

**Third Session – Forty-Second Legislature**  
**of the**  
**Legislative Assembly of Manitoba**  
**Standing Committee**  
**on**  
**Social and Economic Development**

*Chairperson*  
*Mr. Andrew Micklefield*  
*Constituency of Rossmere*

**Vol. LXXV No. 2 - 6 p.m., Thursday, November 26, 2020**

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**MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**Forty-Second Legislature**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Political Affiliation</b>
ADAMS, Danielle	Thompson	NDP
ALTOMARE, Nello	Transcona	NDP
ASAGWARA, Uzoma	Union Station	NDP
BRAR, Diljeet	Burrows	NDP
BUSHIE, Ian	Keewatinook	NDP
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COX, Cathy, Hon.	Kildonan-River East	PC
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FIELDING, Scott, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	PC
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GORDON, Audrey	Southdale	PC
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GUILLEMARD, Sarah, Hon.	Fort Richmond	PC
HELWER, Reg, Hon.	Brandon West	PC
ISLEIFSON, Len	Brandon East	PC
JOHNSON, Derek	Interlake-Gimli	PC
JOHNSTON, Scott	Assiniboia	PC
KINEW, Wab	Fort Rouge	NDP
LAGASSÉ, Bob	Dawson Trail	PC
LAGIMODIERE, Alan	Selkirk	PC
LAMONT, Dougald	St. Boniface	Lib.
LAMOUREUX, Cindy	Tyndall Park	Lib.
LATHLIN, Amanda	The Pas-Kameesak	NDP
LINDSEY, Tom	Flin Flon	NDP
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MARCELINO, Malaya	Notre Dame	NDP
MARTIN, Shannon	McPhillips	PC
MICHALESKI, Brad	Dauphin	PC
MICKLEFIELD, Andrew	Rossmere	PC
MORLEY-LECOMTE, Janice	Seine River	PC
MOSES, Jamie	St. Vital	NDP
NAYLOR, Lisa	Woleseley	NDP
NESBITT, Greg	Riding Mountain	PC
PALLISTER, Brian, Hon.	Fort Whyte	PC
PEDERSEN, Blaine, Hon.	Midland	PC
PIWNIUK, Doyle	Turtle Mountain	PC
REYES, Jon	Waverley	PC
SALA, Adrien	St. James	NDP
SANDHU, Mintu	The Maples	NDP
SCHULER, Ron, Hon.	Springfield-Ritchot	PC
SMITH, Andrew	Lagimodière	PC
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SMOOK, Dennis	La Vérendrye	PC
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TEITSMA, James	Radisson	PC
WASYLIW, Mark	Fort Garry	NDP
WHARTON, Jeff, Hon.	Red River North	PC
WIEBE, Matt	Concordia	NDP
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WOWCHUK, Rick	Swan River	PC

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA**  
**THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

**Thursday, November 26, 2020**

**TIME – 6 p.m.**

**LOCATION – Winnipeg, Manitoba**

**CHAIRPERSON – Mr. Andrew Micklefield  
(Rossmere)**

**VICE-CHAIRPERSON – Mr. Len Isleifson  
(Brandon East)**

**ATTENDANCE – 6 QUORUM – 4**

*Members of the Committee present:*

*Hon. Mr. Fielding, Hon. Ms. Squires*

*Messrs. Isleifson, Lindsey, Micklefield, Wiebe*

**APPEARING:**

*Ms. Cindy Lamoureux, MLA for Tyndall Park*

**PUBLIC PRESENTERS:**

*Bill 4–The Retail Business Hours of Operation  
Act (Various Acts Amended or Repealed)*

*Mr. John Graham, Retail Council of Canada*

*Mr. Romeo Ignacio, Amalgamated Transit Union,  
Local 1505*

*Mr. Loren Remillard, Winnipeg Chamber of  
Commerce*

*Ms. Anna Rothney, Manitoba Federation of  
Labour*

*Mr. Jonathan Alward, Canadian Federation of  
Independent Business (video/audio presentation -  
by leave)*

*Bill 7–The Planning Amendment Act*

*Mr. Bill Courtice, RM of Cornwallis*

*Mr. Ross Farley, RM of Elton*

*Mr. Ryan Nickel, City of Brandon*

**WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS:**

*Bill 4–The Retail Business Hours of Operation  
Act (Various Acts Amended or Repealed)*

*Denys Volkov, Association of Manitoba  
Municipalities*

*Bill 7–The Planning Amendment Act*

*Rick Chrest, City of Brandon*

*Jeff Fawcett, Brandon and Area Planning District*

**MATTERS UNDER CONSIDERATION:**

*Bill 4–The Retail Business Hours of Operation  
Act (Various Acts Amended or Repealed)*

*Bill 7–The Planning Amendment Act*

\* \* \*

**Mr. Chairperson:** If everybody could mute their mics, we're about to start the meeting.

Good evening. Will the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development please come to order.

Our first item of business is the election of a Vice-Chairperson.

Are there any nominations?

**Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister of Municipal Relations):** I'd like to nominate the MLA for Brandon East, Len Isleifson, for Vice-Chair.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Mr. Isleifson has been nominated. Are there any other nominations?

Hearing no other nominations, Mr. Isleifson is elected Vice-Chairperson.

This meeting has been called to consider the following bills: Bill 4, The Retail Business Hours of Operation Act; and Bill 7, The Planning Amendment Act.

Before we proceed with presentations, we do have a number of other items and points of information to consider.

In accordance with our rules, a time limit of 10 minutes has been allotted for presentations, with another five minutes allowed for questions from committee members. If a presenter is not in attendance when their name is called, they will be dropped to the bottom of the list. If the presenter is not in attendance when their name is called a second time, they will be removed from the presenters' list.

Written submissions from the following persons have been received and distributed to committee members. I hope I pronounce the names correctly; my apologies if I do not: Denys Volkov, Association of Manitoba Municipalities, on Bill 4; Mayor Rick Chrest, City of Brandon, on Bill 7; Jeff Fawcett, Brandon and Area Planning District, on Bill 7.

Does the committee agree to have these documents appear in the Hansard script of this meeting? *[Agreed]*

On the topic of determining the order of public presentations, we have had a request by a presenter, Mr. John Graham, that he be allowed to present first as he has a prior engagement tonight.

Is there leave of the committee to allow Mr. Graham to present first? *[Agreed]*

Mr. Graham will present first.

Also, for the information of all members, we have a—we have had a special request from Jonathan Alward, from the Canadian Federation of Independent Business. Mr. Alward is unable to attend this evening, but has recorded a video of his presentation and wishes it to be played to the committee. This request has been agreed to by the House leaders.

Is there leave of the committee to consider Mr. Alward's video presentation at the conclusion of the list of presenters before us and have the text included in Hansard? *[Agreed]*

Prior to proceeding with public presentations, I would like to advise members of the public regarding the process for speaking in committee.

The proceedings of our meetings are recorded in order to provide a verbatim transcript. This is important, so listen up. Each time someone wishes to speak, whether it be an MLA or a presenter, I first have to say the person's name. This is the signal for the Hansard recorder to turn the mics on and off.

Thanks for your patience.

We will now proceed with public presentations.

**Bill 4—The Retail Business  
Hours of Operation Act  
(Various Acts Amended or Repealed)**

**Mr. Chairperson:** I will now call on John Graham of the Retail Council of Canada.

If you have any written materials for distribution to the committee, you can now send the file through the chat function or email it to the moderator, who will distribute it to all committee members.

Please unmute yourself and proceed with your presentation, Mr. Graham.

**Mr. John Graham (Retail Council of Canada):** Thanks—

**Mr. Chairperson:** Pardon me, Mr. Graham, I'm sorry. I'm being advised by the clerks to pause for just a moment, just bear with us. We just need to check a broadcast issue so please bear with us for about two minutes.

All right, this is a test of my microphone to see if it's doing what it should be. We're still working out some tweaks here but—testing. How are we doing, guys? Should I just keep talking 'til you tell me to stop? We're good. Okay. Sorry folks, just bear with us here.

By all means, Mr. Clerk. Thank you for asking me to test the microphone. It's always a pleasure to test a microphone. So I'll just keep talking until you tell me to stop talking.

It's great to see such a vibrant throng of people here tonight. It's going to be a wonderful night here at the Manitoba Legislature, considering bills 4 and 7. I'm sure that you're eager for these presentations and deliberations to begin, as are we all.

And—how's that mic working, sound guys? Oh, I'm supposed to keep talking. Well—I'm not supposed to keep talking.

Okay, in light of technical challenges, we will recess for five minutes or so.

\* \* \*

*The committee recessed at 6:10 p.m.*

*The committee resumed at 6:12 p.m.*

**Mr. Chairperson:** Mr. Graham, thanks for your patience. Because of the broadcast issue, we actually have to start all over again. So apologies for these delays which are beyond our control. I want to thank the clerks, though, for all their help, and the tech people as well.

So we're going to go back to the very top, and you're going to hear the same stuff that I said eight minutes ago, but then the plane will get in the air and we'll be off to the races, to mix metaphors.

Okay, committee come back to order.

Our first item of business is the election of a Vice-Chairperson.

Are there any nominations?

**Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia):** I would like to nominate Mr. Isleifson.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Mr. Isleifson has been nominated.

Are there any other nominations?

