

SLNA DELEGATES MEETING
July 27, 2005

OWN CO-OP, 115 The Esplanade

Executive Members in Attendance:

President: Cam Miller, King George Square V
VP Internal: Ronny Yaron, Woodsworth Co-op V
Treasurer: Paul Smith, St Lawrence on the Park V
At Large: Joan Campbell, Market Square V
At Large: Connie Yang, OWN Co-op V

Voting Delegates In Attendance:

Leo Agosto, Marketview Co-op
Judith Anderson, Marketview Co-op
Cherril Baker, David B Archer
Randy Bath, 15 Scadding
Patricia Bear Claw, Cathedral Court Co-op
Barbara Bell, Woodsworth Co-op
Delano Brown, Marketview Co-op

Bonnie Dew, OWN Co-op
Elisabeth Ecker, St Lawrence on the Park
Robin Hart, Crombie Park
Stig Harvor, La Place St Laurent
D Hawkes, 25 George St
Aurie Hensman, 160 Frederick St
Peter Jackson, Market Square
Eva Jarmicka, Harmony Co-op
Frank McLean, 25 The Esplanade
Susan McLeod, Market Square
George Millbrandt, Longboat Residents Assoc
Ron Monteith, Woodsworth Co-op
Dan O'Leary, 15 Scadding

Loralie Olinyk, Harmony Co-op

Anna Lee Orr, David B. Archer Co-op
Dwight Peters, 25 The Esplanade
Sherri Russell, F.A.N.
Karen Serwonka, David B. Archer Co-op

Alan Seymour, Longboat Residents

Nancy Sheppard, St Lawrence on the Park
Wally Simpson, Crombie Park
Frank Touby, Harmony A Co-op
Michael Waring, New Times Square 2

With Regrets:

VP External: Robert Prowse, Space Condos
Secretary: Samantha Hewit, Space Condos
Georgette Harris, Saint James Condos
Marcus Little, The Wellington

ACRONYMS

BIA: Business Improvement Area
CMHC: Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation
CPLC: Community Police Liaison
Committee
HRSDC: Human Resources and Skills
Development
Canada
OMB: Ontario Municipal Board
PSB: Police Services Board
SLCRA: St. Lawrence Condo Ratepayers
Association
SLCRC: St. Lawrence Community
Recreation Centre
TIACAC: Toronto Island Airport Community
Advisory Committee
TCHC: Toronto Community Housing Corporation
TWRC: Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Committee

Non-voting Delegates and Guests in Attendance:

Arlyss Ponchuk, Recording Secretary

George Smitherman, MPP Toronto-Rosedale Centre
Jennifer Arp, Bill Graham's Office
Wendy Ground, George Smitherman's Office
Bob Kemp, SLMNBIA, 51 Division CPLC
Erin Harris

Joan Boyd
Norma Daltrey
Fouad Hassan
Maggie Smith
John Kimber
Wendy Devine
Maureen Millard
Dorothy Fletcher
Hugh Cleland
Delona Munroe
Thomas Quinn
Leslie Lawlor
Jean Cordari
Tom Hendry
Norma Seymour
N. McKechnie
Joyce Netley
A.M. Williams
Ann McDonald
Sally Doulis

Isabel Rice
Clair Sedore
Diane McIntyre
Jane Affleck
Malcolm Burford
Madelaine Varja
Marianne Ueberschar
Carolyn Cleland
Helen Hawkes
Alice E. Weihs
Maria Mereno
Loga Lenko Aplin
Billy Ammis
Halinna Muhammed
Rebecca Diamond
J.L. McKechnie
Kathleen Hill
Roderick McLeod
Heather Dalzell
Rita Stevenson

*** A full twelve page version of this meeting is available on request.***

1. Welcome & Round Robin

Cam Miller called the meeting to order at 7:04 pm. He introduced himself as President and he chaired the meeting. A round table of introductions was conducted, and an attendance sheet was passed around.

2. Approval of the Agenda

Motion: to approve the Agenda as presented.

