bit going forward so that we can try to be more inclusive and get a better assessment of what is out there.

There are also requirements around reporting, so any kind of funding in terms of using taxpayer dollars - we want to be sure we're using them responsibly. So if we provide even a \$5,000 grant to a community site, we need to see how that is spent, and there is annual reporting that's required for them to then qualify for future funding.

SUSAN LEBLANC: I guess I will end my questions and just say that - again, you won't be surprised by this - I'm very pleased with this increase that was announced last year. I hope that we see in the coming budget session a more kind of - a clearer mapping of how that money will be spent in terms of arts organizations operating. Is it solely going into operating? Are there new project grant things happening?

Also, I want to say that, in terms of the Art Gallery, I hope it's open soon. It's not a luxury. It's a necessity. It's a right.

THE CHAIR: Order. Now we will move over to the PC caucus. MLA Sheehy-Richard will continue her questioning.

MELISSA SHEEHY-RICHARD: I'm going to refresh. We were talking about the model of museums that we have in our jurisdiction. I guess I was just kind of elaborating a little bit - I lost my train of thought, what we were talking about - but maybe some of the challenges, and then the strengths of the way that we have ours more dispersed, if you will?

JUSTIN HUSTON: Certainly. I can start, and then, Stephanie, if you want to chime in on some of those strengths.

I think, obviously, one of the strengths of this system is that a lot of these museums are rooted in community or, in some cases, are run by community volunteer boards or have staff who are working in community. That always, I think, is that strong connection to the region, to the people, to the place. In some cases, we've got some staff who are the great-great-great-great of someone who was a part of that museum, or it was their heritage site.

I think, also, folks are very solution focused because it is so important for their communities. It's a "get 'er done" kind of attitude which is a real strength of the system. I think, as well, is with the addition of the Historic Acadian Village, Highland Village, the Black Loyalist Heritage Centre, and we haven't had a chance to talk a lot around the Mi'kmaq. While there isn't a dedicated Mi'kmaw museum, we are working very closely with Mi'kmawey Debert Cultural Centre and the Mi'kmaq there around developing their own museum system. We do support other areas like Millbrook Cultural & Heritage Centre, and there's another one in Membertou, where the Mi'kmaq are able to tell their own stories. It's a good example of some of the strengths.

I think some of the challenges are, of course - with all of these numbers, it does become the challenge of it is a large system. We are looking at ways that we can operate the most efficiently and fairly across this province. I think MLA Taggart, the pride that you have for the museum in your area - or museums or heritage sites in your area - extends across this province. Sometimes a part of the challenge is how do we meet the needs of every region?

Finally, I would just say, with the challenges that we're facing with some storms recently, the unexpected is becoming, in some ways, the expected. We are working hard to plan around that, but the nature and the extent of repair or damage that happens across the system - it's one thing if you're in a jurisdiction like Ontario where you have one provincial museum. Okay, but when you have all these sites across the province - and, as I said, we're managing about 240 assets. That includes vessels, that includes old historical buildings - it certainly is significant in terms of some of that upkeep.

MELISSA SHEEHY-RICHARD: If MLA Taggart's passionate about his museum . . . (Laughter) I feel like when we talked earlier about opportunity to expand into the shoulder seasons and things that might exist, I'm just thinking Windsor's been the birthplace of hockey, but we have not really taken that and run with it, in my opinion. We're hockey driven. The number of people who came for the IIHF 2023 World Junior Championship. With this new funding and things like that, it would be a project that would be, really, something that I would like to see us work on. I know Long Pond changed ownership and is part of the - some of the area's part of the King's-Edgehill School now. I feel like we kept missing that boat. Maybe there's opportunity to bring it back.

I just wanted to comment on the new app that you talked about - the grant-finder - because I believe it was Community Services that - I chaired that. I think last year we talked about that coming through from the department. Not only would that be great for these organizations, but it's going to be fantastic for our CAs and ourselves as well.

The last thing before I pass it over to MLA MacDonald - sorry - I just want to talk about how we get Nova Scotia Heritage Day honourees. Total change of subject here. Really proud William Hall is named the 2024 - you know, first Black person, first Nova Scotian, and third Canadian to ever get the Victoria Cross. Really significant, so proud of that. I'm just wondering if you could talk a little bit about how decisions like that are made, and what the process is to getting to name and pick the honourees?