Hearing no other nominations, Mr. Isleifson is elected Vice-Chairperson.

This meeting has been called to consider the following bills: Bill 4, The Retail Business Hours of Operation Act (Various Acts Amended or Repealed); and Bill 7, The Planning Amendment Act.

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Thank you for your patience.

**Bill 4—The Retail Business  
Hours of Operation Act  
(Various Acts Amended or Repealed)**  
*(Continued)*

**Mr. Chairperson:** We will now proceed with public presentations, and I will now call on John Graham.

If you have any written materials for distribution to the committee, Mr. Graham, you can now send the file through the chat function or email it to the moderator who will distribute it to all committee members.

Please unmute yourself and proceed with your presentation.

**Mr. John Graham (Retail Council of Canada):** Good evening, and thank you for granting leave as I prepare for our virtual parent-teacher interviews with our eight- and 12-year-old.

My name is John Graham. I'm the director of government relations for the Retail Council of Canada, and we're a not-for-profit industry-funded association that has been the voice of retail in this province for more than half a century. Our members represent about two thirds of retail sales in Manitoba with about half of our members considered small independents and our members being small, medium and large, servicing Manitobans on a broad range of formats, be it department stores, a grocery, online, specialty, discount and all other forms that retail comes in.

Until this most recent pandemic, retail has and likely will return to being the largest private sector employer with—beginning at the start of 2020, had over 67,000 Manitobans working in the retail sector and about 4,700 stores.

But changes in our lives to adapt to the COVID era have created massive changes in the retail environment, including what and how we buy items, and I'm sure each of you has experienced that. As we're spending more time at home, furniture, the outdoor economy, pet supplies, hobbies and grocery have all benefited while apparel, jewellery and travel-related have not.

However, the biggest winner has been online, and the reality is COVID has been the great accelerator for e-commerce, advancing it five years into the future compared to pre-COVID forecasts earlier this year.

The growth is anticipated to continue as more Manitobans have grown increasingly comfortable doing their shopping from their home and comfort of their couch in their casual clothes.

The top 10 Manitoba retailers shopped online this past quarter have included Amazon, PC Express, Walmart, Best Buy, eBay, Canadian Tire, The Home Depot, the Hudson's Bay, Apple and Amazon, and Amazon is by far the biggest online player with over two thirds of Manitoba households having an Amazon Prime card. These players all offered two-click shopping, great selection, good prices, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

And the reality is Bill 4 is about shopping local. It's about removing controllable barriers to shopping local, allowing stores to open with their—when their customers want them to be open. It's about local retailers being able to leverage their competitive weapon, a personalized in-store shopping experience.

It's providing local retailers the same operational flexibility that restaurants and pharmacies and garden stores, liquor stores and other public-serving businesses already enjoy. And, in reality, it's also acknowledging online as a true competitor to brick-and-mortar retail stores in this province, the same way British Columbia and Alberta, Saskatchewan and Ontario and most other jurisdictions in Canada have done so years ago. It's by removing antiquated rules that dictate when a customer has the permission of government to shop.

However, most immediately, it's about the health and safety of Manitobans who are working and shopping in retail stores in this province, and that's why I join you tonight seeking your support for the timely passing of this bill.

\* (18:20)

As you may or may not know, the Quebec government earlier this week requested retailers consider expanding their hours to support greater physical distancing. While in the short term we support that Manitobans should be staying home and minimizing shopping to that that's most necessary, as conditions permit, allowing Manitoba retailers to expand their hours provides stores with the ability to spread more customers over more hours and better support physical distancing.

Further, it gives stores that have, since the start of the pandemic, dedicated their first hour to seniors and vulnerable shoppers the ability to have—to not have to exclude this service on a Sunday due to government restrictions that limit operating hours.

And, finally, the timely passing of this bill provides a lifeline to currently restricted bricks-and-mortar, Manitoba-based stores so that when they reopen to the public they'll be able to better and more safely service their customers on Sundays.

To me and to our members, supporting local is about supporting Bill 4; supporting local retail jobs is about supporting Bill 4; and supporting local retail in the recovery is really about supporting Bill 4; and, finally, supporting safer retail shopping is supporting Bill 4.

I want to thank you for the opportunity, on behalf of Manitoba retailers, for the ability to share our perspectives.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Thank you for your presentation.

Do members of the committee have questions for the presenter?

**Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister of Municipal Relations):** I just wanted to—I don't really have a question, I just have a comment, and I want to express my gratitude to Mr. Graham, on behalf of our government, for your support of this bill and supporting our local retailers. I know you've done an admirable job since you've been in your role, and never more so than this year when we have been seeing challenges presented like never before. So thank you for your continued work on behalf of all the retailers and the small businesses in our province, and thank you for supporting this bill.

**Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon):** I, too, don't really have any questions for the presenter, but I do wish to thank you for coming out and making your points. And certainly kind of a weird time and a different way of performing committees, but we appreciate the fact that you've made it happen, so thank you.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Mr. Graham, if you wish to respond, feel free to do so. If not, that's okay as well.

Would you like to respond, Mr. Graham?  
[interjection] Sorry, just for the sake of the recording I have to acknowledge you.

Mr. Graham, go ahead.

**Mr. Graham:** Thank you very much for the opportunity, again, to share thoughts and your

comments. I appreciate your fast passing and support of Bill 4, we hope. Thank you.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Are there any other questions?

Okay, seeing no further questions for that presenter, I'd like to call on—and I hope I'm pronouncing these names correctly—Romeo Ignacio.

If you have written materials for distribution to the committee, you can now send the file through the chat function or email it to the moderator who will distribute it to all committee members.

Please unmute yourself and proceed with your presentation.

**Mr. Romeo Ignacio (Amalgamated Transit Union, Local 1505):** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Can you hear me?

**Mr. Chairperson:** Sorry, Romeo. Just a quick discussion here. Just give us 10 seconds.

Okay. My apologies, Romeo. You have the floor. Please unmute yourself and proceed with your presentation.

**Mr. Ignacio:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Can you hear me now? Yes, sorry about that. I was having problems. This is my first time joining a webinar. Normally, when we do this kind of Zoom meeting, I'm able to control my own video and—but it wasn't showing earlier.

Anyway, I won't take so much of your time, but I appreciate the opportunity to—that you've given me to speak in behalf of the Amalgamated Transit Union, Local 1505. My name is Romeo Ignacio. I'm the president of ATU 1505 and I'm here to speak with regards to Bill 4.

A lot of the discussions will probably be about just retail businesses but I wanted to speak on this matter because we've been having some problems with scheduling on Sundays. It's a complex issue but has something to do with the operations of Winnipeg Transit.

We just don't have enough people working on Sundays, so any decision that may arise from this, especially if it requires additional service—public-transit service, I believe will require additional funding for the City of Winnipeg because we just don't have enough resources to cover all the shifts that may be required to provide the service to employer—employees that are attending or working for the retail businesses as well as those who are going to those retail businesses that are taking public transit.

Even now, before COVID—I understand with the COVID, there's a lot of things that's going on. There's a lot of uncertainties but with, you know, before COVID, we've been having issues with standing low on a Sunday and that's because we don't have enough service.

And I hope that the Province will consider—I know this is probably not the best time to ask for 50—the restoration, the 50-50 funding but I would like the Province to consider at least additional operational funding in light of the, you know, the changes to—or the proposed changes to the retail businesses act.

This is not just for Sunday, actually. I would like to point out that our holidays or stat days, whenever they fall on a weekday, they—well, right now, it's usually between 12:00 to 6:00 but if there is going to be any expansion in the hours, that would mean a lot more service that would need to be provided, especially when it comes to, you know, those days where it gets busy.

And, I mean, normally a statutory day, people are just home or, you know, they go to bigger stores and all that but there are certain days that are—that it's always busy, especially on a day that falls on a weekday. So I just wish that the—I hope that the Province will consider those things.

Anyway, thank you for the time, and I yield my time.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Thank you for your presentation.

Do members of the committee have questions for the presenter?

**Ms. Squires:** Sure.

I want to thank the presenter for being here this evening and participating in our virtual committee and thank you for the work that you do on behalf of all Winnipeggers.

We know that transit has faced many challenges, particularly this last year with reduced ridership through—because of the pandemic and that is why our government was very pleased to advocate on behalf of all transit in the province of Manitoba to ensure that we could provide funding to cover off the losses due to declining ridership. And so, to that end, we were very pleased to provide the City of Winnipeg \$33 million earlier this month for ridership and revenue losses.

And, certainly, we are working collaboratively with the City of Winnipeg. We've increased their

operating funding at levels unseen in any other jurisdiction in the country and, of course, we've provided them stability in terms of their uncertainty when it comes to their capital requirements. And so we have a great partnership with the City of Winnipeg and certainly are committed and invested in a strong, vital public transit in the province.

Thank you.

\* (18:30)

**Mr. Chairperson:** Mr. Ignacio, would you like to respond to Ms. Squires?

**Mr. Ignacio:** Yes, I do. Thank you for the comments, and I appreciate the, you know, the work that you do.

I understand that the—you know, we've been communicating with you with regards to the operational funding, and I hope that you will continue to address our concerns, not just during the COVID time but in the coming years.

**Mr. Lindsey:** Thank you for your presentation, Mr. Ignacio.

You talked a little bit about funding requirements and the fact that if the stores are going to be basically seven-day-a-week operations, then perhaps the transit schedule needs to change from what it presently is, where you have a reduced schedule on Sundays and holidays.

