



**PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF
TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO**

TENTH PARLIAMENT

SIXTH REPORT

**OF THE
JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON
MINISTRIES, STATUTORY AUTHORITIES
AND STATE ENTERPRISES
(GROUP 2)**

ON

**THE EAST PORT OF SPAIN DEVELOPMENT
COMPANY LIMITED (EPOSDC)**

**Ordered to be printed with the Minutes of Proceedings
and Notes of Evidence**

PAPER NO: / 2012

PARL NO. 14/5/14

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|------------|
| THE COMMITTEE | 5 |
| Establishment | 5 |
| Membership | 5 |
| Secretariat Support | 6 |
| Powers | 6 |
| INTRODUCTION | 7 |
| Background | 7 |
| Conduct of the Inquiry | 8 |
| THE EVIDENCE | 9 |
| The Company | 9 |
| Vision and Mission | 10 |
| Organizational Structure | 10 |
| Financial Arrangements | 112 |
| The East Port of Spain Area | 12 |
| Land and Housing..... | 12 |
| Crime and Violence | 13 |
| Employment and Education | 13 |
| Strategic Development Plan | 13 |
| Implementation of the Plan..... | 14 |
| Development Strategies | 14 |
| Development Areas | 15 |
| Development Projects | 16 |
| OBSERVATIONS/FINDINGS | 20 |
| RECOMMENDATIONS | 22 |
| APPENDIX I: BUSINESS ENTITIES | 26 |
| APPENDIX II: MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS | 31 |
| APPENDIX III: NOTES OF EVIDENCE | 39 |

THE COMMITTEE

Establishment

Section 66 of the Constitution of Trinidad and Tobago declares, that not later than three months after the first meeting of the House of Representatives, the Parliament shall appoint Joint Select Committees to inquire into and report to both Houses in respect of Government Ministries, Municipal Corporations, Statutory Authorities, State Enterprises and Service Commissions, in relation to their administration, the manner of exercise of their powers, their methods of functioning and any criteria adopted by them in the exercise of their powers and functions.

Motions related to this purpose were passed in the House of Representatives and Senate on September 17, 2010 and October 12, 2010, respectively, and thereby established, inter alia, the *Joint Select Committee to inquire into and report to Parliament on Ministries with responsibility for the business set out in the Schedule as Group 2, and on the Statutory Authorities and State Enterprises falling under their purview with regard to their administration, the manner of exercise of their powers, their methods of functioning and any criteria adopted by them in the exercise of their powers and functions.*

The business, as well as the entities which fall under the purview of your Committee are attached as *Appendix I*.

Membership

The current membership of your Committee is as follows:

- Dr. James Armstrong - Chairman
- Dr. Victor Wheeler - Vice Chairman
- Dr. Tim Gopeesingh, MP
- Mr. Clifton De Coteau, MP
- Dr. Bhoendradatt Tewarie
- Mr. Collin Partap, MP
- Mr. Kevin Ramnarine
- Dr. Lincoln Douglas, MP
- Mrs. Lyndira Oudit

- Ms. Alicia Hospedales, MP
- Mr. Fitzgerald Jeffrey, MP
- Dr. Lester Henry

Secretariat Support

| | | |
|----------------------------|---|-----------------------------|
| Mrs. Nataki Atiba- Dilchan | - | Secretary |
| Ms. Candice Skerrette | - | Assistant Secretary |
| Ms. Candice Williams | - | Graduate Research Assistant |

Powers

Standing Orders 71B of the Senate and 79B of the House of Representatives delineate the core powers of the Committee which include *inter alia*:

- to send for persons, papers and records;
- to adjourn from place to place;
- to appoint specialist advisers either to supply information which is not otherwise readily available or to elucidate matters of complexity within the Committee's order of reference; and
- to communicate with any other Committee of Parliament on matters of common interest.

INTRODUCTION

Background

The establishment of the East Port of Spain Development Company Limited was announced in Government's 2005 Budget Speech after note was taken of the fact that East Port-of-Spain was among the most depressed areas in the country characterized by high rates of crime and unemployment and with many of its residents living in sub-standard conditions. East Port-of-Spain was therefore declared a Special Development Zone, in which special attention was to be paid to the economic and social challenges faced by its residents.

Since then there has been very limited public awareness of the activities being undertaken by the Company and few noticeable developmental changes in the landscape of East Port of Spain.

In the Budget speech of 2010, attention was again brought to bear on this area when it was announced by the Finance Minister that East Port-of-Spain was selected as the third growth pole around which cluster development activity would be initiated, with a focus on the creation of business incubators by targeting the arts, culture and entertainment.

Your Committee thought it would be of value to the citizenry to conduct an inquiry into what had been achieved in East Port of Spain since the establishment of the East Port-of-Spain Development Company as a new vision for the area has been announced.

Some of the areas of focus of this inquiry were identified as follows:

- to understand the East Port of Spain Strategic Development Plan
- to ascertain what has been achieved in accordance with the strategic objectives and whether the plan synchronizes with what is currently taking place in the organisation and pronouncements made regarding intentions to establish Laventille as a growth pole
- to determine whether the plan will assist in addressing the issue of crime in the area
- to determine the outcome of the business survey and its influence on future plans of the Company

Conduct of the Inquiry

On Friday November 11, 2011, representatives of the East Port of Spain Development Company Limited (EPOSDC) were invited to a public hearing. Prior to this, they were advised of general objectives of the inquiry and written submissions were requested from the Company. These responses provided the basis for the supplementary questions pursued at the hearing.

The East Port of Spain Development Company Limited (EPOSDC) was represented at the meeting of Friday November 11, 2011 by:

| | |
|--------------------|-------------------|
| Mr. Steve Kistow | Chairman |
| Ms. Deborah Thomas | Managing Director |

The draft of this Report was considered and approved with amendments at the meeting of the Committee held on Friday June 8, 2012.

The Minutes of the meetings of the Committee with regard to this inquiry are attached as ***Appendix II***.

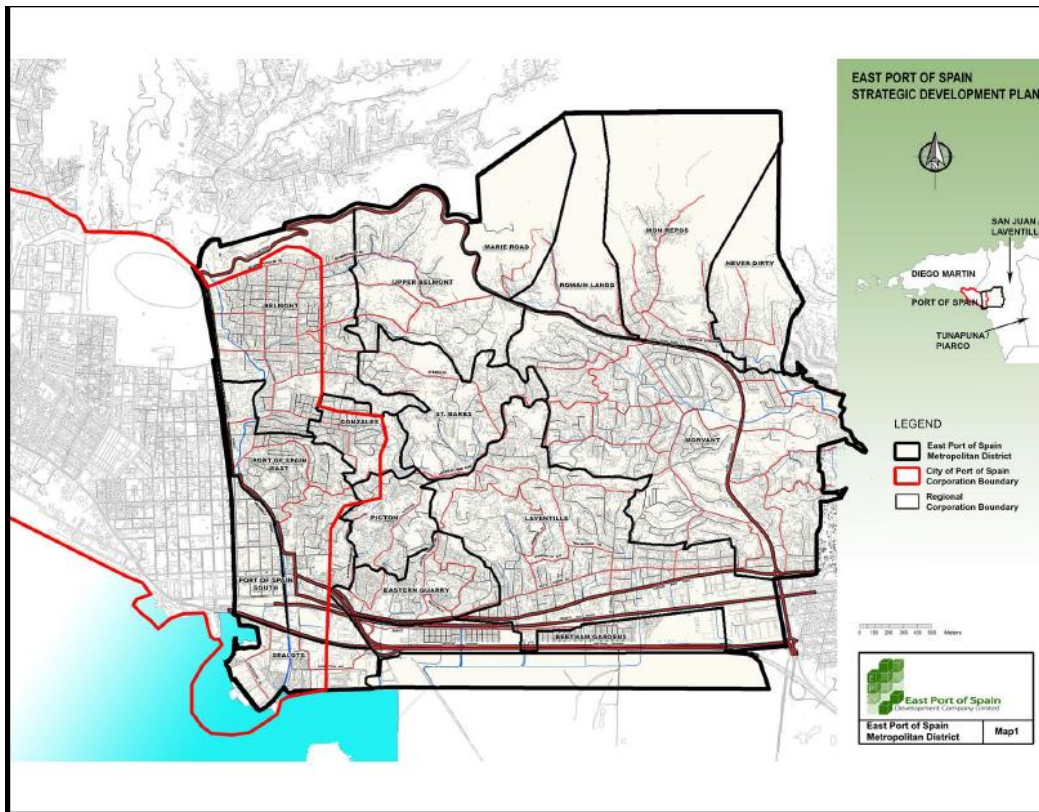
The Notes of Evidence of the hearing held on Friday July 8, 2011 are attached as ***Appendix III***.

THE EVIDENCE

The Company

East Port of Spain was seen as a Special Development Zone by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago and in September 2005, the East Port of Spain Development Company Limited (EPOSDC) was established with a mandate *“to develop and redevelop a zone in East Port-of-Spain, bounded by Charlotte Street, Lady Young Road and the Eastern Main Road and including Morvant, Never Dirty and Caledonia, to improve the economic, social and physical environment of those areas”*.

These boundaries were subsequently expanded to include the communities of Beetham Gardens, Sea Lots and Katanga.



Vision and Mission

VISION- Healthy, safe, economically vibrant, sustainable communities fully integrated into the Greater Port-of-Spain Metropolitan Area and the wider society.

MISSION STATEMENT- Transformation of East Port-of-Spain through economic, social and physical regeneration in partnership with the community, to improve the quality of life of its residents and to celebrate its cultural heritage and achievements.

The company's ultimate goal is the achievement of the reduction of regional disparities and the creation of sustainable communities as prescribed in the Vision 2020 philosophy.

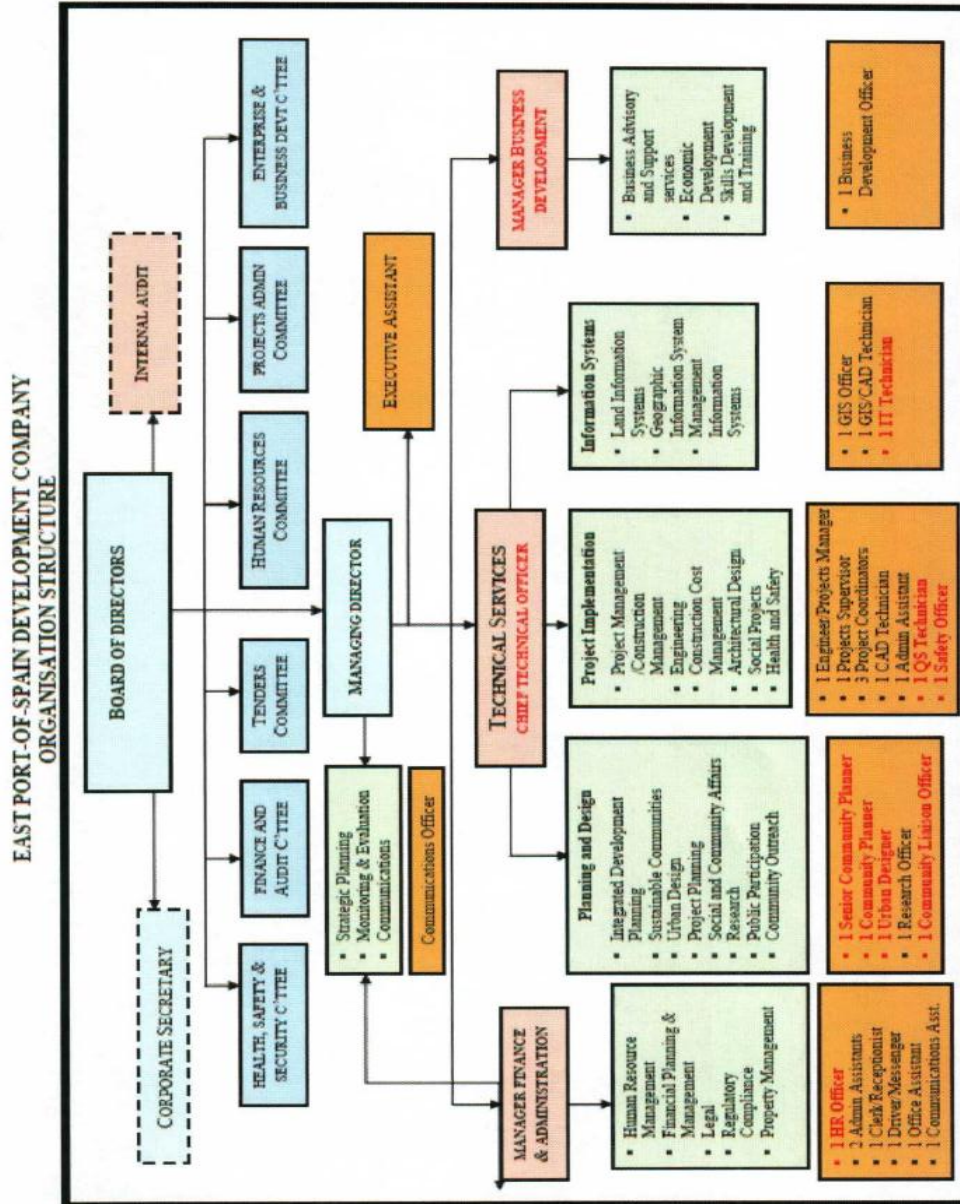
Organizational Structure

The full staff complement is thirty-four (34) persons. While it has employed a maximum of twenty one (21) in the past, the company has never employed its full complement. There are presently eighteen (18) employees.

