



STANDING COMMITTEE

ON

COMMUNITY SERVICES

ANNUAL REPORT

2008

Standing Committee on Community Services Annual Report 2007 - 2008

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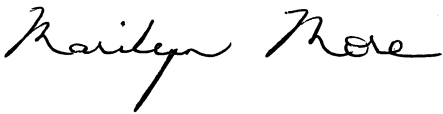
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Hon. Alfie MacLeod
Speaker
House of Assembly
Province House
Halifax, Nova Scotia

Dear Mr. Speaker:

On behalf of the Standing Committee on Community Services, I am pleased to submit the 2007 / 2008 Annual Report of the committee for the Second Session of the Sixtieth General Assembly.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Marilyn More".

Ms. Marilyn More, MLA
(Dartmouth South-Portland Valley)
Chair
Standing Committee on Community Services

Halifax, Nova Scotia
2008

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INTRODUCTION

The Standing Committee on Community Services, an all-party Committee of the House of Assembly, was struck at the beginning of the First Session of the Sixtieth General Assembly. Pursuant to Rule 60(2) (d) of the *Province of Nova Scotia Rules and Forms of Procedures of the House of Assembly*:

(d) the Community Services Committee is established for the purpose of considering matters normally assigned to or within the purview of the Departments and Ministers of Business and Consumer Services and of Municipal Affairs and matters relating to the Human Rights Commission.

In 1998, the Speaker, as Chairman of the Legislature's Internal Economy Board, gave the Community Services Committee written permission to also consider matters within the purview of the Department of Health and the Department of Community Services.

MEMBERSHIP

The membership of the Community Services Committee currently is as follows:

Ms. Marilyn More, MLA-Chair
Dartmouth South-Portland Valley

Mr. Trevor Zinck, MLA
Dartmouth North

Hon. Ronald Chisholm
Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture
Guysborough-Sheet Harbour

Mr. Manning MacDonald, MLA
Cape Breton South

Hon. Len Goucher
Minister of Immigration
Bedford-Birch Cove

Mr. Keith Colwell, MLA
Vice-Chair
Preston

Mr. Pat Dunn, MLA
Pictou Centre

Mr. Leo Glavine, MLA
Kings West

Mr. Gordie Gosse, MLA
Cape Breton Nova

MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

During the Second Session of the Sixtieth General Assembly, the Committee underwent the following membership changes:

Mr. Manning MacDonald, MLA (Cape Breton South) replaced Hon. Stephen McNeil, MLA (Annapolis) as a member of the Committee, and Mr. Keith Colwell, MLA (Preston) replaced Hon. Stephen McNeil, MLA (Annapolis) as the vice-chair of the committee.

PROCEDURES AND OPERATIONS

The Community Services Committee traditionally meets once a month. These meetings are usually held on the third Thursday of the month in the Legislative Committee's Office, however during the Second Session of the Sixtieth General Assembly the Committee elected to meet on the first Tuesday of the month.

Prior to the Second Session of the House of Assembly, the Standing Committee on Community Services has elected to unanimously pass the following motion:

“That the Standing Committee on Community Services meet only in the afternoons (1:00 – 3:00) when the House of Assembly is out of session and in the mornings (9:00 – 11:00) when the House of Assembly is in session. They have also elected not to meet during the Spring Session of the House during Estimate Debates.

The Standing Committee did not meet with presenters during the Spring Session (April 24, 2008 – May 27, 2008) of the House of Assembly.

During the Second Session of the Sixtieth General Assembly the Committee met on the following dates:

September 20, 2007	March 4, 2008
November 6, 2007	April 1, 2008
January 8, 2008	June 13, 2008
February 5, 2008	

NOTICES

Notices of the Committee meetings are sent to all members of the Committee, staff of the caucus offices, the Legislative Staff and the House of Assembly Press Gallery. The notices are also posted in Province House and are on the Committees' Web site at the following address: <http://www.gov.ns.ca/legislature/committees/schedcs.html>

TRANSCRIPTS

Transcripts of all Community Services Committee meetings are available from the Legislative Library in Province House, the Legislative Committees Office or on-line at the Community Services Committees' web page at the following address: <http://www.gov.ns.ca/legislature/hansard/comm/cs/>

RESEARCH MATERIAL

All research for the Community Services Committee is compiled by the Legislative Library and arranged and distributed to the members by the Committee clerk. Reference material is placed in binders and distributed one week prior to the meetings. A copy of this material is also made available to the witnesses appearing before the Committee, the Legislative Library in Province House and to Hansard Reporting Services.

ANNUAL REPORTS

All reports from the Community Services Committee are compiled and written by the Committee clerk. The draft is then sent to the individual Committee members for consideration. Upon completion of the review and approval of the Report, the Chairman tables the Report with the Clerk of the House.