Do you think that you would—or the City would have to hire more bus drivers to legitimately say that people had access to the stores if they're going to be open on Sundays?

**Mr. Chairperson:** Mr. Ignacio, in response to Mr. Lindsey's question.

**Mr. Ignacio:** I believe we do need additional manpower right now. If you take away COVID, we're already short of operators. It's been a difficult year, I know, but there's a lot of things going on that somehow is affecting hiring of additional operators.

So, I really don't know the answer but I think something has to change. But in order for us to actually cover the needed service, additional service for the weekend, we do need additional manpower, or people power. So I don't think I'm in a position to actually—to speak in behalf of the City, but I do believe, knowing the problem—I was a—well, this is my first year as the president, but I've been an operator for 15 years, and it's always the case. There's just not enough service on Saturdays and Sundays.

So, I believe the City could use additional operational funding for the weekend.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Mr. Lindsey, on a follow-up question.

**Mr. Lindsey:** Thank you for your answer, Mr. Ignacio.

I heard you speak a little bit about you'd like the Province to restore the 50-50 funding for Transit, and we've heard the minister talk about how wonderful the funding agreements are now. But clearly the funding isn't sufficient and you believe that the 50-50 funding arrangement would potentially allow Winnipeg Transit to hire enough drivers to meet the increased demand, particularly when COVID is done and people have access to seven-day-a-week shopping?

**Mr. Ignacio:** I believe if we can restore the 50-50 funding, again, outside of COVID, I believe that will be sufficient to provide the additional operational funding.

However, right now, we just got spared from layoffs. I do believe that the City has laid off our union cousins in CUPE, and with all these uncertainties, we could always use additional funding for, you know, emergency funding for COVID.

But, in the future, you know, looking ahead, not just in the coming year but in—you know, I don't think everything's going to happen in one day, but as more and more people get used to additional hours, additional retail hours on the weekend, you know, I lived half my life in the Philippines and businesses are open almost 24 hours, seven days a week.

I'm not saying that that should happen here, but—

**Mr. Chairperson:** Mr. Ignacio? You have about 20 seconds left, so if you can finish your remarks, that would be wonderful. We're running out of time here.

**Mr. Ignacio:** Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, I do believe the 50-50 funding will greatly help. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Thank you, Mr. Ignacio. I'd just remind all members, the subject of the bill at hand is not about funding but about hours of operation. So, while in a global discussion there is a certain amount of leeway, I would encourage members to recall the contents of the bill and discuss those contents more specifically, as much as possible.

I'd now like to call upon Loren Remillard, the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce.

Ms. Lamoureux has requested to ask a question. I'd like to ask—I need to ask the committee if there is leave of this committee to allow Ms. Lamoureux to ask a question of Romeo Ignacio? Is there leave of the committee? *[Agreed]*

Okay. Leave having been granted, Ms. Lamoureux, you do have the floor to ask Mr. Ignacio a question.

**Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park):** Thank you, Mr. Chairperson, and salamat po, Mr. Ignacio. And I promise, I'll keep my question short.

I did just want to express a thank-you for expressing to us the perspective of having to consider both Sundays and holidays with respect to transit in the changing of legislation. It's something that I don't think we had yet considered, and so that was a very valuable piece of information for us.

And, really, just give you one more opportunity to share if you would have a recommendation, something specific that you'd want the minister bringing forward the legislation to hear, what it would be.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Mr. Ignacio, you have about 45 seconds.

**Mr. Ignacio:** Again, I don't want to speak on behalf of the City of Winnipeg, but if we can have a separate discussion on that and I could reach out to you for a proposal. I'd do that.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Thank you for your presentation.

We now move to Loren Remillard, the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce. If you have any written materials for distribution to the committee, you can now send the file through the chat function or email it to the moderator, who will distribute it to all committee members.

Please unmute yourself and proceed with your presentation.

**Mr. Loren Remillard (Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce):** Thank you, Mr. Chair, members to the committee, fellow presenters. Before I start, though, I'd like to acknowledge that we're gathered today, virtually of course, on Treaty 1 territory, the traditional land of the Ojibwe, Cree, Oji-Cree, Dakota and Dene Nations and the homeland of the Red River Metis.

Want to thank you for the opportunity to be here this evening, albeit virtually, to speak in overwhelming support of long-overdue legislation.

Let it not be lost on those here today that we are conducting a committee hearing tonight using 21st-century virtual technology to discuss changes to retail restrictions, restrictions that are based in the 1900s.

The Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce, founded in 1873 by business leaders, including many retail pioneers, is our community's largest, most diverse business voice. We represent business of all sizes across all sectors, employing in excess of 100,000 Manitobans.

The Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce has advocated for changes to Sunday and holiday shopping hours for nearly four decades, likely when most of us here were just starting out in elementary school. So we certainly support the legislation before the committee today.

And the public supports it as well. We'll note that the Winnipeg Chamber and probe research surveyed the public on this issue in 2016, and found seven in 10 Manitobans respond—that responded supported allowing businesses to set their own hours of operation.

Now, why is that? It's because we know society has changed, including our work patterns, religious practices, and family activities.

\* (18:40)

Allowing consumers and business owners more flexibility to set their own schedules as the market and their clients demand will not only generate additional economic activity and more hours of employment, it will also make people's lives a little bit easier, and I think we can all use that a little bit right now. Arguably, Manitoba has the most restrictive regulations for retail operating hours of any province in Canada. That's not something to be particularly proud of. And we believe strongly that all businesses should be allowed the freedom to set their own operating hours.

Let us not forget that retail is no longer a bricks-and-mortar operation; global entities operate 24-7, 365 days a year online. Why is that? Because consumers are shopping 24-7, 365 days a year. Maintaining any semblance of restriction is akin to sending bricks-and-mortar retailers into the boxing ring with a blindfold and their hands tied behind their back.

The world has changed. Retail has changed. And it's long overdue for this legislation to allow Manitoba

to play catch-up to this change. It's time we stopped demanding our local retailers operate as though it's the early 1900s when the marketplace is 2020.

This conversation is particularly relevant given the challenges facing our retail sector, well-known. As you know, many retailers cannot open their doors at all due to recent public health orders, and those that can open are limited to selling only essential items. All of this is happening during what should be, and is, the peak holiday shopping season. To be blunt, our retail sector is in crisis and it's looking for a hand up from government. This legislation delivers a vital, vital hand up to our retail sector.

I want to thank the government for moving forward with this legislation. We know it will make—we know we'll make it through the pandemic eventually, but we need to take steps now that will allow our economy to successfully recover in the future. Removing unnecessary business restrictions like Sunday shopping hour restrictions should absolutely be one of those steps.

We strongly recommend you proceed with this legislation and begin taking the necessary steps to put these changes into effect as soon as possible.

Thank you for your consideration, your time, and I'd be pleased to answer any questions you may have. Thank you.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Thank you for your presentation.

Do members of the committee have questions for the presenter?

Ms. Squires—and I remind all committee members that the rules allow for a total of five minutes for questions shared by all committee members.

**Ms. Squires:** Again, I don't have a question, I just want to say thanks to Mr. Remillard on behalf of the government for your support of this legislation and thank you very much for participating here in committee to speak to it.

So, thank you.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Are there any other questions?

**Mr. Lindsey:** I thank you, Mr. Remillard, for your presentation here tonight and taking time out in these weird times to do that.

I just have a question. When it comes to Sunday shopping in the proposed piece of legislation that says that workers would have the right to refuse to work on a Sunday, would you think that Sunday should be the

only day that a worker would have the right to refuse or do you think that perhaps maybe recognizing the diversity of our population that maybe there should be other days that workers would have the right to refuse?

**Mr. Remillard:** Thank you, Mr. Lindsey, for the question.

You know, we are a very diverse society and people's day of rest, people's day of worship is not just Sunday anymore. I would say, though, when it comes to the right to refusal, obviously this legislation provides employees the option to refuse work on a Sunday if they give their employer at least 14 days of advance notice. I think that reflects historically the approach to Sunday shopping and some of the concerns expressed by, say, organized labour—not that I'm speaking on their behalf by any stretch.

I would say, though, that we are in a society where any of us—and I'll use MLAs—when you entered into this, you knew what the job entailed. You knew that there would be long hours. And I think any employee going into an employment agreement today does so with the understanding, here are our hours of operations; these are the days that you are being asked to work. I think as long as an employer is up front with employees about that, you know, it's a contract between an employer and an employee and a relationship. That's where, ultimately, I'd like to see where that discussion takes place. I'm hesitant to weigh in to whether government should be legislating if it's one day or the other. Ultimately, you know, our position is, let the market decide, let employees decide and employers decide. That will always render the best decision, rather than government-imposed decision.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Are there any other questions?

Seeing no further questions—[interjection] Oh, my apologies. Mr. Fielding, you have a question?

Mr. Fielding, go ahead.

**Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Finance):** So, Loren, again, just as what Rochelle had said—Minister Squires had said, I just want to thank you guys, both yourself and John Graham, for taking a leadership role in this and really pushing government in a way that makes common sense. And so I really want to thank you guys for your leadership role in developing this policy. And, again, I think it's something that makes a lot of sense, and to your point, especially, in the case of right now, what we're going on, makes sense to get this legislation done quickly.