Moved by: Patricia Bearclaw

Seconded by: Aurie Hensman

CARRIED

3. Approval of June 29, 2005 Minutes

Motion: to approve the June 29, 2005 minutes as presented.

Moved by: Aurie Hensman

Seconded by: Joan Campbell
CARRIED

4. Business Arising from the Minutes

There was no business arising from the minutes. Cam Miller announced that George Smitherman would arrive at 8:00, not 7:00 as expected. Attendees presented Other Business. Paul Smith took questions in advance of George Smitherman's arrival. Cam Miller gave a brief update on building developments.

5. Introduction of Guest Speaker George Smitherman — Paul Smith

George Smitherman arrived at 7:49pm. Paul Smith welcomed him to the meeting.

6. Remarks from George Smitherman, followed by Questions, Answers, and Discussion

· **Questions compiled and submitted in advance to George Smitherman** ·

We would like you to encourage the OMB to respect their constituents' St. Lawrence Neighbourhood Urban [Design] Guidelines, which were developed to protect the integrity of the St. Lawrence neighbourhood and the Old Town. Can we expect you to do this?

GS: OMB reform is long overdue and necessary. If the City is given greater power, it must also assume responsibility for increasing density to contain urban sprawl.

Could you give us the status of the reform of the OMB?

If we pass new authority and responsibility and power to the City, if we recognize the City of Toronto as a special circumstance, then we also need to ensure that the transfer is done with a governance model that is accountable. I will be meeting with Minister Gerretson and others on this matter.

The Smoke-free Ontario Act makes no provision for separately ventilated, segregated, smoking rooms in bars and restaurants. This will force smokers to use patios. Will the government amend the legislation to protect non-smokers and hospitality workers by banning smoking on patios?

GS: No. Patios are an outdoor space, which by its nature cannot be regulated.

Restaurant owners have gone to considerable expense to build smoking rooms. Should they get compensation from the government?

GS: No. Those people who have made investments have already had a return on their investment over a period of time. Our party ran on a commitment to bring this legislation in and gave advance fair warning.

Some people have a health issue with noise, and noise pollution is a significant and growing issue in this neighbourhood. Will your Ministry do anything about noise pollution?

GS: This is the responsibility of the Ministry of Environment, not the Ministry of Health. The City of Toronto Act would give the City new powers to decide how to regulate noise.

The Province levies an education tax on commercial establishments. Currently, the rate for Toronto is much higher than the rest of the province. Considerable funding for education could be raised if every jurisdiction in Ontario had the same rate as Toronto. Is this reasonable?

GS: I would be concerned about the competitive environment we would create (between Toronto and 905 area) by increasing taxes as a solution. The challenge for us is to keep all taxes as low as is practicable.

Provincial funding has recently been injected into housing. Has any of that been allocated to supportive housing for seniors? Some people saying some seniors are being forced out of their housing.

GS: [No.] We are increasing funding to provide support to people in their home environment, specifically for community support services. In the next few weeks we will announce a three-year rollout of funding to support people in terminal care in their homes or nearby community care sites.

SLN residents of a condominium in a building which also houses a methadone clinic are disappointed in the Province's response to related debris, prostitution, and drug dealing.

GS: A report is pending in the next 3-4 months. I am seeking to alter the way the Ministry manages its operation with managers of methadone clinics. I apologize that it has gone on so long and that it might seem as if the Ministry is not acting. Action is forthcoming.

Rumour has it that the Province may open a safe injection clinic in the SLN. There are pros and cons to such an initiative. Do you support it?

GS: I have had no involvement, no briefing, around such an initiative.

What is the status and timing of development of the First Parliament site at Berkeley / Parliament / Front Streets?

GS: Due to fiscal restraints, don't expect to see any time soon a brilliant new heritage site at the corner of Berkeley / Front / Parliament. I was active along with City Councillor Pam McConnell to make sure that the land, which has historic value, is preserved for the long term.

Regarding the Toronto Port Authority (TPA), there are a few areas where the Province does have leverage—it does make an appointment to the TPA board—and has recently done so, appointing Michelle McCarthy, without any consultation with the affected parties, to my knowledge. Will the province instruct its appointee to honour the City's wishes, and stop this folly?