A new Board was appointed in March 2011 as follows:

| Name | Position | Occupation |
|------------------------|----------|-------------------------------|
| Mr. Steve Kistow | Chairman | Civil Engineer |
| Mr. Gregory Hill | Director | Chartered Accountant |
| Mrs. Helen Shair-Singh | Director | Marketing/Advertising |
| Mr. Malcolm Kernahan | Director | Micro Credit Facility Manager |
| Mr. Alvin Ramlogan | Director | Businessman |
| Mr. Anthony Skeete | Director | Electrical Engineer |
| Mr. Rajendra Arjoon | Director | Businessman |
| Mr. Paul Solomon | Director | Marine Pilot |
| Mr. Lemeul Murphy | Director | Attorney-at-Law |
| Mr. Criston Williams | Director | Attorney-at-Law |
| Mr. Jainarine Lalla | Director | Consulting Architect |
| Mr. Heston Blake | Director | Project Manager |

The Company is structured as follows:



Financial Arrangements

The EPOSDC receives 100% of its funding from the Government of Trinidad and Tobago via the Infrastructure Development Fund (IDF). This fund is specifically allocated for physical infrastructural works. As such, the Company finds itself constrained for funds to pursue its full mandate. The Company has been advised that funding is not to be utilized for social and economic projects.

In order to access funds from the IDF, the Company is required to establish the scope of works, get approval from Cabinet, get the funding allocated then implement the project.

Challenges exist with respect to the release of funds to contractors and there are often delays before payment is received for work completed.

The level of funding of \$30 million received on a yearly basis is not considered to be sufficient to impact the nineteen (19) communities of East Port of Spain and in order to allow the Company to achieve its mandate.

The East Port of Spain Area

Land and Housing

The Metropolitan area of East Port-of-Spain extends over 2,700 hectares of land and consists of a population of over 92,000 persons in 24,000 households. While a number of houses are in good physical condition, a significant number are of such poor quality that they cannot be refurbished; demolition and replacement is instead needed.

The vision 2020 Housing Sub-Committee Report estimated that in Port-of-Spain by 2020, 30,000 new units should be built. Of this, at least 10,000 should be located within East Port-of-Spain.

The EPOSDC has done their own analysis and from that has identified that different models of houses are needed in different parts of the metropolitan district and will depend on a number of challenges presently in existence. These include plots, steep slopes, overcrowding, safety and design. It will also depend on the particular space where the land will be located, the community in which the land is and the general environment as a whole.

Crime and Violence

The levels of poverty, crime and violence in East Port-of-Spain are high. This threatens the implementation of projects when contractors and employees have to confront attacks, theft, etc. and members of the communities have to be cautious when attending events or using facilities.

Employment and Education

Most recently, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago has embarked on a number of initiatives geared towards addressing the high levels of unemployment which exist in East Port of Spain. The following table shows that some areas have higher unemployment rates than others.

| Communities | Unemployment rates (%) |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Marie Road/Romain Lands | 33 |
| Mon Repos | 20 |
| Beetham | 19 |
| Laventille and Picton | 12-14 |

Similarly, the educational status in the community is alarming.

| Educational Status | % of population |
|---------------------------|------------------------|
| No education | 65 |
| School leaving | 6 |
| CXC basic | 3 |
| CXC certificate | 5 |
| Advanced Level | 1 |
| Tertiary Level | 3 |
| Other | 17 |

Strategic Development Plan

A Strategic Development Plan was formulated and presented to Cabinet in March 2010.

A number of consultations held with residents in East Port-of-Spain and key stakeholders, field/land use surveys, secondary data, data analysis and review of earlier plans were all used to discover the needs which exist in East Port of Spain. A Strategic Development Plan was

formulated which sought to guide and identify development projects and future work to be conducted in the fulfillment of the company's mandate.

The Plan is presented in three (3) parts:

1. The Vision, Mission, Goals and Guiding Principles of the Plan and the Executive Summary
2. Detailed assessment of current conditions in East Port-of-Spain and gap analysis which identifies deficiencies in relation to models of community structure and service provision.
3. The development framework and several strategies and implementation programmes, mechanisms, schedules and budgets for achieving sustainable transformation of East Port-of-Spain to address existing challenges based on development opportunities and potentials.

The objectives of the EPOSDC Development Plan are as follows:

- Formulate a comprehensive and integrated approach to planning, development and regeneration of East Port of Spain
- Articulate a spatial development strategy to guide the location of social, economic and physical development projects in East Port of Spain
- Identify priority action plans and development programmes
- Provide a framework for sustainable development and creation of sustainable communities in East Port of Spain

Implementation of the Plan

The Company has been unable to receive Cabinet approval for the execution of its development plan. After submitting a draft to the Minister of Planning for consideration the Company was then placed under the purview of the Ministry of Local Government.

A draft was submitted to the new line Ministry and a presentation was made to Cabinet in March 2010. The plan is yet to receive the approval of the current Cabinet since the change of government in May 2010.

Development Strategies

The various strategies identified in the Development Plan are detailed in the following table:

| TYOLOGY | CHARACTERISTICS | DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY | COMMUNITIES |
|-----------|--|-----------------------------|---|
| 1. Type A | Good condition, Minor improvements needed | Village Rehabilitation | Morvant, Belmont, Lower Gonzales |
| 2. Type B | Housing and infrastructure improvements needed | Village Rehabilitation 2 | Success Laventille, Beetham Phases 1-3, Caledonia #2, Upper Gonzales |
| 3. Type C | Informal settlements | Settlement upgrading | Marie Road/Romain Lands, Never Dirty |
| 4. Type D | Urban decay, dereliction & obsolescence | Comprehensive redevelopment | Besson Street, St. Paul Street, Eastern Quarry, Prigzar Lands, Beetham Phases 4-5 |
| 5. Type E | Vacant lands | Development | Opportunity sites |
| 6. Type F | Steep, unstable slopes and watersheds | Conservation | Marie Road/Romain Lands, Upper Belmont |

Development Areas

Six (6) areas have been identified as Comprehensive Development Areas (CDAs) under the provisions of the Town and Country Planning Act. These are:

1. Downtown East (Central Business District Extension)
2. Quarry Street/John John
3. Picton/Eastern Quarry
4. Laventille/Trou Macaque
5. Eastern Main Road/Success Village (Business Improvement District)
6. Sea Lots/Beetham South

More detailed planning work is required for the six (6) development areas and the Company has contracted a foreign firm, Dover Kohl and Partners of the US, to provide design solutions for the CDAs. Only an inception report has been prepared thus far at a cost of US \$90,000

Development Projects

Based on consultations with members of the community, the citizen advisory committees and working groups, the Company identified several projects to meet the needs of the population.

In identifying projects, the data collected from consultations is supplemented by statistics from the Ministry of Planning and Development, Central Statistical Office's (CSO) 2000 Population and Housing Census.

Projects which were notably successful included:

- ✓ SportsPLUS (play, learn and unite through sport)
- ✓ Phase 4 Beetham Basketball Court
- ✓ Improvement Works to the Laventille Road
- ✓ Never Dirty Multi-Purpose Recreational Facilities

The constraint of the IDF has meant that the Company has not been able to successfully implement further projects which seek to fulfill social and economic needs.

Details on the status of projects undertaken by the EPOSDC for the period 2006-2010 are supplied below:

| | Project | Location | Contractor | Contract Price | Actual Cost | Status |
|-----------------|---|--------------------|------------|----------------|-------------|---|
| Planning | | | | | | |
| 1 | Strategic Development Plan for East Port of Spain | East Port of Spain | In-House | N/A | | Completed. Awaiting approval by Cabinet |
| 2 | Beetham Urban Village 2020 Development Plan | Beetham Gardens | In-House | N/A | N/A | Completed. Approved by Cabinet in 2006. Implementation on-going |

| | | | | | | |
|------------------------------|---|-------------------------|---|--|-----------------------------|--|
| 3 | Detailed Design Solutions for Comprehensive Development Areas | East Port of Spain | Dover Kohl and Partners (USA) | US \$510,000 Includes reimbursables | US \$90,000 Paid to date | Further phases pending approval of draft Development Plan by Cabinet |
| Recreation Facilities | | | | | | |
| 4 | St. Paul St Recreational Facilities | POS East | Inch by Inch (morvant) | \$3,572,490 | \$3,922,044 | Practical Completion |
| 5 | Sogren Trace Recreational Facilities | Laventille/Trou Macaque | Henry John (St. James) | \$2,679,270 | \$3,343,872 | Practical Completion |
| 6 | Morris Marshall Recreational Facilities | Laventille/Trou Macaque | Roderick Gale/Carico (Trou Macaque) | \$2,162,135 | \$2,558,620 | Completed |
| 7 | Beetham Multi-Purpose Court | Beetham | Modern Fabricators (Success Village) | \$609,000 | \$609,000 | Completed |
| 8 | Never Dirty Multi-Purpose Recreational Facilities | Never Dirty | CEP (Port of Spain) | \$754,115 | \$802,615 | Completed |
| 9 | Beetham Phase 2 Recreational Facilities | Beetham | TDB | | | Tender evaluated |
| Beautification | | | | | | |
| 10 | Construct Berm 7 th Street to Servol | Beetham | Two Js Beautification (Beetham Gardens) | \$3,621,000 | \$2,081,000 | Phase 1 Complete Phase 2 on going |
| 11 | Construct Berm 14 th Street to 18 th Streets | Beetham | Sandra Jacob (Beetham Gardens) | \$3,809,000 | \$1,764,000 | Phase 1 Complete Phase 2 on going |
| 12 | Construct Berm between 11 th to 17 th Streets | Beetham | Karsen & Associates (Sangre Grande) | \$2,869,000 | \$1,801,000 | Completed |
| 13 | Laventille Road Embroidery Phase 1 | Beetham | TDB | N/A | N/A | To be tendered |
| 14 | Packages 9, | Laventille | Santana | \$1,051,651 | \$849,462 | Practical |

| | | | | | | |
|--|--|-----------------|---|-------------|-------------|------------------|
| | 10 & 11 | | Construction (Chaguanas) Henry John (St. James) | \$461,884 | \$461,884 | completion |
| 15 | Packages 12 | Laventille | Henry John (St. James) | \$1,855,473 | \$2,240,259 | Completed |
| 16 | Packages 3, 4 & 6 | Laventille | TBD | N/A | N/A | Tender evaluated |
| 17 | Packages 15 & 16 | Laventille | TBD | N/A | N/A | Tender evaluated |
| 18 | Packages 17 & 18 | Laventille | TBD | N/A | N/A | Tender evaluated |
| 19 | Packages 19, 20 & 21 | Laventille | TBD | N/A | N/A | Tender evaluated |
| Footpaths | | | | | | |
| 20 | Stanislaus Street/T&TE C | Success Village | De Leon Construction (Curepe) | \$1,315,325 | \$1,131,937 | Completed |
| 21 | Espinet Street | Success Village | Moonan Engineering (Tunapuna) | \$1,524,325 | \$1,763,630 | Completed |
| Beetham Residential & Sports/Cultural Complex | | | | | | |
| 22 | Temporary Housing Solution | Beetham | TBD | N/A | N/A | To be tendered |
| 23 | Permanent Housing Solution | Beetham | TBD | N/A | N/A | To be tendered |
| 24 | Lake & detention pond | Beetham | TBD | N/A | N/A | To be tendered |
| 25 | Construction of Sporting Complex | Beetham | TBD | N/A | N/A | To be tendered |
| 26 | Beetham Park and Ride and Transportation Hub | Beetham | TBD | N/A | N/A | To be tendered |
| 27 | Major circulation Road | Beetham | TBD | N/A | N/A | To be tendered |
| 28 | Relocation of temporary housing and scapyard | Beetham | TBD | N/A | N/A | To be tendered |
| 29 | Park and Ride Transportation Hub | Beetham | TBD | N/A | N/A | To be tendered |

| | | | | | | |
|--------------|-----------------------------------|------------|-----|-----|-----|------------------|
| 30 | Light industrial park development | Beetham | TBD | N/A | N/A | To be tendered |
| Other | | | | | | |
| 31 | Despers Panyard | Laventille | TBD | N/A | N/A | Pending approval |

OBSERVATIONS/FINDINGS

Your Committee has found the inquiry into the operations of the East Port-of-Spain Development Company to be insightful and has raised several concerns with regard to the impact that the Company can make in the development of East Port-of-Spain.

Your Committee has therefore made particular note of the following aspects of its operations:

MANDATE

There is obvious dissonance between the mandate expressed by the representatives of the Company and the role envisioned by the Government as expressed by the Ministry of Finance. EPOSDC was advised that the definition of infrastructure in the IDF refers to only physical infrastructure and excludes social and economic programmes. This is undoubtedly an impediment to what could be achieved by the Company.

STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The Strategic Development Plan, while it is quite comprehensive has a number of shortcomings.

- The Census Data on which it is based is dated (2000) and therefore is not premised on what currently pertains closer to the 2011. There may have been consequential changes in the demographic of the area in the last decade.
- There are noted inconsistencies, especially with respect to land use for housing and administrative and municipal services.
- After several unfruitful efforts, the Company is yet to have the Plan approved by the Cabinet so that implementation can proceed.

FUNDING

The parameters placed on the use of monies sourced from the IDF have restricted the ventures which can be undertaken by the EPOSDC. Challenges exist with respect to conducting economic and social projects as well as, the release of funds to contractors.

EPOSDC AND OTHER AGENCIES

There is no evidence that any collaborative relationship exists between the Company and the myriad agencies that operate in the area of East Port of Spain.

DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

Your Committee has noted the success with several projects in the Beetham Community. However, your Committee is of the opinion that many of these could have been completed by other agencies that are also assigned to work within the East Port of Spain area. Your Committee is not convinced that the impact of the East Port of Spain Company to date has been sufficiently significant.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Consequent on the public hearing and the observations made by your Committee the following recommendations are being made with respect to the future operations of the East Port-of-Spain Development Company:

MANDATE

The Company's mandate should be clarified and revised, if necessary. This is critical to the progress of the Company and should be undertaken before mid-2012.

Your Committee is of the view that a clarification of the mandate beginning with alignment to the most appropriate Ministry, a clarification of the roles and identification priorities on an annual basis in the context of a strategic plan would help considerably, especially if funding were aligned to the specific results to be achieved from the priorities identified.

STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Before the Company can embark full scale on implementing its development plan, the plan must first be approved by Cabinet. It is therefore recommended that the line Ministry immediately put the mechanisms in place that will facilitate consideration and approval of the Strategic Development Plan.

A review of the Strategic Development Plan, with particular attention to design and implementation, with respect to achieving the objectives as well as, revisiting the constraints to the implementation of the Plan are recommended.

FUNDING

The source of funding for the projects of the EPOSDC must be aligned to the Company's mandate. The clarification of the mandate of the Company would point the direction to be taken in this regard.

A more effective system must be instituted to facilitate more timely payments for contracted services. This would require greater coordination with the Ministry of Finance which can be supported by the line ministry of Local Government.

DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

Projects should be conducted in a wider range of communities.

EPOSDC AND OTHER AGENCIES

Collaboration and coordination with other agencies is an integral part of the successful implementation of the Company's objectives. This requires agreement on which agencies would conduct which tasks. It is recommended that a meeting be held with representatives of each of the agencies mandated to carry out works in East Port of Spain and a decision be made with respect to which agencies will conduct which development projects since they are all mandated to do so.

It is also recommended that the relationship between the Ministry of Local Government and the EPOSDC be enhanced through a formal system of monthly meetings and reports. The Minister must be kept apprised of the challenges faced by the Company in order to make the necessary interventions with other agencies to ensure the progress of the plans of the Company.

Your Committee respectfully submits this Report for the consideration of the Parliament.

Sgd.
Dr. James Armstrong
Chairman

Sgd.
Dr. Victor Wheeler
Vice Chairman

Sgd.
Dr. Bhoendradatt Tewarie
Member

Sgd.
Dr. Tim Gopeesingh, MP
Member

Sgd.
Mr. Clifton De Coteau, MP
Member

Sgd.
Mr. Collin Partap, MP
Member

Sgd.
Mr. Kevin Ramnarine
Member

Sgd.
Dr. Lincoln Douglas, MP
Member

Sgd.
Mrs. Lyndira Oudit
Member

Sgd.
Ms. Alicia Hospedales, MP
Member

Sgd.
Mr. Fitzgerald Jeffrey, MP
Member

Sgd.
Dr. Lester Henry
Member

June 8, 2012

APPENDIX I

BUSINESS ENTITIES

List of Ministries, Statutory Authorities and State Enterprises that fall under the purview of this Committee:

1. Local Government

- Trinidad and Tobago Solid Waste Management Company Limited
- Community-based Environmental Protection and Enhancement Programme
- Palo Seco Agricultural Enterprises Limited
- Community Improvement Services Limited
- Rural Development Company of Trinidad and Tobago
- East Port of Spain Development Company Limited

2. National Security

- Counter Drug-Crime Task Force
- National Drug Council
- National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA)

3. Office of the Prime Minister

- Board of Film Censors
- Sport and Culture Board of Management
- Caribbean New Media Group Limited (CNMG)
- Government Information Services Limited (GISL)
- National Broadcasting Network (NBN)

4. People and Social Development

- Trinidad and Tobago Association in Aid of the Deaf
- Trinidad and Tobago Blind Welfare Association
- Social Welfare District Boards
- Civic Council on Social Equity
- National Social Development Council

5. Planning and the Economy

- Advisory Town Planning Panel
- National Population Council
- Urban Development Corporation of Trinidad and Tobago Limited (UdeCOTT)

6. Public Administration

- Telecommunications Authority of Trinidad and Tobago (TATT)
- Government Human Resources Services Limited (GHRS)
- Salaries Review Commission
- National Information, Communication, Technology Company Limited (iGovTT)

7. Public Utilities

- Telecommunications Services of Trinidad and Tobago Limited (TSTT)
- Regulated Industries Commission
- Water and Sewerage Authority (WASA)
 - Water Resource Agency
- Water Resources Management Unit
- The Trinidad and Tobago Electricity Commission (TTEC)
- The Trinidad and Tobago Postal Corporation (TTPOST)

8. Science, Technology and Tertiary Education

- Board of Industrial Training
- National Energy Skills Centre
- National Training Agency
- Trinidad and Tobago Hospitality and Tourism Institute
- University of the West Indies
 - School of Continuing Studies
- University of Trinidad and Tobago:
 - Caribbean Industrial Research Institute (CARIRI)
 - Eastern Caribbean Institute of Agriculture and Forestry (ECIAF)
 - Institute of Marine Affairs (IMA)
 - John S. Donaldson Technical Institute
 - San Fernando Technical Institute
 - National Institute of Higher Education (Research, Science and Technology)
 - Teachers Training Colleges
- College of Science, Technology and Applied Arts (COSTAATT)
 - Joint Services Staff College
 - College of Health Sciences
 - College of Nursing
 - School of Languages
 - Business Management and Information Technology Division
 - General Education Division
- Metal Industries Company Limited (MIC)
 - Government Vocational Centre
- Youth Training and Employment Partnership Programme Limited (YTEPP)

9. Sport

- Sport Company of Trinidad and Tobago Limited
- National Sports Council
- National Stadia Board of Management
- Regional Complexes
- Trinidad and Tobago Boxing Board of Control

10. Tobago Development

- Tobago Regional Health Authority
- Tobago Projects Development and Authority Limited

11. Tourism

- Zoological Society of Trinidad and Tobago
- Tourism Development Company Limited

11. Trade and Industry

- Betting Levy Board
- Small Business Development Company Limited
- Trinidad and Tobago Bureau of Standards
- Trinidad and Tobago Racing Authority
- Caribbean International Airlines (Holding) Limited
- Evolving TecKnologies and Enterprise Development Company Limited (e-TecK)
- Export-Import Bank of Trinidad and Tobago Limited
- Rum Distillers Limited
- Sugar Manufacturers Company Limited
- Trinidad and Tobago Free Zones Company Limited
- Point Lisas Industrial Port Development Corporation Limited (PLIPDECO)
- Seafood Industry Company Limited
- Trinidad and Tobago Entertainment Company Limited
- Trinidad and Tobago Export Trading Company Limited
- Trinidad and Tobago Film Company
- National Flour Mills
- PLIPWIJIS Limited
- Property and Industrial Port Development Company of Trinidad and Tobago

12. Transport

- Airports Authority of Trinidad and Tobago
- Air Transport Licensing Authority
- LIAT (1974) Limited
- Pilotage Authority
- Port Authority of Trinidad and Tobago
- Public Transport Service Corporation
- Transport Board
- Trinidad and Tobago Civil Aviation Authority
- Maritime and Fisheries Institute of Trinidad and Tobago
- Caribbean Airlines Limited
- The Vehicle Maintenance Corporation of Trinidad and Tobago Limited
- National Helicopter Company Limited

13. Works and Infrastructure

- National Maintenance Training and Security Company Limited (MTS)
- National Infrastructure Development Company Limited (NIDCO)

14. Gender, Youth and Child Development

- Adoption Board
- Children's Authority

APPENDIX II

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

**MINUTES OF TENTH MEETING OF THE JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE OF PARLIAMENT
APPOINTED TO INQUIRE INTO AND REPORT ON GOVERNMENT MINISTRIES
(GROUP 2), STATUTORY AUTHORITIES AND STATE ENTERPRISES FALLING UNDER
THOSE MINISTRIES, HELD IN TOWER D
ON FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 2011**

PRESENT

| | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Dr. James Armstrong | Chairman |
| Dr. Victor Wheeler | Vice-Chairman |
| Mr. Clifton De Coteau, MP | Member |
| Mrs. Lyndira Oudit | Member |
| Mr. Fitzgerald Jeffrey, MP | Member |
| Ms. Alicia Hospedales, MP | Member |
| Dr. Lincoln Douglas, MP | Member |
| Dr. Bhoendradatt Tewarie | Member |
| Dr. Lester Henry | Member |
| Mrs. Nataki Atiba-Dilchan | Secretary |
| Ms. Candice Skerrette | Assistant Secretary |
| Ms. Candice Williams | Graduate Research Assistant |

ABSENT

| | |
|------------------------|------------------|
| Dr. Tim Gopeesingh, MP | Member (Excused) |
| Mr. Collin Partap, MP | Member |
| Mr. Kevin Ramnarine | Member |

**REPRESENTATIVES OF THE EAST PORT OF SPAIN DEVELOPMENT
COMPANY LIMITED**

| | |
|---------------------------|-------------------|
| Mr. Steve Kistow | Chairman |
| Dr. Deborah Thomas-Austin | Managing Director |

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Chairman called the meeting to order at 9:58 a.m. and welcomed all Members, in particular Dr. Bhoedradatt Tewarie as a new Member of the Committee. Members were informed that Dr. Tim Gopeesingh had asked to be excused from the meeting.

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

2.1 The following corrections were made to the Minutes:

| | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Page 3 Paragraph 8.2 (a); Line 7 | Delete the word "first" |
| Page 5 Paragraph 8.2 (i) | Remove the heading "Public Submissions" from page 5 and insert the heading "Public Submissions" as the first item on page 6 |

2.2 The motion for the confirmation of the Minutes, as amended, was moved by Ms. Alicia Hospedales and seconded by Dr. Victor Wheeler.

2.3 The Minutes, as amended, were thereby confirmed.

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

3.1 Members were informed that the First and Second Reports of the Committee on Palo Seco Agricultural Enterprises Limited and the National Information Communication Technology Company Limited were laid in the Senate on October 20, 2011 and in the House of Representatives on November 9, 2011.

3.2 The Chairman indicated that the drafts of the Third, Fourth and Fifth reports would be forwarded soon for the consideration of Members.

OTHER BUSINESS

4.1 The Chairman drew Members attention to the revised work schedule and noted that the Sugar Manufacturing Company and Rum Distillers had been removed from the purview of the Committee.

4.2 The Committee agreed that the next inquiry would be into the administration and operations of the Trinidad and Tobago Solid Waste Management Company (SWMCOL) on December 9, 2011. This would be followed by the National Drug Council on January 13, 2012.

PRE-HEARING DISCUSSIONS

5.1 Members discussed some of the areas that were of concern to them and agreed to the approach to be taken during the hearing.

(The meeting was suspended at 10:18 a.m. and resumed in the J Hamilton Maurice Room at 10:24 a.m.)

HEARING WITH THE OFFICIALS OF EAST PORT OF SPAIN DEVELOPMENT COMPANY LIMITED (EPOSDC)

6.1 The Chairman welcomed officials and introductions on both sides were made.

6.2 The following matters were discussed with the representatives of the East Port of Spain Development Company Limited:

(a) Overview of Company

Members were informed that the Company was incorporated in September 2005 with the mandate to develop and re-develop a zone defined as East Port of Spain in order to improve economic, social and physical conditions in that area. The defined area includes Charlotte Street in the West, East of Morvant Junction, the communities of North and East of the Lady Young Road such as Second Caledonia, Mon Repos, Never Dirty, Beetham Gardens and Sea Lots.

In April 2006, a Board was appointed and the line Ministry was the Ministry of Planning. A shift was made to the Ministry of Local Government in December 2007.

The present Board of Directors was appointed in March 2011. There is a staff complement of eighteen (18) which has reached a maximum of twenty one (21) but never the full complement of thirty-four (34) persons.

Officials conveyed that there is a “disconnect” between the mandate of the company and how it is allowed to function, as the Company has the responsibility without the requisite authority to achieve its mandate.