So, thanks, Loren. I appreciate all your opinions that you've shared over the last nine months or so. So, thank you very much.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Thank you, Mr. Fielding.

Are there any further questions?

Seeing no further questions, I thank Mr. Remillard for the presentation and would like to call Anna Rothney from the Manitoba Federation of Labour.

If you have any written materials for distribution to the committee, you can now send the file through the chat function or email it to the moderator who will distribute it to all committee members. Please unmute yourself and proceed with your presentation. You have 10 minutes to do so.

**Ms. Anna Rothney (Manitoba Federation of Labour):** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Are folks able to hear me all right? Terrific.

Well, good evening, and I hope everyone who's participating tonight is healthy and safe and doing as well as can be in these difficult times. My name is Anna Rothney—

**Mr. Chairperson:** Anna, my apologies for interrupting you, but we do need you to turn your video on, if you could do that, please. *[interjection]* No problem.

Ms. Rothney, please go ahead.

**Ms. Rothney:** Terrific. Yes, well, thank you again, Mr. Chair.

My name is Anna Rothney and I'm the executive director of the Manitoba Federation of Labour, and I'm presenting tonight on behalf of our president, Kevin Rebeck. Kevin is unable to join us tonight. He is quite literally right at this moment presenting a eulogy, a tribute as part of a virtual memorial service for a dear friend who's just recently passed. And so normally he wouldn't miss the opportunity to share his views on such important matters, but we're hoping the committee can understand the importance of his other engagement.

So, as many of you know, Kevin is both the president of the MFL—which is a federation of more than two dozen unions representing more than 100,000 unionized workers from the public sector, the private sector and the building trades—and he is also the labour co-chair of the Labour Management Review Committee. So, wearing both of those hats, Kevin has prepared some notes that he hoped to share

with the committee tonight. And, with your approval, I will share those notes with you now on his behalf and trying to mimic his voice.

So, firstly, the MFL would, of course, like to begin by thanking and expressing our gratitude to all of Manitoba's incredibly dedicated and hard-working essential workers who have continued to work through this unprecedented global pandemic in unbelievably difficult circumstances, often putting themselves at risk—sometimes extreme risk—to serve our collective needs. And, of course, we know that some of these workers are workers that depend on the types of employment protections that we're going to be talking about this evening.

We also want to extend our heartfelt condolences to all the families and communities who have lost loved ones to this terrible health crisis, including a growing number of workers who have tragically contracted COVID-19 and lost their lives as a result of doing their job, going to work to support their families.

Now, more than ever, we have to do everything within our power to make sure that workers are safe at work, and we urge the government in the strongest possible terms to prioritize the health and safety of workers during this pandemic, including ensuring the right PPE, supporting workers' right to know about the hazards they may face at work and their right to refuse dangerous work, ensuring adequate staffing levels, making sure that workers are informed and have an equal say in establishing safe work procedures.

\* (18:50)

In terms of Bill 4, as all MLAs will know from their constituencies—from their constituents, pardon me, and probably from their own personal life experience as well, working people are busier now than ever before, and working families are finding it harder and harder to achieve any kind of work-life balance.

Between the pressures of work, school, children's activities and the near-constant presence of our smartphones, to say nothing of the many ways in which the COVID-19 pandemic has made all of our lives harder, working families are finding it increasingly difficult to enjoy any quality family time together and to get a little well-earned rest.

The Retail Business Hours of Operation Act, which is being repealed with this bill, was an attempt to provide some basic, consistent time off for retail workers, many of whom work their busiest times

when 9 to 5 workers are done their shifts or on the weekends, when many workers are enjoying time with their kids.

I hope all members will agree that everyone deserves a chance to have at least some amount of time to get together and share a meal with their family. Manitobans want a system that is fair when it comes to balancing the needs of consumers with the ability for retail workers to have some work-life balance.

The system we have now may not be perfect, but we're concerned that the approach being taken in repealing the act, in favour of a patchwork system of different rules for different workers in different municipalities, puts at risk all of the days currently protected for retail workers, whether it's Manitoba's Louis Riel Day, Thanksgiving or Christmas Day.

And while we're aware of the small number of vocal business opponents to the current act, who appear to favour fewer protected days for retail workers, we're not aware of anyone calling for the elimination of all existing protected holidays. So why not start from what we have and make improvements from there?

To be clear, labour is always open to working co-operatively with employers to make improvements that make sense for working families, but we believe that the best starting point for those discussions is the existing act, rather than turning back the clock on worker protections.

Last year, just days before the early election call, the then-minister responsible wrote to the LMRC, seeking input on potential changes to the act. Unfortunately, just two weeks later, prior to the opportunity for LMRC to meet or consider the matter, the Premier (Mr. Pallister) jumped ahead of the consultations and announced he would be repealing the legislation outright. Needless to say, all members of LMRC were disappointed that government would ask for our advice and then make up their minds without hearing from us first.

When the LMRC is given a fair shot at developing consensus advice, it is almost always successful. In fact, the LMRC process has worked extremely well for many decades, covering administrations of all kinds of different political stripes, allowing labour and employers to brainstorm and problem-solve together to come up with creative and constructive solutions to respond to emerging priorities and, in the vast majority of cases, to develop consensus recommendations for government.

That is until recently. Recently, government has taken to picking and choosing when it listens to consensus advice from business and labour or even bothers to wait for our advice, leaving us to wonder: If government isn't listening to consensus advice from workers and employers, who are they listening to? When it comes to our labour relations system, whose voices are trumping the voices of workers and employers? Those who have to live with the system and operationalize the rules every day.

While the LMRC process was completely undermined in this particular instance, and while we would strongly prefer that the act not be repealed and that government, business and labour come up with constructive solutions to accommodate consumer preferences and work-life balance, we are certainly glad to see that the right to refuse Sunday work has been maintained for retail workers under this new legislation, consistent with labour's advice.

This is a critically important right for these workers, who are often doing shift work and appreciate the opportunity to have predictable time to spend with their loved ones, especially when kids are at home from school on the weekends.

And we encourage government to look at more ways to improve work-life balance for retail workers and all Manitoba workers, as we know that improving work-life balance plays a role in reducing stress, preventing burnout and keeping workers healthy and, of course, more productive. The MFL will continue to push for more common-sense solutions that benefit families and their ability to spend time together.

In conclusion, I want to quickly return to the theme of labour and employers working together to find constructive solutions, something that we have a long and successful track record of doing. And our hope that government will treat consensus advice from the LMRC as the real positive that it is. After all, what could be better than the two primary stakeholders on an issue coming to full agreement and giving government their assurance that their recommendations are workable and practical.

This past spring, the LMRC was asked to provide advice on potential changes to The Labour Relations Act and again, we are disappointed that despite having provided a hundred per cent consensus advice, the government has ignored many of our joint recommendations in their Bill 16.

For example, the LMRC was specifically polled on the question of whether or not to maintain binding

arbitration in the event of a labour dispute that goes on for more than 60 days. This was a measure that was of concern to many when originally introduced, but has proven its value many times over since then.

So what did LMRC say about binding arbitration? They said keep it, don't change a thing. This made-in-Manitoba solution has resulted in Manitoba having the lowest rate of days lost to strikes and lockouts of any Canadian province, so why would we change what's working and what's giving Manitoba better results than anywhere else in Canada?

And so I urge the government to have another look at our report and to heed the LMRC's advice on this and other LRA topics. Labour relations has got to be about more than just ideology, it has to be about what works, about keeping Manitobans working and keeping our economy growing.

Thank you for your time this evening.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Thank you for your presentation.

Do members of the committee have questions for the presenter?

**Mr. Fielding:** Great—well, first of all, thank you for your presentation. Welcome back to the Manitoba Legislature and welcome back to Manitoba. It's good to have you back.

And just wanted to go through a couple points. I do have the letter that the labour management—it's actually right here—labour management sent this, and Anna—and it's November 1st, and so I know we introduced the legislation November 22nd. What the Labour Management Review Committee had suggested is they did support the legislation. The one thing that I know labour and I think Kevin Rebeck had spoke to us about was the potential of the refusal to work, and in his comments—and I believe it was incorporated in the labour management's review, was that they wanted a grandfather clause so people that had been there before or were hired on before the legislation could have some sort of a grandfather clause.

We didn't think that went far enough, so we make some changes to the legislation. So, just—I want to correct the record a little bit in terms of the time frames that we're talking about, here. And so—and just to your point, you went off, a little bit off topic with the labour legislation, but I just want to clarify the record. Really, what the labour legislation that we've introduced does, it provides some more accountability; that's a part of it. And we think that

providing some accountability in terms of having audited financial statements and providing the salaries of people—I mean, that's good enough for, obviously, the government employees who have done that for a quarter of a century, and so we think that, you know, there needs to be accountability as well.

So that just clarifies it, and so—I don't know if you've got any comments on that, but just a clarification of the record.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Ms. Rothney, if you wish to respond, you are free to do so.

**Ms. Rothney:** Thank you, Minister. In terms of the timing of Bill 4, of course, you're right in terms of the introduction dates. I guess our concern was that we sort of hold the view that when the Premier (Mr. Pallister) makes a commitment our assumption is government is going to follow through. So when that commitment was made just two weeks after LMRC—they asked for its advice, it was very difficult to convince members to put in a whole bunch of time and hard work to build consensus when it seemed that the book was already written.