Distribution of the report is as follows: to the Speaker/Clerk of the House, all members of the Committee, all witnesses who appeared before the Committee, the Legislative Library in Nova Scotia and in all other provinces and territories, the caucus office and the media. This report is also available to the general public upon request through the Legislative Committees Office or on-line at the Committee's Web page at the following address: http://www.gov.ns.ca/legislature/committees/cs_pubs.html

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Committee wishes to extend its gratitude to the following witnesses for their time and co-operation: Valley Autism Support Team; Autism Society of Nova Scotia, Autism Society of Cape Breton, Department of Community Services, Department of Education, Department of Justice, Department of Health Promotion and Protection, Department of Health, Child Care Advocacy Association of Nova Scotia, Private Licensed Administrators Association, Child Care Connection Nova Scotia, Non-Profit Directors Association, and the United Way of Halifax Region. Special appreciation is extended to Mr. Robert Kinsman, Editor of Hansard Reporting Services, and staff; Mr. James MacInnes, Coordinator/Director of Legislative Television and Broadcast Services, and staff; and Ms. Margaret Murphy, Legislative Librarian, and staff.

WITNESSES

September 20, 2007 Organizational Meeting

November 6, 2007 Autism

Valley Autism Support Team

Mr. Norman Donovan – Director

Autism Society of Nova Scotia

Ms. Vicki Harvey – Executive Director

Mrs. Tracey Avery – Parent Representative

Autism Society of Cape Breton

Ms. Michelle Gardiner – President

January 8, 2008

Child and Youth at Risk Strategy

Department of Community Services

Mr. Robert Wright – Executive Director, Child & Youth Strategy

Ms. Marika Lathem – Director, Family & Youth Services

Department of Education

Mr. Alan Lowe – Senior Executive Director, Public Schools

Department of Justice

Mr. Fred Honsberger – Executive Director, Correctional Services

Ms. Judith McPhee – Senior Director, Strategic Initiatives

Department of Health Promotion and Protection

Ms. Heather Christian – Director, Health Development

Department of Health

Ms. Linda Smith – Executive Director, Mental Health, Child Health & Addiction Treatment Services

February 5, 2008

Early Learning & Child Care Plan

Child Care Advocacy Association of Nova Scotia

Ms. Valerie Blaauw – Chair

Ms. Margie Vigneault – Vice-Chair

Private Licensed Administrators Association

Mr. Shane Richard – Co-Chair

Ms. Heather Hansen-Dunbar – Co-Chair

Child Care Connection Nova Scotia

Ms. Barb Bigelow – Co-Chair

Ms. Elizabeth Hicks – Co-Chair

Non-Profit Directors Association

Ms. Margo Kirk – Member

Ms. Laurie St. Amour – Secretary

Ms. Susan Willis – Co-Chair

March 4, 2008

Adoption and Foster Care

Department of Community Services

Ms. Judith Ferguson – Deputy Minister

Mr. George Savoury – Executive Director, Family & Community Supports

Ms. Vicki Wood – Director, Child Welfare & Residential Services

Ms. Janet Nearing – Manager, Adoption Services

April 1, 2008

**Children & Family Services Act Advisory Committee and
Provincial 211 Information Line**

Department of Community Services

Ms. Judith Ferguson – Deputy Minister

Mr. George Savoury – Executive Director, Family & Community Supports

United Way of Halifax Region

Ms. Catherine Woodman – President & CEO

Mr. Terry Norman – Chair, 211 Nova Scotia Steering Committee

Mr. Robert Wright – Program Manager, 211 Nova Scotia

Mr. Chris Keevill – Chair, United Way of Halifax Regional Board of Directors

June 13, 2008

Affordable Housing Program / Homelessness

Department of Community Services

Ms. Judith Ferguson – Deputy Minister

Mr. Dave Ryan – Executive Director, Employment Support, Income Assistance & Housing

Mr. Dan Troke – Director of Housing Services

ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING

September 20, 2007

WITNESSES

There were no witnesses present at this time as it was an organizational meeting.

MATTERS OF DISCUSSION

It was mentioned that Thursday meetings present conflicts in schedules between members of the Executive Council and the committee, therefore it was suggested that the committee meetings be moved to Tuesdays to accommodate all schedules.

Motion:

The following motion was unanimously passed by the Committee:

“That the Standing Committee on Community Services change meeting days from the third Thursday of the month (9:00 am to 11:00 am) to the first Tuesday of the month (1:00 pm to 3:00 pm) commencing November 2007.

The committee also discussed potential witnesses for future meetings of which will be outlined in the following pages.

TRANSCRIPT

Reference to the transcript for this meeting can be found at the following address:
http://www.gov.ns.ca/legislature/hansard/comm/cs/cs_2007sep20.htm

WITNESSES

Valley Autism Support Team

Mr. Norman Donovan, Director

Autism Society Nova Scotia

Ms. Vicki Harvey, Executive Director

Mrs. Tracey Avery, Parent Representative

Autism Society of Cape Breton

Ms. Michelle Gardiner, President

MATTERS OF DISCUSSION

The purpose of the meeting was to obtain an update on Autism and how it affects Nova Scotia's population.