(b) Strategic Development Plan

The Committee was informed that the present Strategic Development Plan was prepared in consultation with residents of East Port of Spain and other stakeholders from January to July 2008 in accordance with the procedures set out in Town and Country Planning Act, Chapter 35:04.

Upon completion in 2009, a copy was sent to the line Ministry and later presented to Cabinet in March 2010. Consequent on the change of administration, efforts have been made to meet with the line minister and Cabinet to have another presentation. The Committee requested a copy of the documentation related to these requests.

Clarification was sought as to whether the plan was based on the 2000 Spatial Plan or Vision 2020. It was explained that the plan prepared by the company was based on data gathered from CSO and community consultations.

The point was also made that there was a distinction between the existing conditions and the policies that were recommended to address them. Therefore, a variety of strategies for mixed development would be needed.

The Officials indicated that projects in the plan can be easily aligned with the Medium Term Policy Framework 2011-2014. The continuing challenge for the Company in implementation was the lack of mechanisms for collaboration with other agencies and the recognition of the role and jurisdiction of the Company.

(c) Demographics

The Committee expressed its concern with the data presented in the “Situational Assessment” Report which reflected unemployment level in East Port of Spain as high as thirty-three percent (33%) and only thirty five percent (35%) enrollment levels into secondary schools. This data was obtained from the 2000 Population and Housing Census.

(d) Funding

The Committee was informed that the Company was funded via the Infrastructure Development Fund (IDF). The budgetary allocation for development projects was \$20.9 million in its first year of operations, averaged \$25-30 million in other years and \$35 million for the current year. Officials expressed the view, however, that the level of funding for development projects was insufficient to adequately impact the nineteen (19) communities of East Port of Spain. The grant for recurrent expenditure amounted to \$5M although \$15M was requested.

Because of the source of its funding, the Company found itself constrained with regard to the type of projects it could undertake to fulfill its mandate to improve the “*economic and social*” conditions in East Port of Spain. The Company has been advised to seek the assistance of other agencies in implementing certain projects.

It was also explained that the funds released to the Company was done so by the Ministry of Finance only after contractor claims were submitted.

(e) Development Projects

The Officials identified the following as some of the projects executed which were in response to community needs as expressed by the citizen advisory committees and working groups in the area:

- “SportsPLUS (play, learn and unite through sport)
- Phase 4 Beetham Basketball Court
- Improvement Works to the Laventille Road
- Never Dirty Multi-Purpose Recreational Facilities

Members commented that many of these projects could also have been done by other agencies.

The Committee was also informed of the Beetham Strategic Partnership Initiative and the Beetham Urban Village 2020 Development Plan which were prepared in September 2006. The use of an army corps of engineers to provide security for contractors was part of this initiative but did not work out as planned.

The concept of Safe-by-Design was another initiative to reduce opportunities for crime. This would result in safer communities through the way they were laid out and designed.

(f) Increased Recurrent Expenditure

Questions were asked as to the reason for the increase in Directors’ Fees and Advertising between 2006 and present. It was explained that the number of directors increased from five (5) to seven (7) persons. The expenditure under Advertising and Public Relations was related to public consultation activities that required the preparation and circulation of documents and brochures.

(g) Foreign consultation

It was noted that foreign consultants, Dover Kohl and Partners of the US were contracted to assist in providing design solutions for comprehensive development areas.

It was explained that more detailed planning work was required for the six (6) development areas identified. Both local and foreign consultants responded and Dover Kohl was adjudged as having the best technical proposal and a methodology of resident participation in the process.

(h) Priorities

The Managing Director identified the following as four priorities to be pursued:

- agreement on a development strategy

- creation of an appropriate development authority
- obtaining buy in and commitment from communities
- creation of a safe environment for development to occur

Adjournment

7.1 The Chairman thanked the representatives of the East Port of Spain Development Company Limited for attending the hearing and for the information provided.

7.2 The meeting was adjourned at 12:46 p.m.

I certify that these Minutes are true and correct.

Sgd.
Chairman

Sgd.
Secretary

November 14, 2011

APPENDIX III

NOTES OF EVIDENCE

VERBATIM NOTES OF MEETING OF THE JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE OF PARLIAMENT APPOINTED TO REPORT ON MINISTRIES, STATUTORY AUTHORITIES AND STATE ENTERPRISES (GROUP 2) HELD IN THE CONFERENCE ROOM, LEVEL 2 AND THE J. HAMILTON MAURICE ROOM, MEZ FLOOR, TOWER D, THE PORT OF SPAIN INTERNATIONAL WATERFRONT CENTRE, 1A WRIGHTSON ROAD, PORT OF SPAIN, ON FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 2011 AT 10.00 A.M.

PRESENT

| | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| Dr. James Armstrong | Chairman |
| Dr. Victor Wheeler | Vice-Chairman |
| Mr. Clifton De Coteau | Member |
| Miss Alicia Hospedales | Member |
| Dr. Bhoendradatt Tewarie | Member |
| Mrs. Lyndira Oudit | Member |
| Dr. Lincoln Douglas | Member |
| Mr. Fitzgerald Jeffrey | Member |
| Dr. Lester Henry | Member |
| Mrs. Nataki Atiba-Dilchan | Secretary |
| Miss Candice Skerrette | Asst. Secretary |
| Miss Candice Williams | Graduate Research Asst. |

ABSENT

| | |
|---------------------|---------------------------|
| Dr. Tim Gopeesingh | Member [<i>Excused</i>] |
| Mr. Collin Partap | Member |
| Mr. Kevin Ramnarine | Member |

Mr. Chairman: Good morning colleagues, I would like to call the meeting to order. I would like to welcome you back, we were on quite a long break and this is our first meeting for quite some time, so welcome. I would also like to say a special welcome to Dr. Bhoendradatt Tewarie, who is our newest Member—well, our new Member of the committee, so welcome. [*Desk thumping*]

What I would like us to do is to go through the Minutes for any amendments. I should mention that we have had requests from two persons to be excused; Dr. Gopeesingh and Dr.

Lester Henry, so we would like to note that.

Could we now go to the Minutes and go through for any amendments? This would be the Minutes of July 08, 2011 meeting.

Page 1; page 2; page 3. On page 3, under 6.1, 6.2; my recollection is that we had agreed to also send the queries that we got to the appropriate—we did not?

Mrs. Atiba-Dilchan: I got the in-house legal advice and I did send the emails saying what it was, so we—

Mr. Chairman: I noted that we got the legal advice, but did we not also agree to send it to appropriate—

Mrs. Atiba-Dilchan: It was to write back Mr. Clarke and tell him that if he had information that he thought was suitable, he should forward it.

Mr. Chairman: Okay. All right, thanks. So, page 3; page 4; page 5? Just this heading—the first two—if you would just put it at the top of the other page. I am just suggesting that item on page 5, since it refers to the paragraph on the following page that we just move it over.

Page 6; page 7? All right, so could we have confirmation?

[Confirmed by Miss Hospedales]

Mrs. Oudit: Mr. Chairman, before you proceed, I was trying to go back to the verbatim to clarify one thing. On page 3, in terms of corrections, the overview—it was emphasized that the ODPM itself was not the first—

Mr. Chairman: Sorry, where are you reading from on page 3?

Mrs. Oudit: The last line. It was emphasized that the ODPM was not the first responder—I am seeing it here on page 22 of the verbatim where Dr. Ramroop had actually said, “because we are not a responder; first, second or third”. There was no question of first, second or third. He simply said, “we are not a responder”. So, I think we need to clarify because there are first response and second response agencies, and he had clearly said the ODPM was not a responder, they are a coordinator, but they are not a responder.

Mr. Chairman: So, you are suggesting that we delete “first”. Okay?

Miss Hospedales: On page 7 there was a—actually, I was asking or making a statement that, where it says Miss Hospedales—

Mr. Chairman: Page 7?

Miss Hospedales: Yes, on the verbatim.

Mr. Chairman: Okay.

Miss Hospedales: Sorry, Sir. So, on page 7 I was asking, not really stating that the organization’s mandate should be—that is hearsay right—that their mandate should be reviewed “within the context”, and it just has “with the context”. Within the context of what they are

actually doing now.

Mr. Chairman: How do you deal with that? This is not—

Mrs. Atiba-Dilchan: That is just a *Hansard*—

Mr. Chairman: Okay, so you can communicate that to the *Hansard* people. All right, anything else with respect to the Minutes.

Mrs. Atiba-Dilchan: We had someone confirm the Minutes, but we do not have a seconder.

[Secinded by Dr. Wheeler]

Mr. Chairman: So we now have “Matters Arising”. One of the things I would like to mention is that you may be aware that we actually tabled our first two reports [*Deskthumping*] iGovTT and PSAEL on October 20. I should also mention that we have three others in draft form that, hopefully, you would be getting during the next week once I am able to go through it and we circulate those and, hopefully, have those tabled as soon as possible as well.

Prehearing discussions: we have today also noted that we no longer have under our jurisdiction the Sugar Manufacturing Company Limited (SMCL) and Rum Distillers, but we do have a new one with us, that was just those two removed.

Mrs. Oudit: I think for the record it has to be noted based on 6.2, that was one of the actions to be done, it was agreed that in-house legal advice will be sought on how to proceed, so that if that was done, I think for the Minutes it should be noted that legal advice was given and the response sent to Mr. Clarke.

Mr. Chairman: You know whether Mr. Clarke—

Mrs. Atiba-Dilchan: We did not get any response from him after that.

Mr. Chairman: Okay, fine. All right. Anything under “Matters Arising”? Okay. Prehearing discussions: we have today—anything else here? We will deal with these after. I thought we were going to deal with these first and then go to this.

Mrs. Oudit: You have to change it.

Mr. Chairman: Okay, I prefer that. Before we get on to prehearing discussions so that we do not have to come back here, I think we should just dispense with a few matters. Okay, we mentioned the three reports that we have pending. I just wanted to quickly consultate the next enquiry hearing. We have on our list the National Drug Council and we also had SWMCOL and Water Resources Management in that order, I think we need to decide which we are going to deal with. The National Drug Council—

Mrs. Atiba-Dilchan: We circulate enquiry proposals for both.

Mr. Chairman: All right, you have enquiry proposals for both, so can we agree that we would go ahead with the National Drug Council or Solid Waste?

Mrs. Oudit: Solid Waste as I thought and then National Drug Council.

Mr. Chairman: You think we should put Solid Waste, SWMCOL next?

Mrs. Oudit: Yes.

Mr. Chairman: Okay, so that is agreed, we would ask the secretary to proceed accordingly. Do we also agree that we would follow the—

Dr. Douglas: Mr. Chairman, sorry I was—East Port of Spain?

Mr. Chairman: That is today. From here—we are just trying to finish up a few—and then from here we are moving to East Port of Spain in another location. I just wanted us to agree on the order that we would proceed. This is a list that was prepared quite some time ago, so are we still going to follow the order that we have here? We just agreed that it would be Solid Waste Company next and then we have the National Drug Council, so that would be on December 9th, for Solid Waste and after that we would go to National Drug Council.

Miss Hospedales: Mr. Chairman, I would like the opportunity for them to come because—

Mr. Chairman: For who to come?

Miss Hospedales: The National Drug Council—linked to the homeless strategies there are issues, drug prevention, et cetera.

Mr. Chairman: Okay, so you agree that we would do that next after Solid Waste. Do we have a date on that as yet or do you—

Mrs. Atiba-Dilchan: January 13, 2012.

Mr. Chairman: Okay, January 13, 2012, so that is taken care of. Anything else that we need to deal with? Okay, let us go back to the prehearing discussions for East Port of Spain. We are running a little late, but I circulated some questions from reading the reports. I do not think we got any additional—I was also went over the reports again and came up with five additional—

Mr. De Coteau: Twenty five questions.

Mr. Chairman: So, I now have 25. I do not know whether anyone else—I understand that there was no other—

Mrs. Oudit: I have one.

Mr. Chairman:—actually submitted.

Mrs. Oudit: I was not here and by the time I came in and sorted out it was just a question of—

Mr. Chairman: Okay, so how shall we proceed today?

Mrs. Oudit: Well, you could lead off.

Mr. Chairman: I could lead off and then you have a question that you would like to raise, so then we can perhaps go to you.

Mrs. Oudit: Yes.

Mr. Chairman: I trust that you have looked at the questions, but clearly I cannot ask all the questions, so quite apart from the questions that you might have, or if you do not have any,

perhaps you can go through the list and see whether—

Dr. Douglas: Spread them around.

Mr. Chairman: Yes, spread them around so that we cover—

Dr. Douglas: They were good questions, but fairly comprehensive as such.

Mr. De Coteau: I just wanted to tie in, I am trying to see which one, whether it was question two or whether which one of your questions—I wanted to look at the new thrust in the light of the state of emergency—

Mr. Chairman: You wanted to look at which?

Mr. De Coteau: I want to tie it in with one of the questions you have as to the objectives of the company and the initiative. I wanted to see—

Mr. Chairman: Which question would that be? You want to tie it in with which?

Mr. De Coteau: I want to tie it in with the present state of the—whether the objective of the company that is going to undertake, whether it would help to change our perception of the area?