In terms of the LRA, it remains our hope that you will reconsider LMRC's recommendations. We may not agree on everything. We are concerned about the additional red tape that's being proposed to be put on the same group of public sector workers that took this government to court and, of course, won in terms of the illegal wage freeze legislation. It's feeling very punitive from our perspective. But there are certainly measures unrelated to that, in particular the binding arbitration provision, which we really do sincerely believe has given Manitoba the best track record in terms of lost days, and we can't imagine government, business or anyone being opposed to having the best record in that respect.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Are there any other questions?

**Mr. Lindsey:** Thank you, Ms. Rothney, for making your presentation.

\* (19:00)

Certainly, I believe that what you had suggested was that the Labour Management Review Committee, even though the Premier jumped the gun and said he was changing the legislation, your group still went ahead and made a consensus recommendation to the government on what, perhaps, should or should not be included. But, overall, what you've suggested is that you would like to stay with the existing legislation, if I'm not mistaken, and just make some changes to it so

that everything that was presently included wasn't now excluded. Could you just clarify that for us, please?

**Mr. Chairperson:** Ms. Rothney, in response to Mr. Lindsey's question.

**Ms. Rothney:** Sure. Thanks, Tom, for the question, and just to clarify. In this instance, LMRC did not produce the fully consensus report, and, again, we feel that the process was undermined and wasn't given a chance.

Honestly, there wasn't much of an imperative for people to sort of put in the work to do that. Now I can't a hundred per cent promise you they would have reached a consensus otherwise, but just to set the record straight.

Yes. I guess our concern is that there are a number of days that are currently protected, and maybe first I'll just start by repeating. We certainly are very appreciative of the fact that the Sunday rule has been rolled over, and the minister's absolutely right that that was a very high priority, and so we're very pleased to see that continue.

But with respect to other holidays, like Christmas Day, we were certainly aware that there were, you know, small number of businesses wanting to be open maybe Labour Day, maybe Thanksgiving, but we're not aware of anyone calling for, you know, 365 days; nobody has the right to take a guaranteed day off with their family.

So our view was, why not start with what we have, and fix it if it needs fixing. That said we are very happy that the Sunday rule has been brought forward, and we certainly thank the government for that.

**Mr. Chairperson:** The time for questions has ended.

### **Bill 7—The Planning Amendment Act**

**Mr. Chairperson:** We now move to presenters on Bill 7, and—right. Just for clarity, for committee members and the wide Internet audience, the method will be that we'll hear from presenters on both bills, and then, after that, during the approval of each bill, ministers and critics have an opportunity to comment.

I'm looking at the clerk to make sure I'm not saying anything I shouldn't here.

But we will now call on Bill Courtice, a reeve for the RM of Cornwallis.

If you have any written materials for distribution to the committee, you can now send the file through

the chat function or email it to the moderator, who will distribute it to all committee members.

Please unmute yourself and proceed with the presentation.

Is Bill Courtice here?

**Mr. Bill Courtice (RM of Cornwallis):** Can you hear me now?

**Mr. Chairperson:** Okay. I'm seeing Donna Anderson, but my papers here say Bill Courtice.

**Floor Comment:** Yes. It's Bill Courtice.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Okay. So, a moment ago, what I would guess was a male voice said, can you hear me now, and then shortly after what I assume to be a female voice said, yes, it's Bill Courtice.

I'm just wondering if—

**Floor Comment:** We're just getting our mics set up here.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Hey, no problem. If you could unmute the video as well, that would probably help us. Turn the video on. We want to see you, however you want to—it's been a long day.

**Floor Comment:** There we go.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Okay.

**Floor Comment:** How is that?

**Mr. Chairperson:** I think that's good. Bill, thanks for being with us. You have the floor.

**Mr. Courtice:** Thank you, and thank you for the opportunity to present. My name is Bill Courtice and I'm the reeve of Cornwallis—Rural Municipality of Cornwallis.

We are very pleased to see Bill 7, The Planning Amendment Act, come before this standing committee, and I would like to formally say the Rural Municipality of Cornwallis supports Bill 7.

I would like to provide the committee with a brief history regarding the subdivision approval for the City of Brandon, and what that means to the current Brandon and Area Planning District.

Brandon and Area Planning District members of the City of Brandon and the Rural Municipality of Cornwallis and Elton have worked very hard over the past few years to complete a harmonious dissolution allowing the City of Brandon to obtain approving authority of subdivisions of land within Brandon will be one of the final steps to the—to allow this to happen.

The Rural Municipality of Cornwallis and Elton will continue their planning partnership with the formation of a new planning district called Keystone Planning District.

It had been hoped that this approval would have been given in late 2019 and in preparation for the January 1, 2020 start date. The rural partners moved their office to the rural municipality of Cornwallis building. Staff has been hired and has been in place since January 1, 2020 to serve the residents of both Cornwallis and Elton.

All indications are that our residents are very pleased with the changes that we have made and we, as council, feel we have greater awareness within what is happening within our jurisdiction.

Cornwallis has given our subdivision approval authority to the Province of Manitoba and the local staff at the community planning office administrator—the administrator—the process, which has been well received.

The staff at community planning have been supporting us through this long process and are always willing to provide an answer to any of our questions. Allowing the minister to designate the council of the municipality as the proving authority for subdivision approval by regulation will undoubtedly prevent the many delays for other municipalities that have had to deal with.

And we support this amendment as proposed in Bill 7. I urge you, on behalf of the Rural Municipality of Cornwallis, to vote in favour of passing Bill 7, The Planning Amendment Act.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you this evening.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Thank you for your presentation.

Do members of the committee have questions for this presenter?

**Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister of Municipal Relations):** Just a comment. I would like to thank Reeve Courtice for coming—or, for presenting here this evening and I would also like to thank you for your previous correspondence supporting this legislation. It is a true honour to be working with you and everyone in your municipality and certainly look forward to future collaboration and look forward to the passage of this bill.

Thank you.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Does Mr. Courtice wish to reply to Ms. Squires? It's not necessary, but you have the option if you'd like to. You're good? Okay.

Mr. Lindsey, I believe you had a question? *[interjection]*

Okay, I was told that Tom had a—Mr. Wiebe, you go right ahead. Mr. Wiebe?

**Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia):** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, and thanks, Bill, for joining us here this evening. I'm glad we could accommodate folks. It makes it a little bit easier; you don't have to drive in and you can still participate and we heard you loud and clear here, so thank you very much for participating.

Thanks also for your letter and the letter from your RM and from others. It sounds like you guys are on the right track. It sounds like you got a bright future out there and I'm glad to see that you're here representing your folks at—in this committee.

The question I had was just around timing. As you said, this is—we are now sort of a year behind and I'm sure the minister's going to want to get into the, you know, the reasons for that, but the question I really have for you is just, I noticed that you're—in at least one of the letters that was submitted to this committee, it indicates January 2021 as being a date that you'd like to hit the ground running.

Can you just give me some guidance on that? Is that what your timeline looks like? Are you looking to get this bill through the legislative process and ready to go for January 1st?

**Mr. Courtice:** Yes. If we can speed it up before that, that would be excellent. But the way the times are and what we're dealing with, as soon as you can get it passed, we're down on the ground running.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Are there any other questions from the committee?

Seeing no further questions, I thank Mr. Courtice for his presentation.

\* (19:10)

I will now call on Ross Farley, the reeve for the RM of Elton. If you have any written materials for distribution to the committee, you can now send the file through the chat function or email it to the moderator who will distribute it to all committee members.

Mr. Farley, are you with us?

**Mr. Ross Farley (RM of Elton):** Yes, I am.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Okay. You have unmuted yourself. We can see you.

Mr. Farley, go ahead.

**Mr. Farley:** Okay, are you—are we ready to go? You can—guys can hear me? Okay.

Thank you for the opportunity to present. My name is Ross Farley and I am the reeve of the rural municipality of Elton.

The Rural Municipality of Elton is very pleased to see Bill 7, The Planning Amendment Act, come before the standing committee in full support of Bill 7.

With the City of Brandon obtaining subdivision approval, this allows the three members of the Brandon and Area Planning District to proceed with dissolution. The three member municipalities have been working diligently together to make this an agreeable separation and to allow for streamlining and improving planning process for each member.

Allowing the City of Brandon to obtain approving authority of subdivisions of land within Brandon will be one of the final steps to allow this to happen. We have anticipated this bill would have been passed in late 2019, and, in doing so, the municipalities of Elton and Cornwallis will continue their planning partnership with the formation of the new planning district, Keystone Planning District.

Staff have been hired and have been in place since January 1st, 2020 to serve the residents of both Elton and Cornwallis. All indications are that our residents are very pleased with the changes that we have made and we as council feel have greater awareness what is happening within our jurisdiction.

Elton has given our subdivision approval authority to the Province of Manitoba. The local staff at the community planning office administer the process, which has been well received.

We appreciate the assistance that we have received from the staff at the Brandon community planning office, as well as proceeded through changes with any and all inquiries. Allowing the minister to designate the council of the municipality as approving authority for subdivision approval by regulation will undoubtedly prevent the many delays for other municipalities that we have had to deal with.

And we support this amendment as proposed in Bill 7.