GS: The Province does make an appointment to the TPA board, and has recently done so without consultation. [George Smitherman shrugged.] So go ahead and criticize us for

making an appointment to a board to which we have a fiduciary responsibility. The island airport is governed by a tripartite agreement amongst the Port Authority, the Federal government and City government. It is their responsibility.

Given the Toronto Port Authority's (TPA's) legacy of undemocratic abuse and illegitimate authority, what is the position of the provincial government on the many calls including those from the SLNA to close the TPA? Does the Province support a) closing the Toronto Island Airport, eliminating its contribution to deadly air pollution acknowledged by public and professional health authorities, b) abolishing the illegitimately established TPA and c) returning its functions to the City of Toronto for legitimate and public accountability?

GS: It is not my jurisdiction.

Paul Smith: You are our MPP. Can you give us some counsel?

GS: I agreed with and campaigned for the decision not to proceed with the bridge. My instinct is that it is getting increasingly difficult to operate out of the Island Airport. The limited volume of traffic that is occurring there is making the ferry less viable, less reliable. As my Ministry is responsible for Air Ambulance which operates out of the Toronto Airport, the reliability of the ferry is a crucial element. I can't say any more at this time. Personally, I recommend that the land be turned into a cricket field.

What, if any, changes are being considered (1) to make the Condominium Act more consumer/owner protective? (2) to make the Condominium Act more enforceable without the consumer (usually the innocent victim) making lawyers rich? (3) to continue the fight against "hotelling" in residential condominiums? (4) to revamp the Ontario New Home Warranty Programme (as administered by Tarion) to really protect the consumer in a practical, meaningful, timely manner?

GS: (1,2) There is no plan at present to amend the Condominium Act. (3) I worked on the hotelling issue: A under pressure, the previous government changed the property tax classification for hotel suites in condos to disallow them from gaining the benefit of lower residential taxes while operating a commercial practice. (4) In my 6 years as an MPP the warranty program has not been a major source of inquiry. Anyone with an issue regarding a particular building can contact Wendy Ground at my community office.

Is Queen's Park prepared to reverse Harris' policy of centralized control of education finance and return the right to levy taxes to Boards of Education so that they can set their own fiscal and program priorities?

GS: No, but "no" is not the status quo. There are existing initiatives. The relative labour peace in schools stands as apt testimony that when it comes to education we have not proceeded like the Harris Conservatives. We need to be careful that one set of students do not benefit in a way that other students do not because their school has a bigger tax base.

Are you planning to expand Supportive Housing services?

GS: I hope so, but I have no glimmer of good news for you about expanding the services any time soon.

Maureen Millard: Can you draw from Savings?

GS: The only way the expenditure can be made is to draw from an existing budget. In our “Drive to Community” initiative, we are trying to change people’s thinking from an institutional mindset to a community mindset, for homecare environments. The more pressure that can be exerted on [expanding supportive housing services], the more likely it is to be taken on.

Maureen Millard: Where do we put pressure?

GS: There are people in this room, particularly seniors, tied in with other networks, who have been aggressive on this front. We all want to live at home and live out our days at home. There is much more work to do on this program, and as we look to the next election, I hope to shape community-based healthcare as a signature of our party’s platform.

· **Questions from the Floor, and as recorded just before George Smitherman’s arrival** ·

Wendy Devine: Why do governments consider borrowing money from the private sector when they could borrow from the Bank of Canada with no interest charged to the people of Canada. The NDP have made this part of their platform now.

GS: We need to be careful. The differential with what the government can access money for and what a big private sector company can access money for is only about ½%.

Wendy Devine: But we would only have to pay a small administrative fee.

GS: I don’t think your characterization is accurate. I’d be happy to send you some information. The government can’t say to the Bank of Canada, send us money and we’ll repay you in twenty years. If the government seeks resources, it has to pay on those resources.

Guest: I used to live in Wawa. We had a small hospital with 5 doctors. Now they have a great big hospital and no doctors.