Mr. Chairman: Okay, so that is a new question?

Mr. De Coteau: No, I would tie it in somewhere with you.

Mr. Chairman: Okay, fine.

Mr. De Coteau: If you would permit me the copyright.

Dr. Tewarie: I just want to ask since I am new here—these questions here do you have the opportunity to ask questions—

Mr. Chairman: Yes, any question you can raise.

Dr. Tewarie: Because I am concerned about one thing, because of when this report was written I want to know if the people in the East Port of Spain Company are aware of, first of all, the medium-term framework, the Government's strategy towards East Port of Spain, the number of initiatives that are involved. For instance, there is one with the IDB for a sustainable city. There is the expert panel which is supposed to make a cultural intervention where specific thrust for the creative industries and then there is the East Port of Spain plan itself, and then there is the issue of the whole business of consultations to, basically redevelop the centre city, Port of Spain together with East Port of Spain and issues related to the movement of the port and stuff like that which would affect, of course, data.

Mr. Chairman: That is right.

Dr. Tewarie: So, it is all of those things. If we could have a kind of integrated sense from them of what they know, what they do not know and how we can, going forward, try to integrate a lot of these things so that we can have the greatest possibility of success, but more, also, enough information so that people in the community understand what is involved and we can involve them in the process.

10.15 a.m.

Mr. Chairman: Okay, so after Sen. Oudit, then we will go to you and then we will follow on. Is there anybody else that would want to go—*[Interruption]*

Dr. Douglas: Is Sea Lots part of the East Port of Spain project.

Dr. Tewarie: Yes.

Mr. Chairman: Actually I have been looking at that plan and the line does not seem to include Sea Lots. It does not. But we can clarify that because I was looking at the map and the line actually runs along the highway, but it does not seem to go South, but we can clarify that.

Miss Hospedales: It does. They have a relocation plan.

Mr. Chairman: Okay fine. Maybe I am looking at an old map.

Miss Hospedales: The port is projected to be developed and the airplane project.

Mr. Chairman: Can we adjourn and go to the enquiry? So let us go down.

10.16 a.m.: *Suspended*

10.20 a.m.: *Resumed*

Entity's Attendance

Mr. Steve Kistow

Chairman

Dr. Deborah Thomas-Austin

Managing Director

Mr. Chairman: I would like to call this meeting to order. First let me apologize for the slight delay in starting, but we were involved in some pre-enquiry discussions which took a little time. As you are aware this is Committee two, which is a joint select committee on Ministries, Statutory Authorities and State Enterprises, which are required to submit annual reports to the Parliament, and some of these enterprises are actually selected for enquiry into the administrative management matters and so on, and on this occasion we are dealing with the East Port of Spain Company. I would like to welcome the Company here this morning, and to start with introductions, we would ask the Company to introduce themselves and then we would introduce the Members of the committee. Could you put on your mike because it is operated individually and anyone speaking would be required to press—could you introduce yourselves, please?

[Introduction of Members]

Mr. Chairman: So could we start by asking the company to give us a brief overview of what this company is about, so that we could have some idea of your operations and your structure and so on.

Dr. Thomas-Austin: The East Port of Spain Development Company was established or incorporated in September 2005. The budget speech of 2005, the Prime Minister at the time indicated the need for the area of East Port of Spain to be considered a special development zone and as such, announced the establishment of this company with a particular mandate and the

mandate was agreed by Cabinet to develop and re-develop a zone defined as East Port of Spain in order to improve economic, social and physical conditions in that area.

The area defined as East Port of Spain in the Cabinet Minute extended from Charlotte Street in the West, to just a little East of Morvant Junction, including communities North and East of the Lady Young Road like: Second Caledonia; Mon Repos; Never Dirty including the Beetham Highway and the communities of Beetham Gardens and Sea Lots. So that is the area under the jurisdiction of the company. I think a number of things went into defining East Port of Spain as a special development zone, because preceding that announcement, the vision 2020 planning exercise had been completed and one of the committees of that vision 2020 exercise had recommended the need to treat Laventille in a particular way because of the issues and challenges in the area.

So the company as I said was incorporated in September 2005, a board was appointed by the end of January 2006, and the company became operational in April 2006. And so we have been in existence from that time starting literally from scratch with just a Cabinet decision and a mandate, so we spent some time trying to figure out what our mandate meant, what we were being asked to do, and to get to understand the East Port of Spain area. We felt that that needed to precede any plans or any work that we came up with. So we spent some time investigating the area and we decided to do a development plan for East Port of Spain. We felt that the challenge to redevelop this area required some kind of strategic framework, some development strategy that would help to guide the identification of the development projects and any future work in East Port of Spain.

So the plan which we submitted copies of to the committee, the plan was prepared over a period of time in consultation with the residents of East Port of Spain and other stakeholders in the community. So we held a series of consultations in each of the 19 communities that were identified in East Port of Spain to get feedback and input for the plan, and over time the plan was finalized. A draft was submitted to the Minister responsible for Planning and our line Minister in 2009. When the company was formed it was under the Ministry of Planning. In December 2007, the company was transferred to the Ministry of Local Government. When we completed the plan, the plan was submitted to our line Minister, the Minister of Local Government, but there had been discussions overtime that the plan needed to be taken to Cabinet by the Minister with responsibility for Town and Country Planning because it was a development plan. And so it was submitted to our line Minister to be transmitted to the Minister responsible for Planning for submission to Cabinet. And of course the company, we made ourselves available for making a presentation of the plan to Cabinet. So after submitting in March of 2009, we were asked in March 2010, to do a presentation to Cabinet, which was done. The plan has not been formally

approved by Cabinet. We have asked that it be approved by Cabinet. We also wanted to follow the procedure set down at the Town and Country Planning Act Chap. 35:01 for the approval of the development plans which means that ultimately, it should be approved by the Parliament and become a binding document and a framework for guiding development in the East Port of Spain area.

So that is where we were with the plan, and since then during the time that we have operated we also identify a number of development projects coming out of our own analysis of the area but also coming out of our interaction with residents of East Port of Spain and in the communities. They have identified several physical and social development projects that they would like to see implemented in their communities and we have undertaken several of those during the years since we have been in operation. In terms of organizational structure we have an organization chart that if fully implemented we will have a staff of about 34 persons. Right now our staff is about 18 and we have fluctuated. I do not think that we have ever gone above 21 persons on the establishment at any time. So we are still operating under our organization structure, and in addition to doing the plan and carrying out development projects we've also been trying to build an organization. So a number of policy and procedures needs to be put in place in making sure we have HR policies and procurement policies to guide our work, so those things have been going on simultaneously. We receive our funding from the Infrastructure Development Fund. We have been receiving a recurrent grant from Government to meet our operating expenses because at this time the value of projects that are approved for the company to carry out would not sustain the operating expenses of the company.

Mr. Chairman: Okay, thanks a lot. Dr. Thomas-Austin, before we proceed any further, you give us an overview of geographical area on how you are structured and so on. I must commend the company for the submissions which were quite thorough, quite attractive and very informative. Before we proceed there is something I wanted to clarify with you that sort of jumped out of me that—which would really elaborate on your situation analysis document which is—I think it is part two of your submissions. It is indicated in that document that you have an unemployment situation in some communities as high as 33 per cent and average of 11 point something per cent. But in some communities like: Marie Road, Romain Lands, 33 per cent; Mon Repos 20 per cent. I was wondering, is that—when would that situation have occurred. Is this correct and is it still the prevailing situation?

10.35 a.m.

Dr. Thomas-Austin: The data was correct at the time that we used it. Because we were presenting an official planned document that we sought to have approved by Cabinet and ultimately by Parliament, we relied very heavily on the published official statistics. So we would

have used data coming out of CSO, and the most recent data from CSO would have been the 2000 census. There is some more data that comes out on an annual basis, but it tends not to be disaggregated to the community level; it is at a national level. So that would not tell us how the situation has changed in individual communities. Even where CSO has done surveys annually since the census, it has been on a sample survey basis, and for some of the data we needed they did not have sample points in East Port of Spain, so for unemployment data, we had to rely on what was available in the 2000 census.

Mr. Chairman: So this is CSO—

Dr. Thomas-Austin: This is from CSO's data, the 2000 census, by community.

Mr. Chairman: All right. The other thing that jumped at me has to do really with education, and I believe it is indicated that only 35 per cent of persons entering elementary school, complete, and the same figure at secondary school level?

Dr. Thomas-Austin: Um-hm.

Mr. Chairman: Is that also something that is correct?

Dr. Thomas-Austin: Again, the data would have been from the 2000 census and that is what we would have used.

Mr. Chairman: All right. So you have not done any, sort of, primary data collection or up to date—

Dr. Thomas-Austin: We have not done any up-to-date; no. The surveys that we would have undertaken ourselves would have been land and building use surveys; we would have looked at the number of schools, but in terms of enrolment and completion of educational criteria, that is coming strictly from the census.

Mr. Chairman: Okay, because you would appreciate that this is startling, sort of, statistical information.

Dr. Thomas-Austin: Yes.

Mr. Chairman: I mean, I could not imagine that there are communities with these kinds of—you know.

Dr. Thomas-Austin: Yes.

Mr. Chairman: Okay. Sen. Oudit?

Sen. Oudit: Good morning, members of the company of the board. [*Interruption*] The system is now getting itself sorted out.

My first question has to do with, going back to what you said, you said you were established in 2005; you became operational in 2006; you submitted your plans in 2009 and you were asked to prepare a presentation, March 2010 to Cabinet. I am looking at your submission for the developmental plan, on page 4 you make reference to the National Spatial Strategy for

Trinidad and Tobago, 2007, but on page 5, the document refers to the National Spatial Strategy, 2000. You also, in response to the question from the Chairman just a while ago, indicated that there is no new data that you have concerning your enrolment, et cetera, and the needs from an educational perspective. However, I noted on page 67 of that developmental plan, you have a schedule of consultations that took place in 2008, January to July, and in it you have several Ministries, but you also have Laventille Youth Facility, Success Laventille Composite School, Eastern Girls' Government School, St. Paul's School, and you have, well, I would imagine, many of the parents and the representatives from the schools themselves would have been at that consultation.

My first question is, what exactly was the plan used? Which plan was actually used in developing East Port of Spain as you see it? Because I see 2000 Spatial Plan; I see 2007 Spatial Plan and I see you make reference directly to this entire document, an entire plan consistent with Government's Vision 2020. Now, when you first started you said it was arising out of 2020. My question at this time, in addition to which plan you used is, do you know currently what the plan of this Administration for East Port of Spain is and how consistent is it with what you have had in the past?

Dr. Thomas-Austin: I am not quite sure which document you are referring to in terms of page 4 and so, but let me try to clarify. We speak to a National Spatial Strategy for Trinidad and Tobago that was developed by the Government, I think in 2007. It was a Spatial Strategy prepared at the request of the Cabinet and the significance of that is that it outlined the hierarchy of settlements or an overall settlement strategy for the country and the similarity between that and this plan is that the settlement strategy articulated in the 2007 document spoke to Port of Spain being the capital of Trinidad and Tobago. Beneath that you would have a series of other centres at different levels in a hierarchy, and the link with this plan is that we have followed that hierarchy, so within the city of Port of Spain or the metropolitan area of Port of Spain, we locate East Port of Spain as a metropolitan district and then the hierarchy of settlements coming down to urban neighbourhoods and so on. That is the relation between that settlement strategy and this document.

The plan for East Port of Spain was, in fact—this is the plan that the company prepared. The company prepared a plan based on our analysis and understanding of the needs in the area, which was determined by data that we would have gathered from CSO, our consultations with the communities, et cetera, we produced this plan. The development strategies in the plan relate back to the needs that we have identified and the problems that we realized that existed on the ground, so we came up with some development strategies that are in the plan.

Sen. Oudit: If I can interject here. You identified needs based on which consultations? Because I

only see your consultations in 2008 for six months.

Dr. Thomas-Austin: That was a consultation on the finished draft or the first draft of the plan, but in preparing the plan, which may not be listed in the list of consultations that you had there; in the preparation of the plan, we would have had meetings with several community groups, not at the same level of detail, because when we finished the first draft of the document we went community by community, holding a series of, I think, 22 meetings in 18 or 19 communities, and the reason they did not match up is because in some communities we had to split them and have two meetings. But prior to that, when we first started work, before we even started putting together a plan, we were meeting with groups like the East Port of Spain Council of Community Organizations; we were meeting in regions with groups within East Port of Spain, and they provided information that went into the making of this plan, and when we had a document between covers, then we went back to the communities to consult again on what was in the plan.