I urge you, on behalf of the municipality of Elton, to vote in favour of passing Bill 7, The Planning Amendment Act. Thank you for the opportunity to speak.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Thank you for your presentation.

Do members of the committee have questions for the presenter?

**Ms. Squires:** Thank you very much, Reeve Farley, for being with us here this evening virtually to present at committee and to offer your support for this bill.

I also want to thank you for your letter that you had sent to myself, my office and all members of the Legislative Assembly, urging support for this bill's passage, and I certainly do think that your letter was well received and I've heard from members from all sides of the House that there is—there seems to be broad support for this legislation.

So I can assure you that on our side, on the government's side, we are doing everything that we can to move this forward as quickly as possible, and I certainly hope that we have the support. And I think I do have the support of other members, and that is certainly, in no small part, because of your participation in the process and working very collaboratively with government to bring this to fruition.

So again, thank you for your contributions.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Are there any—or, sorry, Mr. Farley, would you like to respond to Ms. Squires? You don't have to. You're good, okay.

Are there any further questions from the committee?

**Mr. Wiebe:** Thank you, Mr. Farley, for joining us here this evening. It's—I think it's important to hear from all the parties involved, and so it's important that you're here to represent your folks. And it sounds like there's unanimous support from your planning district, from the soon-to-be-called keystone, I guess, Keystone Planning District, which is fantastic. Great to hear that you're able to join us.

The question I have for you: obviously, there's been a lot of discussion lately around the province about land use and land planning, and it sounds like you've had some success in reorganizing yourselves in a way that works well for you, but then also getting attention—the attention of the government to listen and go ahead with the kind of structure that you're—that works best for you.

Can you give me any kind of insight as to the process of how this came about, the—I guess, the—what kind of input you had and what kind of consultation that was done from the department level? Can you just talk to me a little bit about some of the work that was done—I guess this would've been now over a year ago—to get this bill ready to go and get us to where we are right now?

**Mr. Chairperson:** Mr. Farley, in response to Mr. Wiebe's question.

**Mr. Farley:** Yes, I sure can. What started, I guess probably, I'm thinking, a year and a half to two years ago, it was just a need for us, virtually—I mean, I think the City and the two surrounding municipalities, us and Cornwallis—I do feel we have a great working relationship and it may be, you know, the best right now it's been in a lot of years.

But certainly it's just a common-sense kind of approach and I think some of the issues, you know—approving some of the subdivisions within the city, I mean, they know more directly than what we know and, you know, our board consisted of nine votes and six of them were rural. It just made more sense, I think, for them, you know, just the well-being of—and us—I mean, Cornwallis and us, certainly with rural, we have more, you know, things in common. It just—it was the right time, I think, to do it.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Are there any further questions from the committee?

Seeing no questions, I thank Mr. Farley for his presentation.

I will now call on Ryan Nickel from the City of Brandon. Is Mr. Nickel with us?

**Mr. Ryan Nickel (City of Brandon):** Yes, I am.

**Mr. Chairperson:** If have any written materials for distribution to the committee, you can now send the file through the chat function or email it the moderator, who will distribute it to all committee members. I see you have unmuted yourself and your video appears to be on so, Ryan Nickel, please go ahead.

**Mr. Nickel:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, through you to the committee.

It was great to see both Reeves Courtice and Farley speak. I think they covered it relatively nicely and I think it's a—really testament to the co-operation within the district that you have the two reeves of the rural partners showing up to talk about a bill that's

related to subdivision within the city of Brandon. So I think that's wonderful.

Just to maybe—just a quick other piece of history: the BAPD was created in the 1980s. It's definitely gone through many different evolutions over the years to 2006, where the majority of planning services were provided in the city of Brandon and we continued to work co-operatively together.

I agree completely with Reeve Farley when we talk about relationship-building. Our relationship, I think, is better recently than it's been in many, many years, and part of that is, I think, is we do have the interest of the others in mind and that was one of the things that was guiding us through this process.

In terms of other things that were spear-heading it: I was part of a red-tape committee with the Brandon Chamber of Commerce, and one of the things that we looked at was both internal process improvements that we could make to local bylaws, but also provincially, and this was one of the key pieces that came out of it.

So, through previous correspondence—I think there was letters written by our chamber of commerce and the group, so—to show partnership between a regulatory body and the chamber and the business community is a strong partnership. And I really appreciate that we were being heard and it was moving on in the process.

What's really important for the City of Brandon to note is that the evolution of this new structure does not mean we don't value or want to promote the co-ordination and co-operation with our neighbours. Joint municipal planning is key to effective planning and we certainly want to continue that relationship. In fact, the Brandon and Planning District passed a resolution to create a joint planning committee that will involve the Keystone Planning District and the City of Brandon, and we will continue to meet and discuss matters of joint municipal interest with an aim to have a collaborative problem-solving in the interests of both the rural RMs but also the City of Brandon.

\* (19:20)

So we appreciate this moving forward. It's—I think, as the reeve said, it's a little bit later than we wanted but I think that's like most things nowadays and I thank you for your time tonight.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Thank you for your presentation.

Do members of the committee have questions for this presenter?

**Ms. Squires:** Well, thank you very much, Mr. Nickel, and certainly not a question, just a comment. I'd like to say thanks to you for being here at committee and I'd like to pass on—I'd like to ask you to pass on our appreciation to your mayor, Rick Chrest, and your council for their collaboration on this and many other initiatives. We value our partnership with the City of Brandon, and certainly we'll be pleased to pass this bill and provide these new opportunities for the City of Brandon and look forward to continued dialogue and collaboration with you all.

Thank you.

**Mr. Chairperson:** In response to Ms. Squires, if you wish to, Mr. Nickel.

Mr. Nickel, go ahead.

**Mr. Nickel:** No response. Sorry, confusing. Thanks.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Go ahead. Mr. Nickel, no response? That's okay.

**Mr. Nickel:** Sorry. No response. I'm confusing you. I appreciate the kind words.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Thank you.

Mr. Wiebe, you had a question?

**Mr. Wiebe:** Well, thank you very much, Mr. Chair, and to you, Mr. Nickel, I thank you for joining us. Always great to have somebody from the City of Brandon to come join us. And, if you followed along, present MLAs excepted, but if you followed along in some of the debate that happened the other day with regards to this bill, you would have heard some very kind words put on the record with regards to Brandon and some of the surrounding areas, and I think it's just a testament to the kind of city that Brandon is and the kind of atmosphere that I think we all enjoy when we get to be there.

The question I guess I have for you is similar to the question that I had for Mr. Farley and that was just with regards to the process of how this came about. You know, as I was saying, I think there's a lot of concern around the province right now about how changes that are being made with regards to planning districts and land-use processes that are giving people a lot of concern and here's an example where you guys, you've come up with your structure. As you said, it works well. It sounds like you've got buy-in from all partners; this isn't one jurisdiction sort of being heavy-handed on the other.

And the most important thing is you got the attention of the government and of the minister and a

lot of RMs right now around the province are saying, how do we do that? How come we aren't getting the same face time and we're not getting the same reaction and support that others are? I want to be very clear. I'm not begrudging the work that you've done or in any way questioning it, because I think it—you've done it right.

And what I'm just trying to figure out is: Are there lessons that you've learned from the work that you guys did to get to this point that maybe you could share with other RMs and other jurisdictions around Manitoba who are just, at this point, just desperate for any kind of support at all in—from the government. And anything you could shed in that regard, Mr. Nickel, I think would be very helpful.

Thank you.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Mr. Nickel, would you like to respond to Mr. Wiebe? [*interjection*] Sorry, I just need to acknowledge you for the sake of the Hansard.

**Mr. Nickel:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, so, regarding the question to how it came about was this was ongoing for quite a while and it involved our work, as I mentioned, with Canada Chamber of Commerce under the provincial-red-tape-efficiency umbrella. We're all in the business of looking at providing efficient and effective services. Land-use planning's important but we still need to kind of keep things moving along.

So we had discussions through there and this was identified as one of the key topics. Through that, I mean, different venues—we talked to kind of the local MLAs. We worked through our local elected officials, both with the City of Brandon and the RMs of Cornwallis. We worked with staff at the provincial level and once that came back to us, we found that we made very good progress.

It was just working once we got through the staffing, and I think there was some connections made at the political level to help that happen and we were able to work collaboratively to move this system forward. I think a real big beneficial piece is that we do have a good relationship, so if we're looking to get the Province involved, it's much easier if we're getting them involved where we're rowing in the same direction.

So that would be an advice is to involve all the local groups, get them on-side first, reach out to the Province, make sure you're connecting with the business community and other stakeholders such as

construction associations; make sure they're in support and then move forward accordingly.

**Mr. Chairperson:** That does conclude the time for questions for this section.

**Bill 4—The Retail Business  
Hours of Operation Act  
(Various Acts Amended or Repealed)**

*(Continued)*

**Mr. Chairperson:** So, we will now proceed, as previously agreed, to a video presentation from Jonathan Alward on Bill 4 from the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, and it is my understanding that tech has arranged for that video to be played for all of us, so I hand over to tech and await the video momentarily.

*Video presentation of Jonathan Alward of the Canadian Federation of Independent Business:*

Good evening everyone, thanks for listening to my presentation to the committee on Bill 4, The Retail Business Hours of Operation Act, and obviously Various Acts Amended or Repealed as part of this.