THE CHAIR: You have nine minutes, Deputy Minister Huston.

JUSTIN HUSTON: On the process of designating someone for future Heritage Day, I don't know the exact process off hand. It is something that we . . .

THE CHAIR: I do.

JUSTIN HUSTON: Yes. (Laughter) Good. Do you want to speak to that action? Can the Chair speak to that?

THE CHAIR: I don't know if that's proper - but it is schoolchildren who actually choose them. They send in their potential nominees.

JUSTIN HUSTON: Yes, and there is a committee, which we help, so we don't get a Boaty McBoatface as the winner. (Laughter) There is a committee that helps them review those, and they are established - it's 10 years out or something like that. There is a number and we've got it lined up for years going forward.

Sorry, MLA MacDonald - the question relative to Windsor and the hockey - I think Stephanie has a great answer to that, which I think is helpful.

STEPHANIE SMITH: Just a few things about Haliburton House . . .

THE CHAIR: Order. We have a number of conversations going on in the room. If we could just keep it down a little bit so we can hear Ms. Smith.

STEPHANIE SMITH: Haliburton House Museum is a really good example for a lot of things that have been discussed here just in the last few minutes. Season extension - it sits in a wonderful park-like space right in the middle of town, and they have extended the season, the use of that space, which is a government asset - for cross country skiing. They brought in a provincial organization that has purchased grooming equipment through our department and have this wonderful trail when there is snow. That's a really good example of a site that's being maintained by the town, funded by the Province, and being used for cross-country skiing.

They also have a disc golf course there on site that's used through the Summer. So maximizing what is a traditional museum site and using it in a variety of ways is a really great example of collaboration. The town is to be credited for how they worked together with us to make that happen.

On the hockey note, many years ago, the Windsor Hockey Heritage Society was looking for a home - they couldn't afford a place. We took a wing of Haliburton House and gave it to them so that they could have a warm place for their hockey collection. People go there to see the hockey exhibits, but then others will go see the historic house, and vice versa. It has put visitation to that site in the tens of thousands where it used to barely sit at 2,000 to 3,000 a year. So hockey is being celebrated on a provincial site in Windsor. I just think it's a great example of what can be done.

THE CHAIR: MLA Sheehy-Richard, are you through with questioning now?

MELISSA SHEEHY-RICHARD: Yes, well, I'll just . . . (Interruption) I think that's great. I just envision that being bigger and better, but yes, it is really great. I don't know that I realized about the cross-country skiing, but snowshoeing is happening there as well.

Yes, I will turn it to MLA MacDonald for his questions.

THE CHAIR: MLA MacDonald, you have just under six minutes.

JOHN A. MACDONALD: I'll just comment on my colleague over there. I've been to York Redoubt National Historic Site, and I'm very disappointed to hear what you said because I do remember it. I'm going to have to take a look out there.

[10:45 a.m.]

One thing I want to do is - your group. For my area, it's the Fundy region, and I will tell you, your staff have been great. They actually came out and we did a Grant 101 thing. We had, like, 26 people show up and everybody had positive things to say, even though not everybody gets money because there's only a limited amount.

Just to put into MLA Taggart's point, from the looks of it, that budget got increased 70 per cent from \$900,000 to \$1.5 million, which I think everybody here is happy over because everybody's got great groups. You happened to mention great-great-great. Well, I have the Lawrence House in my area, in Maitland, when Maitland was the first historical district in the province that was ever registered. I do have people who are descendants of William Lawrence, and this year is the 150th anniversary of the launching of it. (Interruptions) Oh my God, it is. (Laughter)

It was launched in 1874, and 150 plus 1874 . . .

THE CHAIR: Order. MLA MacDonald has the floor.

JOHN A. MACDONALD: You'd think I'd ignore all these people when I do that, except when the Chair says, "Order", I stop.

It was launched in 1874, and 150 - that is 2024, is it not? Okay, just checking. (Laughter) It's 150. It was launched October 27, 1874. So it's a thing.