Sen. Oudit: Okay. Thank you very much. I would just like to ask you a follow-up to that, so I am going to use the document that you have as your developmental plan. On page 10, you have a planning framework. Your planning framework talks about the establishment of district centres to cater for your 93,000 residents. However, I would like to jump to page 18 which talks about housing and land use. There seems to me some inconsistency in what has been identified and what you would like to see in terms of the land use, and—bear with me—under 3.3 in your Housing, you have identified that the Vision 2020 document estimates that 30,000 new housing units should be built and your plan proposes that at least 10,000 of those should be located within the metropolitan district. You went on to indicate that traditional single family housing on individual plots do not optimize the use of scarce and urban valuable land, which I agree. And, therefore, in the next paragraph you have identified that “new or replacement housing should provide innovative solutions to your current challenges.” Right! But on page 10, you have identified that East Port of Spain and your district centres must be nodes for levels of administrative and municipal services. I cannot see—how do you balance the creation of administrative and municipal services with trying to establish housing within the core districts? One more thing, because you have identified, as well, that there are compound and extreme deficiencies on page 11 regarding facilities and space and size and environmental conditions. So is it that you are asking for complex housing to go hand in hand, additional, and revised and new, but at the same time maintaining strong administrative and municipal centres? I am just trying to figure out where—the land. Are we going how high up?

Dr. Thomas-Austin: You are asking a number of things and I like to confess to people early up that I am a town planner by profession, and so, the perspective is reflected in what we have put forward here. What we need to distinguish between is our analysis of the existing conditions and

the policies and proposals that we put forward to address them. So our analysis of what exists in East Port of Spain, based on the CSO data, based on our own land use surveys, our discussions with people, would have reflected a number of problems and challenges that are identified in this document, and that is where we identified the compound deficiencies that you referred to, that there is a lack of social and community infrastructure; that there is poor housing quality. A number of challenges in the East Port of Spain area were identified from our survey.

We did our analysis. We also looked at a model for sustainable communities. We said in an ideal world what should a sustainable community contain; what should it look like. And communities should address not just the need for housing; they should also provide for social and community facilities, depending on the level of the community in the settlement hierarchy of the country. They should provide other services like administrative and financial services, because all of those things come together to create a sustainable community.

So looking at the model and what exists, we then came up with proposals for how do we fill the gap between what exists and what the model dictates a sustainable community should be, and that is where we put forward proposals for how many housing units we would need, based on the projected population increase; how much would we need to replace, given the condition of existing housing, some of which may be quite poor; some of which may need to be demolished; how many units would we need to create to provide for, to accommodate the population that is expected to be in that area. And we are saying that traditional models of housing with everybody building on their individual 5,000 square feet of land may not be appropriate in some parts of East Port of Spain, because you may not have the land space, given topography, given other things that are there. So we may have to consider alternative forms of housing.

We have not gone to the level of detail in this plan to recommend whether it is six storeys high or 26 storeys high. That will come subsequently when we know which parcel of land that we are dealing with; where that specific parcel of land is located and what is happening around it. So right now it is at a strategic level in terms of the kind of development, but we are making the point that sustainable communities must have a variety of development, a mix of development; we must provide housing for people to live; we must provide the social and community facilities; we must provide opportunities for employment and job creation and for government and administrative services and facilities as well.

Sen. Oudit: I hear you and I think it is commendable. Also, you have identified here a little bit as a discrepancy in what you are saying just now—this is exactly what I was hoping to hear in the development, but I am also reading where you are saying here this document points to your plan of defensible space development should be the utilization of small plots, compact housing, innovative design but mixed densities. So I am not sure, I think there were some inconsistencies

that I saw—I do not know about some of the other Members—in some of the language that was used. I think your explanation is exceptional; I think what you have put forward is very good, but I am just suggesting that there are some inconsistent bits of language in your plan and it possibly needs some revision.

Dr. Thomas-Austin: We would look at it, but what you may be interpreting as an inconsistency is that in some places we are describing the form of housing where there are areas that are devoted exclusively to housing. But within any community you would have housing settlements and you would have other kinds of development, and it is mixed in the sense that not all the housing will be here and all the administrative here and all the shopping over there. It is mixed in the sense that you may have multiple uses in any given geographical space. So it may not be an inconsistency; it is just planning jargon, language and methodology.

10.50 a.m.

Mrs. Oudit: Thank you.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you. Dr. Tewarie.

Dr. Tewarie: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Good morning. I want to add to the compliments of the Chairman in saying that I found the document very helpful and fairly thorough and well-prepared. They were very useful in getting a sense of what you are about, what the community situation is, and what was some of the thinking going into strategically looking at the development of the community. So, I want to compliment you on that.

I want to begin by asking a few questions based on what you have said here. The first thing is, you have about 18 staff now, and with that 18 staff, let us say in the year 2011—I suspect now 2011/12—what from your point of view as the CEO is the staff meant to achieve in this year? Do you have a set of achievements that you have identified for yourself during the course of this year that you would like to deliver?

Dr. Thomas-Austin: We produced an annual development programme of projects that we would like to carry out and so there are physical development projects, the physical infrastructure projects that are part of the development programme funded under the IDF, but within the company as well, we set ourselves some targets so there may be some planning work that we decide that we would like to undertake in the financial year.

It may be the detailing of community plans coming out of this. We have an exercise that we are carrying on right now. In the development plan, you would notice that there are some areas identified as comprehensive development areas in the plan designated as comprehensive development areas in the plan. And we have an exercise ongoing to try to develop some more detailed urban design solutions and plans for those areas.

We would like, if resources permit, that we would do one or two community plans as

well. And there are a couple of other things that we have other projects that we are trying to get off the ground. So, there is a work plan that we identify for the staff in any given year.

Dr. Tewarie: But, what about the impact and people and communities themselves. I mean, it is one thing to study what the situation is, it is another thing to establish what you feel might be appropriate to do and to put it on paper on go ahead and do it. But what about the direct impact on the community itself? Is that part of your mandate?

Dr. Thomas-Austin: Absolutely. The work that we do, the fact that we have consulted with communities in the preparation of the plan and after the preparation of the plan, means that we are constantly dialoguing with the communities at East Port of Spain to find out what their needs are, and those are the needs that are reflected on our development programme.

Dr. Tewarie: And who meets their needs?

Dr. Thomas-Austin: Well, the company attempts to meet their needs through some of the projects that we implement. There are other agencies of government that are also attempting to meet their needs.

Dr. Tewarie: Okay, give me one example. This is not meant to be hostile questioning.

Dr. Thomas-Austin: No, no; absolutely not.

Dr. Tewarie: I want to understand, okay. Give one example of something that you did or are going to do that will directly impact in a human way on numbers of individuals who live in a community or a set of communities.

Dr. Thomas-Austin: Let us take one of the physical development projects that we would have done. The community of—I will use Beetham as an example, we started with what we call a community working group in Beetham Group identifying members of the Beetham community who would represent the views of their community and interact with the East Port of Spain Development Company. Through several discussions with that group, they identified a number of projects, things that they would like to see in the community for different reasons.

So, one of the projects that they identified was the need to refurbish what was a basketball court in the area of Phase IV, Beetham, and so, you know, we probably have some pictures of before and after, but that was a project the community requested. So our task was to identify this as project, develop the scope of works, get approval from Cabinet, get the funding allocated and implement it.

So that provides not only a facility, a recreation facility that the community wanted, but we would have engaged a contractor from around the community, we require the contractors to engage a certain percentage of unskilled labour from within the community so that there is some employment created, and the facility is delivered. So that is in the case of our physical development.

The Beetham community also identified other needs. For instance, they wanted a homework centre because Dr. Armstrong talked about some of their education statistics. One of the things that the community brought to our attention and it was backed up by some of the CSO data that we got, was that there were many young children getting through the SEA exam going into secondary school, and then they were falling out of school. And they wanted to find ways of keeping those children engaged in school and they talked about a need for an after school programme.

We started a homework centre which we were able to fund through our development funds for a while until we were advised that we could no longer do that, so we ran the homework centre for a period of time. So that is another need for the community. Where it is possible we advertise for tutors from within the community, sometimes they respond and so people get jobs in that way. You hire a caretaker; you rent a building from members of the community, so those are several of the ways in which we impact the lives of the community.

Dr. Tewarie: What is your budgetary allocation for year approximately?

Dr. Thomas-Austin: Our allocation for development projects has varied over the years since we started. In our first year, we were allocated \$20.9 million for development work. In subsequent years, it varied between \$25 million to \$30 million. I think this year the allocation on paper is \$35 million for development projects. We have, as I said also, received a grant for recurrent funding and—

Dr. Tewarie: The recurrent cost is about what?

Dr. Thomas-Austin: For this new financial year, we put in a budget of \$15 million; we have been awarded \$5 million.

Dr. Tewarie: So you say you have \$5 million for re-current and about \$35 million on paper.

Dr. Thomas-Austin: \$35 million for development projects.

Dr. Tewarie: Now, \$35 million is a fair amount of money for development projects. Now, it is not a lot of money but for a community which involves maybe eight or ten identifiable communities; it is possible to do something meaningful in that. But, I think that the key thing would be, from my point of view, given a situation as extracted by the Chairman from the statistical data, and given the statistics I myself have pulled out here, where you have high levels of poverty, you have single parent households; you have low levels of skills; fair significant numbers of dropouts and attendant problems related to that. It seems to me that with some creativity, we can design programmes that begin to impact directly on human lives. So that we sort of take them out and help them to step up from their condition.

I was very struck by the fact that you could identify the number of people who live there—I think you said about 90, 000; that you could identify the number of households, and

therefore, it is possible to say that, okay, if we are going to address this question to deal with 100 households in a certain period, in a certain way, it can actually be managed and done. Has that kind of thinking gone into the development strategy rather than simply a physical development strategy?

Dr. Thomas-Austin: Our strategy is by no means just a physical development strategy because we have interpreted and stuck to what we consider to be the critical parts of our mandate, and I like to quote it in the sequence in which it is given, which is to improve economic, social and physical conditions. So we recognize that this speaks to the need for an approach that is comprehensive and integrated in the kinds of projects and strategies that we identify.

However, we have a major constraint. Our funding for development projects comes from the Infrastructure Development Fund. The Ministry of Finance and our line Ministry have advised that the definition of infrastructure in the fund speaks to physical infrastructure. And therefore, we have been told, in no uncertain terms, that we should not or cannot use the funds allocated from the IDF for social and economic programmes which for us means that our funding limits us and prevents us from undertaking two-thirds of our mandate, so that that presents a challenge. So we were able to do some of it in our early years but we have since had to stop.

Dr. Tewarie: Am I to interpret from that that you feel that this is a mandate which basically says that you can build physical infrastructure but the condition of the people remains the same notwithstanding the new building?

Dr. Thomas-Austin: I think this is a mandate that recognizes that development is not single-focused, that development—if we are talking about sustainable development, that we must be talking about comprehensive and integrated development which means we must balance the pillars of economic, social, physical and environmental issues in order to achieve sustainable development. So that any physical development on its own will not achieve the transformation or regeneration of East Port of Spain which is what we understood our mandate to speak to.

Dr. Tewarie: Okay. Might I ask a couple more questions?

Mr. Chairman: One more.

Dr. Tewarie: I want to ask, taking off from what Sen. Lyndira Oudit asked: Are you aware that the Government of Trinidad and Tobago now has a medium-term framework called Innovation for Lasting Prosperity?

Dr. Thomas-Austin: Yes.

Dr. Tewarie: Am I to take it that you would take that into account as you align what you have in your strategic plan and related plans to that in some way? Are you aware of the IDB-funded project to make Port of Spain one of 10 sustainable cities in the hemisphere, and the implications

of that for you? Are you aware of the thinking by the expert panel that was established to address the issue of cultural development and generation of creative or its support for creative industries with part of it being focused on Port of Spain East? And would it be reasonable to say that taking these new things into consideration we might be able to make some adjustment to the plan before we take it both to Cabinet and eventually to Parliament or has that been done already?

Dr. Thomas-Austin: I think, without wanting to blow our own trumpet, the answer to many of your questions is yes. Yes, I am aware of several of the initiatives, not only am I aware, I have copies of the medium-term framework.

We have looked at the current Government's policies as articulated in whatever way they have been articulated, and we have tried to match that up against the plan. But because the plan for East Port of Spain is based not just on Government policies but on need—a need and the desire to create a model of sustainable communities—I think because we have taken that focus, it is easy to see what we have proposed fitting into this Government's strategy as well. For instance, when you look at the strategies presented at the back of this orange volume—volume 3 of the plan—we speak to the need for a heritage city in East Port of Spain, and this draft was done in 2009.

So that it is definitely consistent with what the current Government's thinking is for East Port of Spain, because we identified in the plan the importance of the heritage resources. We have identified some of them in the plan. We speak to the tradition of culture and performing arts and so on in East Port of Spain, and the heritage city is meant to build on that. So, yes, there is strong link that already exists, and that can be taken further with regard to developing specific projects.

11.05 a.m.

Dr. Thomas-Austin: With respect to incubators, the plan has a strategy for economic development as well, which recognizes and can adjust to the designation of east Port of Spain as a growth pole, so we speak in the plan to the development of business incubators in east Port of Spain. We speak in the plan to coming up with strategies for attracting investment and creating employment. So, that is entirely consistent with the current Government's strategy for east Port of Spain as well. So, I do not know how much more tweaking is needed, but we can look at it in more detail. We have tried on several occasions to, through our line Minister, sit down and understand the Government's strategy to make sure that we are consistent with that.