My name is Jonathan Alward, I'm the director for the prairie region for the Canadian Federation of Independent Business. I am based out of Winnipeg, for anyone that doesn't know me or hasn't already heard me speak at a committee presentation before.

Just a little bit of background information about CFIB and the members that our organization represents here in Manitoba: we are a non-partisan, non-profit, political-advocacy organization with about 110,000 independently owned and operated business members across the country and, specifically within Manitoba, we have about 4,800 across the province, every corner of the province, really. And one thing that's really important to us is that we represent all sectors and, really, all regions of the country—

**Mr. Chairperson:** One second, folks.

*Jonathan Alward video presentation continues:*

So, what makes us unique compared to some other organizations? We have district managers who are meeting with business owners every day, usually in person. Right now it's a little different; it's either on the phone or with video chat. We have business-resource counsellors across the country and, you know, Janice here in our office is talking with hundreds of business owners every month, especially right now to make sure they're getting the right

information and interpreting rules as best as possible. And we work, you know, primarily based on survey research and our members set what our political agendas are in a one member, one vote system. So, just as I mentioned we have about 110,000 members across the country and every corner represented there, you can see.

So before I kind of jump into why I think—you know—this act is very important and the changes coming are very important and, as well, why it's important to expedite everything, I wanted to paint a little bit of a picture of the small-business climate, not just in Winnipeg but across Manitoba.

So as you can see here, kind of with the progressively increasing restriction—you know, code yellow, orange and red phases now that we're facing—the number of businesses that we've seen fully open in Manitoba has dropped already dramatically from 71 per cent to 51 per cent. We finished up the November survey preliminary data just as early as Monday of this week. You know, similarly, those businesses that are fully staffed, just over a third now are fully staffed, and only a quarter are making their normal sales now for this time of year. And I'm worried that this is only going to get worse, so I think this is really putting an emphasis on why these changes need to be made right now, to give businesses some more time to be able to operate, fulfill orders, deliveries et cetera, especially during this really critical season for—so, as I mentioned, you know, of course—

**Mr. Chairperson:** Okay, the committee will recess for a couple of minutes. We're having technical difficulties. Apparently some people can't hear or maybe see, we're not really sure.

\* (19:30)

So, we'll recess for three minutes or so, and get these issues sorted out so that we can give this presenter the time that is deserved. Apologies for the delays. We'll be back up and running as soon as we can.

*The committee recessed at 7:31 p.m.*

*The committee resumed at 7:46 p.m.*

**Mr. Chairperson:** Okay, I now call the meeting back to order.

We will now listen to, as previously agreed, we will now listen to Jonathan Alward, the Canadian

Federation of Independent Business, and apologies for technical glitches, but if we can proceed and listen, I don't know that we will have a video presentation, but certainly we will be able to hear what Mr. Alward had prepared for us.

*Audio presentation of Jonathan Alward of the Canadian Federation of Independent Business:*

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little bit of a picture of the small-business climate, not just in Winnipeg but across Manitoba.

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You know, similarly, those businesses that are fully staffed—just over a third now are fully staffed and only a quarter are making their normal sales now for this time of year, and I'm worried that this is only going to get worse. So I think this is really putting an emphasis on why these changes need to be made right now to give businesses some more time to be able to operate, fulfill orders, deliveries, et cetera, especially during this really critical season for retailers in particular.

\* (19:50)

So, as I mentioned, you know, of course we're operating on one member, one vote system and we go to our members whenever it comes to important policy decisions. So, we asked them when the issue came up for debate, you know, it was a statement-agree-disagree question, you know, whether or not they agree that all businesses in Manitoba should have the choice to remain open during statutory holidays.

And as you can see, 62 per cent of members agreed and I think that's important and significant as well, not just because it's the majority of small-business owners but it's also taking into account every sector. I mean, you have agriculture sector, transportation, among others, not just retail. So I think, across the province, there's quite a widespread support for these changes to be made that we're seeing here in Bill 4 from businesses of all types.

And I just want to, you know, quickly dive into, really, why this is so important. And, as I'm sure everyone here knows, the regulations around statutory holidays or even, you know, Sunday shopping to a lesser degree, but they're very confusing and certainly very outdated.

There's so many questions that we hear every time a statutory holiday rolls around from various members. You know, even discrepancies in, you know, the public sector employees, in some cases being able to work on holidays compared to private sector employees not being able to. There's even

differences, you know, based on the size of your business or, you know, if you have a produce stand versus a grocery store that has produce sold within it.

There are, you know—there's a lot of grey area, it's very complicated and confusing to interpret and that's one of the things that our business-resource counsellors here always find themselves doing, leading up to a holiday, is answering those kinds of questions.

You know, on top of that, we've obviously heard from, really, not just small-business owners but all Manitobans that these rules feel very outdated and don't necessarily reflect the cultural mosaic that is the province and I think, for that reason as well, this is an important change.

So, you know, with this survey data and still being quite recent, we asked in our party-leaders survey just prior to the 2019 provincial election where different, you know, potential leader candidates stood on different issues. And we asked specifically: if elected, will your government allow businesses the choice to remain open on all statutory holidays, regardless of size or business type.

And, as I'm sure I don't need to tell anyone here on the table, both the current government and the official opposition agreed to make these specific changes and I think that was something that we certainly commended them both for and it was very good, too, to see the parties on the same page on this important change.

So, you know, in getting into that, I think the changes do largely what we had hoped that they would do and that's clear up a lot of the inconsistencies, you know, give businesses more of the freedom to be open while still making sure that their staff have, you know, a right to determine whether or not they want to work on a Sunday, for example.

And I believe this legislation does capture those changes, largely. I think it'll be much easier for businesses to interpret everything, it will give them more choice—especially in this critical time of year—to stay open for more hours. It will keep Manitobans more spread out, I think, as well, during the pandemic and beyond and these are all really positive, very timely changes that should be made right now.

If anyone has questions for me, I'd be very happy to call and chat at any time. My contact information is here. But I appreciate everyone's time and I appreciate what I hope is a very swift passage of Bill 4 and

implementation to make these changes in time for the holiday season.

Thank you.

**Mr. Chairperson:** As that was a previously recorded presentation, that concludes the list of presenters and there will be no questions.

\* \* \*

**Mr. Chairperson:** We will now proceed with clause-by-clause of Bill 4. Does the minister for Bill 4 have an opening statement?

**Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Finance):** I do, Mr. Chair. Thank you very much.

First of all, I'd like to thank everyone for—that came forward to present—the comments on the bill tonight. This is an important bill that will really remove restrictions on Sunday and holiday shopping so that Manitoba businesses can compete with their counterparts in Ontario and western—other western provinces, as well as—and probably more importantly today—online retailers.

I appreciate the opportunity to hear from opinions on the legislation from a large and diverse group of Manitobans here tonight. I would also like to thank the stakeholders who have contributed to the development of the bill, including the Labour Management Review Committee, which is comprised of both labour and management. As you know, our government believes very strongly in the importance of consultation. And I'm grateful for the dialogue and advice that I've received from stakeholders for legislation.

My one final point is, I do appreciate Mr. Alward from the CFIB, and I know he had an opportunity to send out a letter to all members in the Legislature just very recently on November 16th that talks about the support for the expedited passage of The Retail Business Hours of Operation Act. And I see from the letter he sent around to the Legislature, which we could table, Mr. Chair, that over 63 per cent of people that were surveyed support this.

So we're very much in favour of this and we look forward to the smooth passage of this legislation.

**Mr. Chairperson:** We thank the minister.

Does the critic from the official opposition have an opening statement?

**Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon):** I do, Mr. Chair.

I'd like to take the opportunity to thank all the presenters that went out of their way to figure out how to make presentations tonight.

We're not opposed, necessarily, to this bill. And certainly we understand the importance to retailers and to workers of the changes that are proposed here. We wish that there had've been a little more consultation to come up with something that could have potentially been better than this.

We want to make sure that people understand that workers do need to have a day off where they can spend a day with their family, but that day doesn't necessarily always have to be a Sunday, recognizing the diversity of people in this province, that Sunday doesn't have the same connotations that it did once upon a time.

So we wish that the government had've been more receptive to looking at diversity and not just the same old thing. We want to recognize that workers do have the right to refuse to work on a Sunday but not other religious holidays or other days that may be important to them, like Thanksgiving.

So we think that this bill will pass, but we hope that perhaps maybe the minister will be receptive at the next stage to some amendments, or maybe the minister themselves will make some amendments to make this bill into something that all Manitobans can be proud of and that we can actually stand up and say, we worked co-operatively to come up with a bill that was so much better.

Having said that, Mr. Chair, I don't suspect that we are going to oppose the passage of this that is presented to us today.

Thank you.

**Mr. Chairperson:** We thank the member.

During the consideration of a bill, the enacting clause and the title are postponed until all other clauses have been considered in their proper order. Also, if there is agreement from the committee, the Chair will call clauses in blocks that conform to pages, with the understanding that we will stop at any particular clause or clauses where members may have comments, questions or amendments to propose. Is that agreed? *[Agreed]*

I now invite all virtual committee members to unmute themselves so that their responses to the question can be heard.

As a reminder to all, the members of this committee are myself, Honourable Mr. Fielding,

Mr. Isleifson, Mr. Lindsey, Honourable Ms. Squires and Mr. Wiebe.