Motion:

The following motion was unanimously passed by the Committee and referred to the Ministers of the Departments of Health, Education and Community Services:

“That the Province create a Working Group of Health, Education and Community Service professionals, including parents and advocates to be determined by Autism Society Nova Scotia, who can investigate the scope of issues surrounding the Autism Community and produce a report that develops and implements a plan that addresses the intervention, support and accommodation needs across the lifespan of individuals living with and affected by an Autism Spectrum Disorder.”

The Department of Health Response:

“The Department of Health, under the Mental Health, Children's Services and addiction Treatment Branch, continues to work collaboratively with families, practitioners, community groups and researchers to further the treatment needs of all individuals who are affected by Autistic Spectrum Disorders”.

In response to further correspondence, the Department of Health states:

“The department will not be developing a working group on autism as we already have several working groups in place. These working groups were developed to assist with the implementation of our \$4M Autism Treatment Program and include representatives from the Departments of Community Services and Education, families, physicians, researchers, mental health clinicians and DHA/IWK administrators”.

TRANSCRIPT

Reference to the transcript for this meeting can be found at the following address:
http://www.gov.ns.ca/legislature/hansard/comm/cs/cs_2007nov06.htm

CHILD AND YOUTH AT RISK STRATEGY

January 8, 2008

WITNESSES

Department of Community Services

Mr. Robert Wright, Executive Director, Child and Youth Strategy

Ms. Marika Lathem, Director, Family & Youth Services

Department of Education

Mr. Alan Low, Senior Executive Director, Public Schools

Department of Justice

Mr. Fred Honsberger, Executive Director, Correctional Services

Ms. Judith McPhee, Senior Director, Strategic Initiatives

Department of Health Promotion and Protection

Ms. Heather Christian, Director, Health Development

Department of Health

Ms. Linda Smith, Executive Director, Mental Health, Child Health & Addiction
Treatment Services

MATTERS OF DISCUSSION

The purpose of the meeting was to obtain an overview of the results of the recommendations stemming from the Nunn Commission Report in regard to the Strategy for Children and Youth at Risk.

There were no recommendations, motions or request for documentation made by the committee at this meeting.

TRANSCRIPT

Reference to the transcript for this meeting can be found at the following address:

http://www.gov.ns.ca/legislature/hansard/comm/cs/cs_2008jan08.htm

WITNESSES

Child Care Advocacy Association of Nova Scotia

Ms. Valerie Blaauw, Chair

Ms. Margie Vigneault, Vice-Chair

Private Licensed Administrators Association

Mr. Shane Richard, Co-Chair

Ms. Heather Hansen-Dunbar, Co-Chair

Child Care Connection Nova Scotia

Ms. Barb Bigelow, Co-Chair

Ms. Elizabeth Hicks, Co-Chair

Non-Profit Directors Association

Ms. Margo Kirk, Member

Ms. Laurie St. Amour, Secretary

Ms. Susan Willis, Co-Chair

MATTERS OF DISCUSSION

The purpose of the meeting was to examine issues regarding the Early Learning and Child Care Plan of the Department of Community Services.

There were no recommendations, motions or request for documentation made by the Committee during this meeting.

TRANSCRIPT

Reference to the transcript for this meeting can be found at the following address:

http://www.gov.ns.ca/legislature/hansard/comm/cs/cs_2008feb05.htm

**DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY SERVICES
“ADOPTION AND FOSTER CARE”**

March 4, 2008

WITNESSES

Department of Community Services

Ms. Judith Ferguson, Deputy Minister

Mr. George Savoury, Executive Director, Family & Community Supports

Ms. Vicki Wood, Director, Child Welfare & Residential Services

Ms. Janet Nearing, Manager, Adoption Services

MATTERS OF DISCUSSION

The purpose of the meeting was to examine the issues of adoption and foster care in regard to the Adoption Redesign Initiative that was established by the department to review adoption services in Nova Scotia.

There were no motions or recommendations made at this time, however the Committee has requested and received a copy of the section of the Adoption Manual which sets out the approval process for adopting children.