I just wanted to take up on what you have asked about the initiatives and: are we aware of them? We are aware of them, because we have done our homework and doing our research. We are not

aware of them because we have been incorporated, so that these discussions have been taking place without necessarily including the East Port of Spain Development Company. So, we hear about it and we try to intervene where we can to stake a claim for some of what needs to happen. That is one of the challenges of the company, in terms of the recognition of the role and the jurisdiction of the company in east Port of Spain and the fact that there are other several other agencies that have been given similar responsibilities within the area and there is no formal mechanism for coordination and collaboration.

Dr. Tewarie: Final question and it is short. Do you ever collide with local government and other Government agencies, given that you are a special purpose company?

Dr. Thomas-Austin: I am not sure that "collide" is the word, but we certainly interact with and from time to time, "yeah", our objectives, might be slightly different.

Dr. Tewarie: You do not collide?

Dr. Thomas-Austin: We do not collide?

Dr. Tewarie: I am asking.

Dr. Thomas-Austin: I do not have the bumps and bruises to suggest that collisions have taken place.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you. Dr. Thomas, I just want to quickly clarify something in your response to Dr. Tewarie. You indicated that you are preparing a comprehensive integrated plan—social, economic and physical development—could you just quickly clarify, briefly: is it that you are expected to prepare a plan and also be an implementing/executing agency for some of your development projects and, therefore, from what you are saying you are constrained in terms of the funding, the major portion of your funding, which speaks really to infrastructure and therefore a number of the other aspects of the plan cannot be implemented or addressed by the company? And if that is so, then are there any formal linkages to other private sector or public sector institutions that can actually implement aspects of the plan?

Dr. Thomas-Austin: Whether or not the company was meant to be a planning agency, we are not intending to take over the role of the planning from Minister Tewarie's Ministry and the Town and Country Planning Division. What we felt very strongly is that given the nature of the challenges in east Port of Spain, we could not start coming up with proposals for development without some kind of planning context, some kind of overall development strategy.

Mr. Chairman: I understand that. I want you to address specifically, the problem that I am raising, which is one of yes, we have prepared a plan, but you are saying the funding that you are getting is largely from the Infrastructure Development Fund, which has to be used for infrastructure development, which might not necessarily address some of the critical requirements in east Port of Spain. How are those requirements met?

Dr. Thomas-Austin: Those specific requirements, we would still like to challenge that definition of "infrastructure", because there is nothing that says infrastructure must be physical only, so the interpretation of "infrastructure" as physical only and therefore restricting the use of the IDF funds for physical infrastructure projects only is one that we would like to challenge. But, be that as it may, the implementation of social and community and economic projects, we would want to do, in collaboration with other agencies. We see the plan as providing a framework and a tool for coordination. We see the role of the company as not just a planning agency, but implementing some development projects of our own, but not all. Not all of the development is expected to be carried out by the East Port of Spain Development Company.

Some can be carried out by the relevant line ministries, the sectoral ministries. Once we identify that Mon Repos needs a secondary school or two private schools or nursery schools, then the Ministry of Education can go in and develop that. It does not have to be this company.

Mr. Chairman: You are hoping that will happen?

Dr. Thomas-Austin: That is the level of coordination. If we accept the plan as a framework and a strategy and we identify the needs of the communities in the plan, then we would expect that other agencies of the state can take up the implementation of some of that development.

We are also willing to collaborate—because there is an opportunity for the private sector to become involved as well and we have been having discussions with some private sector groups about possibly funding some of the social initiatives. So, we take on the role, not just of implementer but facilitator and coordinator of development in east Port of Spain to be able to secure the kinds of projects that we are cannot implement with the funding, given the funding restrictions that we have.

Mr. Chairman: I will have Miss Hospedales and then come back.

Miss Hospedales: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I just also want to join my colleagues in complementing you all for a very comprehensive report. I found the historical context within which the reports are developed to be very informative. I can say I learnt a lot about east Port of Spain by simply reading the report.

I would like to ask: could you indicate to us some of the challenges you have been experiencing, with respect to the implementation of the strategy to develop east Port of Spain, taking it into context? I read in the report where you said that you had requested a preparation to Cabinet and it has not been forthcoming almost 18 months later.

Additionally, the strategic developmental plan has not been approved and you all highlighted issues, in terms of delays in the release of funding, that causes implementation delays with respect to developmental projects, social and economic projects as well. Could you give us a little insight into some of the challenges you are experiencing, please?

Dr. Thomas-Austin: Well, from last year, we have had a change in Government and we want to make sure that the company is still relevant. The challenges of east Port of Spain continue to be real and so, we think that there is need for the company to continue to exist and the work that we do, we think is still valid. We would really welcome an opportunity to have the new Government be aware of what that is, so that some of the strategies and proposals of the new Government can be seen within the context of what is already a framework for planning and development in east Port of Spain. That dialogue will continue to try to achieve that, so that we can have discussions on the plan if there needs to be any changes to the document that would make it acceptable to go forward for approval by Cabinet and ultimately by Parliament, then we stand ready to do that.

The other challenges that you have identified—I think Dr. Tewarie spoke a little while ago about the fact that \$30 million would be quite a lot and can achieve quite a lot in east Port of Spain. I beg to differ. You spoke about, perhaps, eight identifiable communities. There are 19 identifiable communities within east Port of Spain and that is for the purposes of analysis. When you talk to people about what they identify as their communities on the ground, we are talking about a larger number than that.

Thirty million for the kinds of work that need to be done in east Port of Spain—what we do not want to do is tinker in east Port of Spain. We can attempt to fix things on the surface, but they are not going to achieve what we thought our mandate was, which is the transformation of east Port of Spain. And you do not achieve transformation by tinkering. Therefore, small sums of money would allow us to fix a drain and repair a road and fix a basketball court, but when we look at some parts of east Port of Spain and the compound deficiencies and the multiple problems that we have in certain years, you cannot fix that just by small isolated, uncoordinated development projects, it requires a much more comprehensive and strategic approach. That allocation of \$30 million has to be seen in the context of our request, which would have been for, like \$600 million, to be able to achieve the kind of transformation that we are talking about.

In terms of the releases, the procedure, the ideas that the special purpose companies might have a role to play in securing or taking on a development-led approach is compromised by the funding mechanisms and the funding structures, because if you are treated as a division within a Ministry and you have to go through the exact same bureaucratic processes, then that delay is implementation. None of the \$35 million or the \$30 million that is allocated to us is given to the company. That is allocated on paper and when we have development projects approved by Cabinet, we then have to go through a procurement process. When we select a contractor, we go back to the line ministry and we say this is the contractor, this is the contract price and if they agree on that, then the money is released only when the contractor submits claims for payment and that is the amount that is released.

If you do not get that coming in on time, it can delay work. We are dealing with a lot of small contractors who do not have the financial capacity to carry projects. So, when payments are not forthcoming right away, when you finish work and you make a claim and the payments are not settled for three months or more, these are small contractors who cannot necessarily absorb that. More than that, the people that they work with, who are coming from the communities of east Port of Spain, cannot wait three to six months to be paid. Those are some of the challenges. When we get the recurrent releases we have to request them on a quarterly basis. They are not always released on a quarterly basis. There are some years they are not released at all. There are a number of challenges.

Overall, we speak to the issue of public safety and personal safety in east Port of Spain. The issue of crime and violence, which is a real challenge in east Port of Spain; that affects us, not just in terms of communities being able to come out to events, but sometimes to be able to make use of the facilities that have been upgraded and it also affects the actual implementation of work in the communities, because contractors are sometimes the victims of crime and violence in the area.

Miss Hospedales: I am going to ask a question with respect to the issue of crime and violence and the engagement of communities. For instance, in your report you said that you all are building a culture of peace, but there are communities, based on their jurisdictional boundaries that are unable to cross even the white line in the road. What are some of the strategies you all are using to ensure that the tension and the conflicts are actually diffused and communities actually come together and really bond in a special way?

Dr. Thomas-Austin: I think some of the projects that we have tried to implement can achieve that. For instance, we tried with a sports programme called Sports Plus. It is a programme that uses sports as a tool for social and economic development. And the PLUS means play, learn and unite through sport. We have been able to implement that project in sort of pilot phases until we were stopped from using our funds to do that.

It is interesting that you can have a Sports Plus project going on in one community and participants from other communities to attend. We worked with communities and sports groups in the area to facilitate sport tournaments and those tournaments bring together teams from all over east Port of Spain. So, it is telling us that it is possible for people to cross the barriers and that is why the development, if we are allowed to do the kind of development, and adopt the framework that we are talking about here, we think that we can break down some of those barriers and other agencies getting involved to do that can achieve the same.

Mr. Chairman: Sen. Oudit, you had a quick follow-up question. If it could be brief so that we could get to some of the—

Mrs. Oudit: Mr. Chairman, I do not know if it can actually be brief, because the more I listen the more I am becoming very worried. I thought we started off pretty okay. And, in all honesty, as a Member here, I am sitting and I am beginning to be extremely worried. My first question, again to you is who do you report to?

Dr. Thomas-Austin: We report to the Ministry of Local Government.

Mrs. Oudit: If you report to the Ministry of Local Government and to date, this document is dated 2007, you have come to a joint select committee meeting in November of 2011, with a 2007 document and telling me or telling the committee that these are the plans and that to date, you have not yet articulated or held consultation with any representative of local government, because in whatever format, the policy framework is, you do not—I think *Hansard* would recall you said in whatever format it may be. If you report to the Ministry of Local Government, my concern is why are you presenting documents from 2007?

Secondly have you done any revisions? Clearly this was submitted, so therefore no revisions have taken place, and, therefore, there is no recognition in any of your plans, that since May 2010, at least June, in terms of parliamentary proceedings, there has been a change; a development of a new policy framework. There has been no articulation in any of your documents to suggest that you have any consultation and change.

11.20 a.m.

Since 2006 you have been operational I cannot see in any one of these documents what has been achieved. I am seeing plans. I am seeing references to your vision 20/20 in terms of what are some of the things you would like to see happen. How you would like to see East Port of Spain developed. I am seeing many, many things here that on paper look very nice, and then you indicated that you started a few things which had been stopped only recently, because the Minister of Finance identified that the funding was not in the way it was supposed to be spent. Am I clear on that one?

Dr. Thomas-Austin: No.

Mr. Chairman: All right. Sorry. Before you respond Dr. Thomas—

Mrs. Oudit: No? So that if it is that you have—I am just—I wrote down the words here where you said you started with the sporting activity and you had a stoppage of funding, I just wrote it down as you were speaking. Now, if it is, in light of my first question, who do you report to? And since you all have been established, have you been reporting and have you been following a mandate prescribed to you, so that there should have been no stoppage of funding? Had you been going in the way that the organization was supposed to have been going in the first place? And to date would have been continuing under a national framework and not just as I understand what is happening here now, is that East Port of Spain seems to be going along a very insular sort of

route. So that somewhere along the line, up to now, you have not met with your Minister, or least have some direction and so there is intervention in your disbursement of funds; and in the way in which you are spending moneys; whether it is \$30 million or \$300 million or whatever it is, you clearly had to be stopped in the way you were spending, because—I am not sure if you understand the reporting which was supposed to have been done, whether from 2006, 2010, 2011. So if you—

Dr. Thomas-Austin: Can I respond?

Mr. Chairman: Yes, before you respond. Dr. Tewarie is it in connection with this, otherwise I would like deal with this and move to some others.

Dr. Tewarie: It has to do with the fact of whether \$30 or \$35 million is a lot of money or a small amount of money, it is all a matter of perspective. When I raised the question of \$30 million being a fair amount of money within the framework of a year to achieve something, I am making the assumption: that there is a Local Government for the area; that there is a range of governmental services constituting 26 ministries, that are meant to impact on the country; that there is a national budget for the country as a whole, which is shared across 524 communities in Trinidad and 61 in Tobago, and so on. It is all a matter of perspective, but I do take the point of Mrs. Oudit which is that there is a paucity of tangible achievements over the period, and there is a question of sustainability. For instance, I do not know if the basketball court continues to be a sustainable, functioning entity with organized community participation.

The issue which I am concerned about really which is, if you are going to get \$35 million this year, provided that you organize and you get it, I mean, are there things—that is the first question I asked. Are there going to be achievements during the course of the year? I think it is an important question and I do not believe that throwing money at problems is a solution to anything.

Mr. Chairman: Okay, Dr. Tewarie if we can, sorry. If we can now get a response and then we can move on to somebody else. One minute. Could you respond Dr. Thomas-Austin?

Dr. Thomas-Austin: Well, there were a number of issues raised. Yes, we report to the Ministry of Local Government, and we have done so on a regular basis, meeting the statutory obligations for reporting. In terms of consultation, first of all the document is not dated 2007, the draft that is here may have been started in 2007, the final draft was presented in 2009, it was completed in 2009 and after consultations, and that is the document after consultation that was submitted. So it should be—it was submitted in 2009, the—

Mrs. Oudit: Just for the record, this document is September 2007, this is the document I have here, it is called your executive summary it is even on the front cover, it says September 2007. So if we are supposed to have a next document, maybe we need to be furnished with that

particular document.