Clause 1—pass; clauses 2 through 6—pass; clauses 7 through 9—pass; enacting clause—pass; title—pass. Bill be reported.

\* (20:00)

### **Bill 7—The Planning Amendment Act** (Continued)

**Mr. Chairperson:** We will now move on to Bill— to clause by clause of Bill 7.

Does the minister responsible for Bill 7 have an opening statement?

**Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister of Municipal Relations):** I do.

I just want to put a few words on the record and thank my fellow committee members for agreeing to the passage of—or, to having Bill 7, The Planning Amendment Act, come before this committee and I look forward to its passage in the legislature.

As we heard from our presenters this evening, we know that we've got widespread support for this change to the planning process and we know that our government is committed to modernizing planning processes and streamlining approvals and reducing administrative burdens for municipalities; and this is just one example of that where we work collaboratively with our municipal partners and bring forward changes that will ultimately benefit them in their municipalities.

So, really pleased to have thus far heard supportive remarks for this bill from members of the legislature including members opposite and we did also hear from the municipal leaders that there was some frustration expressed by the delay in this bill coming thus far; we know that we did introduce this bill a year ago and it was unfortunate that there was delays in the legislature that prevented its passage in the spring, but I certainly hope that we have no further delays and I certainly hope that members opposite are willing to do the right thing and to respond to the needs of municipalities and support us in passage of this bill.

Thank you.

**Mr. Chairperson:** We thank the minister.

Does the critic from the official opposition have an opening statement?

**Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia):** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, and thank the committee for—just a brief statement.

We know that Bill 7 gives the City of Brandon the ability to approve subdivisions of land in Brandon. It also allows the future designation of approving authorities by regulation. It's our understanding, of course, that the mayor of Brandon and the City of Brandon are supportive of the powers given to them with this legislation and so are we. We know that the City of Brandon has a strong group of planners and has the capacity to see this through and we have full confidence that they will continue to be successful.

But we also see here that the minister is once again giving the government broad regulatory powers, allowing Cabinet once again to create new subdivision authorities in the future. What this will do is allow—by Cabinet order alone—the ability of Cabinet to create subdivisions, making powers anywhere the government sees fit. And they are empowering that not by another round of legislative change; instead, this will allow them to just write the regulation anytime that they want.

I think the public would be better served if the Pallister government made its intentions known upfront; there's really no reason that the minister couldn't return with additional legislation in the future should other communities be added to the list; obviously, we see how co-operative we can be as legislators here and we can move things forward. But, of course, the minister knows that if they were to do that, they would have to come with additional scrutiny and accountability, which they obviously aren't fans of.

We do believe that the Legislature should rightfully ask if planning authorities are being created that are knowledgeable and properly-resourced, which is a major issue—again, Brandon being an exception to this. If the minister believes that another entity should be so empowered, I see no reason why we couldn't come together and build that piece of legislation together. We know that preparation for such a transfer of authorities would be months and years in the making, so there's really no reason that the minister needed to include this as part of Bill 7.

Certainly, at the very least, we would welcome the minister to explain in more detail why—sorry, which authorities she is eyeing—maybe she could give us a sneak peek at which other authorities are being looked at—but we appreciate that the City of Brandon

is supportive of this legislation and we look forward to further debate on Bill 7.

And just as a quick aside—and I wasn't going to go there, but only because the minister mentioned that, for the record, of course, folks will know that this did come before the Legislature a year ago, I think, in late November, this bill was introduced as Bill 6. There's no reason why Bill 6 could not have passed in the same way it was introduced in November this year, it could have been introduced in November of last year, moved through the process and it could have—if the government would've called the bill—*[interjection]*—if the government would've called the bill, we could have moved it, but instead, they didn't see this as a priority.

We do see this as a priority and so I'm making a commitment here to those folks from Brandon and surrounding communities that are watching that we will do our best to push the government to actually move on this and hopefully get it done by the timeline that you're expecting now.

Thank you very much.

**Mr. Chairperson:** We thank the member.

During the consideration of a bill, the enacting clause—*[interjection]*—order, please—and the title are postponed until all other clauses have been considered in their proper order. Also, if there is agreement from the committee, the Chair will call clauses in blocks that conform to pages, with the understanding that we will stop at any particular clause or clauses where members may have comments, questions or amendments to propose. Is that agreed? *[Agreed]*

I now invite all virtual committee members to unmute themselves so their responses to the question can be heard.

Clauses 1 through 3—pass; clauses 4 through 6—pass; clauses 7 through 9—pass; clauses 10 through 12—pass; clause 13—pass; enacting clause—pass; title—pass. Bill be reported.

The hour being seven minutes past 8 p.m., what is the will of the committee?

**Some Honourable Members:** Committee rise.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Committee rise.

**COMMITTEE ROSE AT:** 8:07 p.m.

## WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS

Re: Bill 4

To Whom It May Concern,

On behalf of the Association of Manitoba Municipalities (AMM), which represents Manitoba's 137 municipalities, I am writing to provide some comments regarding Bill 4: The Retail Business Hours of Operation Act.

As the AMM understands that this proposed legislation would eliminate province-wide restrictions on retail businesses on holidays, except for Remembrance Day, and Sundays, we welcome the granting of greater authority to municipalities over these matters. While municipalities would continue to have authority to impose restrictions on retail business hours as they see fit through by-laws passed under The Municipal Act, the AMM encourages the Province of Manitoba to provide the necessary by-law templates to municipalities to assist with effective implementation of this legislation. Informational materials that clarify the enforcement process should also be provided to municipalities.

Additionally, the AMM firmly believes that local Councils know their communities best. It is essential consideration be given to grandfathering/transitional clauses in consultation with affected municipalities so that local Councils wanting to possibly maintain restrictions currently in place do not need to take any additional action until such time as a change is desired.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide these brief comments.

Sincerely,

Denys Volkov  
Executive Director

Re: Bill 7

I would like to provide some background information regarding proposed Bill 7 and its impact on the City of Brandon and two of our nearest neighbors: RMs of Cornwallis and Elton; although I do not profess to speak on their behalf.

For many decades the Brandon and Area Planning District (BAPD) has existed, worked quite well and was a great mechanism to have three neighboring municipalities work together as our region grew. BAPD has consisted of the RM's of Cornwallis and Elton as well as the City of Brandon. The Board is

made up of three Councillors from each municipality. Approximately 90 percent of the activity of the planning district occurs within the City of Brandon.

While BAPD was working well and the three municipal partners continue to get along very well, several years ago the two Rural Municipalities began to examine whether the structure was the most conducive for their respective needs. Given the size disparity between the partners (Elton population 1,320; Cornwallis 4,520; Brandon 50,000) the needs and scope of each partner are significantly different. As a result of the examination by the RMs, Cornwallis and Elton reached the conclusion that they wished to branch off on their own and partner in a planning district tailored to their circumstances resulting in Brandon becoming a stand-alone planning entity. The Department of Municipal Relations planning staff have been most helpful in advising and facilitating this desired outcome and as a result, the process was put in motion early in 2019 with an anticipated changeover date of January 1, 2020. The two RMs have created a new entity known as Keystone Planning District and as an interim measure, the two Rural Municipalities and Brandon have agreed to continue the operation of Brandon and Area Planning District in order to continue processing planning and subdivision applications. While the January 2020 date could not be met legislatively, it was anticipated that the Bill could be passed in early 2020 and the new structure would take effect for all three municipalities. Then COVID-19 arrived and naturally many aspects of the legislative agenda were impacted including this Bill.

The Bill has now been reintroduced as Bill 7 with the hope that everything could take effect by January 1, 2021. The effective date is one year later than planned and all 3 affected municipalities have been operating on a less than ideal interim basis. The Bill has the full support of three municipalities as a means of streamlining and improving the planning scenario for each district. This would seem to be a legislative measure that would merit the support of all MLAs. As you may know, as Mayor of Brandon, I rarely if ever appeal to the collective Legislature but in the interest of seeing this process completed for the benefit of all three municipalities in our district, I am asking for the assistance of the House to see their way clear to offering an all-party concurrence to see the passage of Bill 7. Such a measure would clear the path for each of Elton, Cornwallis and Brandon to properly proceed in our new planning structure and assist

developers and residents with a more expeditious framework to guide them.

Thank you for your consideration. I am available should you wish further clarification or questions answered. Please accept my best wishes for your continued endeavors as elected officials.

Sincerely,

Rick Chrest  
Mayor

Re: Bill 7

To Standing Committee of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba,

Please accept this letter from the Brandon and Area Planning District (the BAPD) in support of Bill 7 to amend The Planning Act. The BAPD partners have

worked collaboratively with Minister Squires and her team to establish a new structure for the District where the rural partners will continue providing services under the newly named Keystone Planning District (KPD) independent of the City of Brandon. This new structure will provide increased autonomy/processing efficiency for the KPD and the City of Brandon with intermunicipal planning facilitated through a new joint planning committee. The Province of Manitoba granting subdivision approval authority to the City of Brandon under Bill 7 and adopting a regulation with a new boundary and name for the BAPD are necessary changes to move this process forward.

The District appreciates your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Jeff Fawcett  
Chair, Brandon & Area Planning District

The Legislative Assembly of Manitoba Debates and Proceedings  
are also available on the Internet at the following address:

**<http://www.manitoba.ca/legislature/hansard/hansard.html>**