To get to my questions. I can do what I want with my time. It's a great portion of this.

How is it that the department is leveraging the museum and heritage to support tourism? What's the department doing for that?

THE CHAIR: Deputy Minister Huston.

JUSTIN HUSTON: It's a good question. We touched on a little bit of that today. One thing that I'd kind of like to highlight is the interface. We've got now tourism, film, and culture and heritage all in one department.

To highlight an example of some of the work that we're doing, there are productions - notably *Washington Black*, which will be screening on Disney+ here in the very near future. I spoke about this last week at a committee meeting. It's poised to be one of the

biggest series that's going to be on Disney+ shortly. A lot of it is filmed here in Nova Scotia, and in some of those places, using actual museum sites that were used for the filming, and then tying that into tourism.

For example, it's as simple as - this is the future, now - when you're streaming that on Netflix and then you go on your computer, there will be ads for Nova Scotia that will be able to come up. Being able to link those together, utilizing our assets, utilizing our amazing film industry, and then tapping into that for tourism to actually drive people to say, "Wow, I really liked what I saw on the screen. How interesting - it was filmed in Nova Scotia. I didn't know that. Let's maybe plan a trip."

In particular, what's interesting about that one is where the focus is. It's a story following - I won't ruin the punchline, but it's around slavery and a freed slave, an African American, coming to Nova Scotia. There's a really interesting story there, tapping into the market of African Americans and that tourism market, in the northeast U.S. in particular. We see huge potential there. It's a real good opportunity.

JOHN A. MACDONALD: I would agree. In my previous life, I dealt with many Americans. Oak Island - the amount of them who have said, "Have you been down there?" I'm going like, "It's not a place you can just walk in anymore and go on."

The other thing is, you made a very clear distinction between when you said provincial and municipal heritage properties. Why did you make such a distinction? I'm just wondering. If one is a municipal, is it not a provincial also? Or are there two separate things?

JUSTIN HUSTON: It can be both. You can be registered as both. The difference would be - essentially, I'm boiling this down in the interest of time. One is, is it of municipal interest from a heritage perspective, and another, does it have provincial significance? I won't go into the details there, but you can distinguish kind of between the two. There are, for example, many more municipal heritage properties. I think Halifax might have about 1,300, and Nova Scotia, we have closer, I think - 600 sites. It's a bit different. The criteria we look at: Are they of provincial significance from the historical perspective versus municipal?

THE CHAIR: Four seconds, MLA MacDonald.

JOHN A. MACDONALD: Thanks a lot. Burntcoat Head is awesome.

THE CHAIR: Order. Thank you very much to our witnesses here today. I would be remiss if I didn't mention the heritage site in my own area, Scott Manor House - since everyone was doing a little plug there. They have great programming all Summer long.

Deputy Minister Huston, would you like to make some closing remarks?

JUSTIN HUSTON: My closing remarks will be brief. I just want to thank everybody for the time here to talk about what is a positive story for all Nova Scotians in all areas of the province.

I do appreciate the work that you and your constituency assistants do for your citizens. I've worked with probably almost everybody around this table. I encourage you and your colleagues to reach out if you ever have any questions or you have any community groups who are looking for possible solutions to a great thing they want to do to make your area better. Don't hesitate to reach out. We're always there.

THE CHAIR: Thank you very much. We will let our witnesses go out into the world. They don't have to hang around here while we do a tiny piece of committee business, and that's correspondence from the Department of Service Nova Scotia. It was information requested from the January 10th meeting. There's quite a bit of information there. I don't know if folks have had a chance to look through it. Any questions or comments about what is there or what is not there? Okay.

Just for folks' information, our next meeting is February 7, 2024. The witnesses will be Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Department of Public Works, and the Joint Regional Transportation Agency re: Municipal Grant Funding and Strategic Initiatives.

If there is no further business - MLA Maguire.

HON. BRENDAN MAGUIRE: Sorry, I don't - do I have a list? Who is the witness for the Joint Regional Transportation Agency? Mark Peck?

THE CHAIR: Mark Peck, yes.

No further business? Then the meeting is adjourned. Thank you.

[The committee adjourned at 10:51 a.m.]