TRANSCRIPT

Reference to the transcript for this meeting can be found at the following address:

http://www.gov.ns.ca/legislature/hansard/comm/cs/cs_2008mar04.htm

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY SERVICES **April 1, 2008**
“CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES ACT
ADVISORY COMMITTEE” & PROVINCIAL 211 INFORMATION LINE

WITNESSES

Department of Community Services

Ms. Judith Ferguson, Deputy Minister

Mr. George Savoury, Executive Director, Family & Community Supports

United Way of Halifax Region

Ms. Catherine Woodman, President & CEO

Mr. Terry Norman, Chair, 211 Nova Scotia Steering Committee

Mr. Robert Wright, Program Manager, 211 Nova Scotia

Mr. Chris Keevill, Chair, United Way of Halifax Region Board of Directors

MATTERS OF DISCUSSION

The purpose of the meeting was two-fold. The Committee was interested in examining the mandate of the Department of Community Services Children and Family Services Advisory Committee, their mandate, membership and reporting structure.

In regard to the United Way 211 Information Line, the purpose of the meeting was to examine the initiative to establish a provincial 211 information line which is understood to connect citizens to a full range of non-emergency social, health and government services within their communities.

Motion:

The following motion was unanimously passed by the Standing Committee on Community Services:

“That the Standing Committee on Community Services supports a province-wide 211 system initiative and requests that Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations also support this initiative”.

Response from the minister:

“As part of the budget process for the previous two years, the government gave full consideration to the United Way’s proposal and request for funding to establish a 211 service. While we are aware of the many potential benefits associated with the establishment of a 211 service, government was not in a position to provide financial support to the initiative at that time.

With the 2008-2009 budget planning process currently underway, government will again consider the United Way’s 211 funding request”.

TRANSCRIPT

Reference to the transcript for this meeting can be found at the following address:
http://www.gov.ns.ca/legislature/hansard/comm/cs/cs_2008apr01.htm.

**DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY SERVICES
“AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROGRAM / HOMELESSNESS”**

June 13, 2008

WITNESSES

Department of Community Services

Ms. Judith Ferguson, Deputy Minister

Mr. Dave Ryan, Executive Director, Employment Support, Income Assistance & Housing

Mr. Dan Troke, Director of Housing Services

MATTERS OF DISCUSSION

The purpose of the meeting was to examine the affordable housing program / homelessness under the purview of the Department of Community Services.

There were no recommendations or motions made during the meeting; however the Committee requested and received the following information:

- Two annual reports regarding the Affordable Housing Agreement
- Annual Audit on Housing Development Corporation
- Statistics on wait lists
- Information on security/custodian issues regarding seniors' housing
- Reporting on affordable housing to the general public and the role of the department
- Actual monies spent from the provincial budget for the years 2003/2008/2009
- Strategic plan regarding Health Communities Conference held in 2000/2001

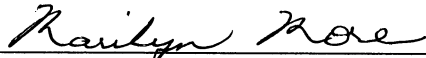
TRANSCRIPT

Reference to the transcript for this meeting can be found at the following address:
[http:// www.gov.ns.ca/legislature/hansard/comm./cs/cs_2008june13.htm](http://www.gov.ns.ca/legislature/hansard/comm./cs/cs_2008june13.htm).

STATEMENT OF SUBMISSION

All of which is respectfully submitted to the House of Assembly

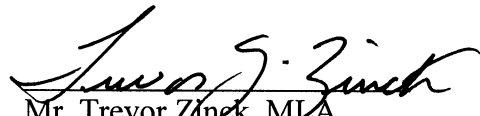
This 2nd day of December, 2008



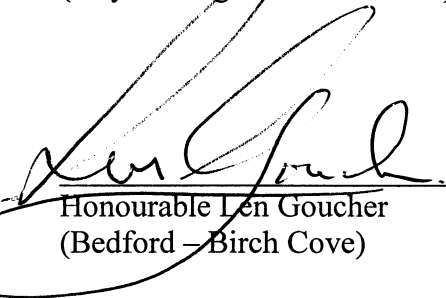
Ms. Marilyn More, MLA (Chair)
(Dartmouth South-Portland Valley)



Honourable Ron Chisholm
(Guysborough-Sheet Harbour)



Mr. Trevor Zinek, MLA
(Dartmouth North)



Honourable Len Goucher
(Bedford - Birch Cove)



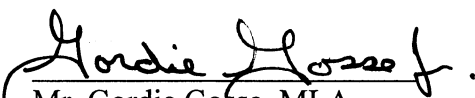
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(Cape Breton South)



Mr. Pat Dunn, MLA
(Pictou Centre)



Mr. Keith Colwell, MLA
(Preston)



Mr. Gordie Gosse, MLA
(Cape Breton Nova)



Mr. Leo Glavine, MLA
(Kings West)

APPENDICES

The following is a list of documents requested and received by the Standing Committee on Community Services;

Department of Community Services

- Two annual reports regarding the Affordable Housing Agreement
- Annual Audit on Housing Development Corporation
- Statistics on wait lists
- Information on security/custodian issues regarding seniors' housing
- Reporting on affordable housing to the general public and the role of the department
- Actual monies spent from the provincial budget for the years 2003/2008/2009
- Strategic plan regarding Health Communities Conference held in 2000/2001

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