GS: I visited that hospital in February. We have a challenge with doctors in our province, because ex-Premier Bob Rae shrunk medical schools. The NDP’s theory was that the only way to control healthcare costs was to shut off the supply of doctors. There are a number of things we’re doing:

- 1) We haven’t just given doctors more money for money’s sake, but to leverage changes in the way that they practice.
- 2) We are generating more opportunities for foreign-trained doctors to practice in the province, although not every doctor granted a foreign license will meet the standard to practice in Ontario as our standards are even higher than in the US.
- 3) We are negotiating with the Ontario Medical Association to develop models for community-based family health teams, whereby a doctor works in a team environment with a nurse, nutritionist etc. Doctors can double their patient base because often a patient’s issue can be dealt with by a team professional other than the doctor. This model also prevents doctors from getting burnt out.
- 4) We are expanding medical school spots by 15%. We will be making announcements. The trend line for doctors leaving for the US is flattening. We have been licensing more doctors than in any year since 1981.

- 5) A Deputy Minister for Human Resources has been appointed to develop strategic planning, as up to now the Ministry has been micromanaging on a day-to-day basis.
- 6) Nurse practitioners in the province have been doing a tremendous amount of work previously done by doctors.

Gerald Rose: How can you possibly justify private public partnership (3P) hospitals? All indications are that they will cost more and be less efficient. [Gerald Rose added that he heard George Smitherman say at a meeting before he became Minister of health that he was against 3P hospitals.]

GS: You're right. When we came to office, we made a decision to amend the deal of the previous government, to ensure public control at all times, to ensure that the building never leaves the hands of the public. I've seen the British statistics that you cite but we have not adopted the British model in Ontario. Cost overruns with public moneys have run to over \$100 million in two cases. The approach we are using in Ontario is like a mortgage. We are drawing on some private money and private sector discipline and private sector skill sets and proven models, and the private sector takes the risk on cost overruns.

Tom Hendry: Does Cabinet have any plan to reform the way that residential homes are assessed for taxation? When I left my huge house in the Annex I was paying half the taxes that I'm paying in my tiny condo in the SLN.

GS: There is no plan to amend the way that property taxes are assessed or collected in Ontario.

Tom Hendry: What do we have to do to get you to have a plan?

Our government's agenda is pretty clear: healthcare, education, economic vitality . . . Your issue has not made it to the top of the agenda.

Tom Hendry: Would you think about doing it? It is a matter of equity for people owning residences.

Paul Smith: It is up to the community to generate a loud enough voice to bring that issue to the government's attention.

Karen McMillan: Right now organ donation is voluntary. Peter Cormos has a bill that has had first reading to bring in system for presumed consent (you would by default contribute your organs when you die—but anyone could opt out of it). Given that most private members' bills die on the table, and that this is an all party issue, what is your position on it as Minister of Health and what is the Liberal Party's position?

GS: The provincial government is looking into presumed consent. I support it myself but the debate has not occurred in the party yet.

Joan Boyd: Does the provincial government have any control over the price of drugs coming in from the US, particular Cytomel, the price of which has gone up extravagantly? Do we control the price at all?

GS: I don't know that particular drug. In general, the drug program might be the least equitable program we have in Ontario. You are going to hear a lot about drugs in the next

3-4 months and strategies necessary for our government to employ to reduce the cost curve.

Elizabeth Ecker: Has the government considered that most of the research for drugs is done at universities. Why doesn't the government do research on new drugs and then farm out production to pharmaceutical companies, to the highest bidder. That would cost a lot less. If the government sponsors research in the universities, why aren't drugs patented and the money given back to us rather than given to pharmaceutical companies?

GS: We've got to do an even better job of capitalizing on these products, but it will typically be done in partnership with pharmaceuticals that buy those patents up under the Innovation Agenda.

Elizabeth: Why don't we have universities do research, then find pharmaceutical companies that will produce the drug the cheapest possible way, and the province keep ownership of the patent?

GS: The Premier is looking into it. He has a law degree and a science degree, so he has good grounding in this area. You'll hear more about the Innovation Agenda in the next couple of years.

Kathleen Hill: There is too much noise along The Esplanade. Why hasn't something been done about it 8 years ago?

Paul Smith: This is a municipal matter and will be forwarded to the City Counsellor for a response.

Wally Simpson: The Social Housing Reform Act (SHRA) has potential to cause hell to communities all over the province. How long do we have to wait for it to be amended?

GS: Amendments are forthcoming. The matter is taken seriously enough that this year John Gerretson was the first Housing Minister to go to the Annual General Meeting of the Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada (CHFC).

Ann Marie Williams: the fact that optometry was de-listed is absolutely unconscionable. It is a basic need. What are we paying taxes for anyway? I know so many people who are working for minimum wage, and children, everyone, needs to have their eyes tested. I could not believe my ears when I heard that. [Other attendees added other de-listed items, including physiotherapy, chiropractics, and possibly hearing aids and foot care.]

GS: [Regarding chiropractics, physiotherapy and optometry,] I don't have anything to suggest to you that these were great decisions. Amongst the range of very poor options these were the best decisions we could come up with. Some things that are needful in the budget force other things out of the budget.

Stig Harvour: We hear in almost all your answers that resources are limited. It is a matter of what the government can raise in revenue. The previous government cut taxes severely and as a consequence we ended up with a big deficit that now also has to be coped with. It seems to me that we are not paying enough taxes to operate a decent

government. I'd like to pay a bit more in taxes to overcome the problems you face right now. Most of the money given in tax breaks were given to people who had high incomes. People with very low incomes got a pittance of the tax break. The distribution of the tax cuts was bad, but also the idea itself was bad.

GS: In this riding there are a lot of progressive people who hold that sentiment, but it is not a powerful voice in Ontario. Don't misread your neighbourhood for the province. We have to do our work to get more resources out of the Federal government as they have surplus after surplus after surplus, which are still the dollars of Canadians.

Kathleen Hill: We are experiencing problems at 85 The Esplanade with drilling. They start as early as 7:00 am. Pam McConnell's office told us they have permit to work from 7:00 am to 7:00 pm, and that if they extend beyond that, we have the right to call the police. Yet the advance notification to our building stated that work would start at 9:00 am, not 7:00 am.

Paul Smith: This is a municipal issue, and will be forwarded to the Councillor's office.

Guest: do you think that stroke units could use improvement?

GS: Every element of healthcare could use improvement. Tremendous improvements have already been made. My own father, who had stroke in 1992, would likely be alive under today's healthcare environment. Still, we have lots of work to do.

Guest: The equipment is stellar, but the staff is not sufficient.

GS: Staffing in hospitals is always going to be a concern. No one-to-one ratio can occur, and any standard lower than that will not satisfy a family member accompanying a patient in a hospital. It is very hard to meet people's expectation for hospital care.

Ronny Yaron: Is there really a Ministry of Health Promotion just starting and how does it relate to the Ministry of Health?

GS: It's our "sister", and its Minister is Jim Watson. Whereas I wake up mornings wondering what to do about a list of immediate crises, his mandate will be to prevent people from getting sick in the first place.

GS: I'm surprised that we didn't talk about the environment today. We are working diligently to eliminate coal from the Ontario energy vernacular. That will have long-term positive effects. [Recording Secretary's note: An advance question overlooked was "*Many of our delegates challenge the progress the Ontario government is making on energy/environment conservation. What is your response?*"]

· Remaining Questions ·

Additional questions were raised by attendees from the floor in advance of George Smitherman's arrival. Because these questions were dealt with in the context of George Smitherman's responses to other questions, the Acting Chair, Paul Smith, chose not to address them to the MPP during the meeting. However, all questions were documented and will be forwarded to the MPP after tonight's meeting.

7. Adjournment

Paul thanked George Smitherman. Attendees applauded. At Ronny Yaron's and Cam Miller's invitation, George Smitherman agreed to come to SLNA meetings biannually.

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 10:00 pm.

The next Delegates meeting will be held on Wednesday, September 28, 2005, at 7:00 pm. There will be no meeting in August.

Samantha Hewit, Corporate Secretary

Cam Miller, President and Chair