Dr. Thomas-Austin: Okay, all right. The document was submitted in 2009. We have done presentations in terms of reporting to local government bodies. The two local government bodies which straddle East Port of Spain are the San Juan/Laventille Regional Corporation and the Port of Spain City Corporation. So we have had under different corporations' administrations, we would have held consultations with the Councils of both bodies. We would have done our presentation to the Council of the San Juan/Laventille Corporation as recently as—I think it was earlier this year, if not earlier this year, then late last year. So we have continued to have those consultations.

In terms of the new Government, we were asked in October last year by the Minister of National Security who actually convened it, together with the Minister of Planning, Economic and Social Restructuring and Gender Affairs at the time, and the Minister of Local Government was also at that for a short period of time, to receive a presentation on the plan and to talk about what was being proposed and how that might fit in.

We have also done discussions with the IDB funded programme through the persons responsible for that, looking at the aspects of the Heritage City, the growth pole concepts for East Port of Spain, to see how those provisions for that are reflected in the plan and could be accommodated within the plan. So there had been several attempts to link what the plan proposes with the current initiatives or the initiatives of the current Government.

In terms of achievements, I think in the report which we submitted we have highlighted some of the achievements to date in terms of development projects completed, and some of the other social and community projects which were undertaken.

We produced a report for the joint select committee which would have had a table with the development projects completed, and would have also listed some of the other achievements in terms of projects and programmes that the company started.

Mrs. Oudit: Just for clarification, is it this document [*Holds up a document*] which you are referring to?

Dr. Thomas-Austin: No, it is not. Its—

Mrs. Oudit: Because I see you have—its projects and activities.

Dr. Thomas-Austin: No, it is a document entitled: "Report to the Joint Select Committee" and that would have had a table—

Mrs. Oudit: Yes thank you.

Dr. Thomas-Austin:—with some of the development projects completed over time, some photographs, also a list of some of the social and economic programmes which we undertook. Just to reassure you, that we did not undertake any projects without the approval of those who

needed to approve them at time, because the funds would not have been released otherwise. We were allowed to do certain things for a while, and it was made clear to us that ultimately we would need to find other agencies to take over some of the social and economic programmes. So it was not that we are going off on a tangent on our own, because none of the money which comes to us; comes to us without having first been approved and then released by the relevant Ministries for expenditure and we account for all of it.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you. Mr. De Coteau.

Mr. De Coteau: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairman. Dr. Thomas-Austin I would really like to compliment you on your articulation here this morning. And you clearly have a passion for your field, I was impressed. However, underlying all that was said, you know I always like to be down to the ground, and I know that we have spoken a lot and given a lot of theoretical exposition, but there seemed to be, and as you said you would like to confess, you are a passionate planner by profession. But I get the impression you spoke in terms of the—this South/East Port of Spain or East Port of Spain project was conceptualized by the last political administration, you spoke in terms of vision 20/20.

What are the—tell us, confess, what is the reality, are things going on as usual, what are the obstacles? Because you would have been there from the embryonic stage of this, you would have been part of that nurturing process; probably you would have been given a freer hand than you have now. What is the reality? And then by extension too, you did use a term that I do not want to put you in any spot, but probably you can clarify that. Our esteemed Prime Minister did talk in terms recently, and I think it made the headlines of something for the hotspots. One of the hotspots mentioned would have been large sums of money for the people of East Port of Spain creating over 20,000 jobs. Would that be part of your perception of tinkering?

Dr. Thomas-Austin: No. I was very specific when I made reference to that, saying that given the scale of problems—we talked about the compound deficiencies in East Port of Spain; we talked about the numerous development challenges in terms of poor layout of settlements; poor quality of buildings; poor quality of physical infrastructure; the fact that in some cases the terrain is difficult; it is steep; narrow, winding roads. When you have those kinds of problems - a high level of informal settlements in some communities - when you have those kinds of problems concentrated in one geographical area, to have projects that—simply putting a box drain while it might improve drainage, it does not significantly impact the overall esthetic and functioning of the community.

Mr. De Coteau: So it is still tinkering?

Dr. Thomas-Austin: And that is what I referred to as tinkering.

Mr. De Coteau: So how do you see the projects as conceptualized by the Prime Minister?

Dr. Thomas-Austin: What we see as necessary is a comprehensive approach to development that recognizes that in some areas not all, in some areas it may be appropriate to clear; to redevelop; to put in trunk infrastructure, because there are parts of East Port of Spain which do not have trunk infrastructure. When you look at the data it is showing you that in some communities 47, 46, 35 per cent of the households still use pit latrines. So they do not have access to central sewers, they do not have access to septic tanks, some of that cannot be accommodated given the current plot layout and road layout.

You cannot straighten the Laventille Road for instance, because in some areas there is development coming right up to the edge of the road. So what you can do is try to put in a sidewalk, you might be able to put in a sidewalk along one side of the road for a certain length of it, but you cannot do it consistently all around. So it may be that to achieve the proper alignment or widening of a particular road, it may require some other interventions, which the smaller projects which we are doing cannot facilitate. That is the kind of thing I was referring to, that is specific—

Mr. De Coteau: Okay, okay. What would you say your take on the initiative of the Prime Minister?

Dr. Thomas-Austin: I think it is a necessary initiative, we talked about the high levels of unemployment in East Port of Spain, the data from CSO to the extent that we can make generalizations of going back to data from the year 2000, but that is the only official data we have; we cannot create other data, collect other data, especially when it comes to income and employment; so we have to rely on what is available to us. Given that, it suggests that there is a need for employment creation programmes in East Port of Spain. What we would like to ensure is that these programmes can be sustainable, so that while we may assist people, put in the social safety nets at this time, that parallel to that we are doing things to ensure that in two years, five years, 10 years' time, there are sustainable job creation programmes which create new jobs, private sector investments, so that the State does not have to continue indefinitely supporting the economic situation in East Port of Spain.

Mr. De Coteau: Doctor, you spoke in terms of sustainable communities and integrated development, and not to pass judgment on your town planning colleagues, but would you say that some of the housing developments in the past generally—they lack any type of sustainable development?

I will give you an example. In my constituency, Moruga/Tableland, we have one on Gomez Street and instead of trying to build and integrate it was one of division, because we had a recreation playground which existed for a number of years. So right now what do we have? The young men are on the street. So then it probably would have been planning by “vaps”, because it

certainly was not integrated.

11.35 a.m.

Dr. Thomas-Austin: I think what I am talking about for East Port of Spain is moving forward from here, and to ensure that any development that is done in the future, corrects whatever problems may have existed in the past and that we adopt a different approach to planning and development that will facilitate the creation of sustainable communities.

Mr. De Couteau: Could you come back to the point of the challenges that you are faced with? Seeing that you were there from the embryonic stage to present, is it frustrating? Is it challenging? What are the plans of the company to overcome the possible obstacles?

Dr. Thomas-Austin: Some of the challenges that we have faced in East Port of Spain have not just arisen. If you look at some of the reports that we would have submitted over the years there is a consistency in some of the challenges.

Mr. De Couteau: Challenges with the present administration.

Dr. Thomas-Austin: So, let me make that clear. The issue is not about challenges with the present administration. My reference to challenges would be challenges in East Port of Spain and the challenges for the company to carry out its mandate. That is not a challenge with an administration. That is a challenge with a system and a process. So the challenges that I have identified are the challenges with respect to the release of funds; the adequacy of funding; the issue of crime and violence in East Port of Spain that we need to be able to address; the issue of being able to fulfill what we understood the mandate of the company to be, in terms of how it is defined to be able to improve economic, social and physical conditions in East Port of Spain. That is our mandate; that is the wording of our mandate. And so, for me, and for the company, a challenge is to be able to carry out those three aspects of our mandate and not just one. So it has been for a number of years that we have been having discussions with the Ministry of Finance about what the Infrastructure Development Fund can be used for. That is not something that is new.

Mr. De Couteau: My colleague and I were trying to clear the air. Are you supposed to make a presentation to Cabinet in March?

Dr. Thomas-Austin: We did make a presentation to Cabinet in March of 2010. We were invited to do so and we would welcome an opportunity to do so again.

Mr. De Couteau: That is the challenge.

Dr. Thomas-Austin: I do not think it is a challenge.

Dr. Douglas: I think we have a wealth of good plans that have rightly been pointed out. I am sure you will agree that there is a big step between a development plan and the actual implementation of the plan. You have pointed out the challenges. In a simple way, could you

give me about five—10 things I could go and look at tomorrow, if I want to confirm that you are all did something?

Dr. Thomas-Austin: Let us start with the Beetham Multi-Purpose Court at Phase 2 Beetham Gardens.

Mr. Chairman: What document is that?

Dr. Thomas-Austin: The report that was submitted entitled “Report to the Joint Select Committee” on pages 30 and 31, that list development projects that have been carried out by the company. You would be able to see the Beetham Multi-Purpose Court; the completed Never Dirty Multi-Purpose Court; and the Beetham Berm which has been constructed in phases. So there were several individual projects there, and the work was undertaken in phases. There have been works carried out on the Laventille Road done in packages against sections of Laventille Road that were done, and those are listed there and the kind of works that were done.

There were footpaths constructed at the request of the Beetham community linking the Eastern Main Road and the Priority Bus Route to allow for safe access. Before there used to be some tracks that would get muddy when it rains and lighting was put in and so on. So those two at Stanislaus Street and Espinet Street are work that we have done in terms of the preparation of the development plans, not just this overall strategic plan, but we had also done a draft development plan for the Beetham community and some of the social-type programmes that we have listed in this document as well. We have the Woman’s Entrepreneurial Development Programme; our attempts with the Sports-Plus programme; and the homework centre that was being run at Beetham. So there are several things that you can look at that have been done.

Dr. Douglas: You see, immediately I have a fundamental problem. All of them are in the Beetham.

Dr. Thomas-Austin: The Never Dirty Court is in Never Dirty. The Laventille Road Project extends through a number of communities in Laventille. The recreation ground at Sogren Trace is also not in Beetham.

Dr. Douglas: Well, I was going by the ones that you called out.

Dr. Thomas-Austin: I am pointing you to the document. So the document has all the projects listed.

Dr. Douglas: Well, I was just trying to get what would be considered like five of your star projects that are still there and functioning that is a demonstration of good work. That is all. So I could go and look at them.

Dr. Thomas-Austin: Well they are listed here. So these are the projects that we have done.

Dr. Douglas: I wanted you to give me the ones that you are proud of so that would be like test pieces.

Dr. Thomas-Austin: I am proud of all that we have done, given the challenges that we have had in executing them.

Dr. Douglas: I do not want fancy talk. I am just asking a simple question.

Dr. Thomas-Austin: You can look at the Beetham Multi-Purpose Court; you can look at the Berm and how it has transformed that landscape; you can look at the Never Dirty Court; you can look at the facility at Soogrim Trace; you can look at the Facility at the Morris Marshall Ground in Trou Macaque and the work that was done on Laventille Road. So those are six that I would start you with.

Dr. Douglas: I guess my follow-up question would be; a lot of the things that you have mentioned here, to me, I could technically get them done through URP or CEPEP—like the footpath and all of those things. I do not identify them with a mandate for the development of East Port of Spain which, when I look at the document, I am impressed that there is a high order of thinking that is at work. The implementation to me, suggests things that I could get done through CEPEP, URP if I beg BPTT or NP and that kind of thing. I hope that when I look at them on the ground and go and look at them with eyes that they are more impressive than—

Dr. Thomas-Austin: I agree with you totally.

Dr. Douglas: Firstly, I am not sure what is accounting for the discrepancies. Secondly, I am concerned about plans that are very nice on paper and not translating in the way that it is designed. Thirdly, I hear you say money might be the main issue because it subjects you to tinkering as opposed to doing big tangible things. I do not know if you understand my dissonance. I am hoping that between 2007 to now that I could have less degree of dissonance, and I do not know how you can help me.

Dr. Thomas-Austin: As I said, I completely agree with you. The projects that the company has focused on are not the kinds of development projects that we think best reflect our mandate. The reason for the focus being different and, therefore, the dissonance that you experienced is that certainly, the line ministry has felt—and we have had that from our line ministry in the past—is that we cannot implement or funds cannot be allocated for implementation of the strategic vision in the plan until the plan is approved, and that is why we maintain that one of the things that we would like to achieve whether it requires an amendment or adjustment to the plan, must be the approval of a development strategy for East Port of Spain, and it is only when that is done that governments will commit to implementation of the strategy.

So that, in the meantime, while we have been trying to work towards that, what we have done is a number of small infrastructure development projects that are consistent with the plan.

For instance, the plan speaks to the need for a network of open spaces and recreation facilities in East Port of Spain that reflect the position of a particular community in the hierarchy, given the population size and composition of that community, and so the development of recreation facilities is consistent with that overall plan. The development of the Berm Project is consistent—

Dr. Douglas: Okay, I understand what you are saying. Let me seek to clarify. To the extent that the plan has been created and has not been fully ratified by the Government, it provides a limitation both in terms of funding and your ability to implement.

Dr. Thomas-Austin: Yes.

Dr. Douglas: That the analysis.

Dr. Thomas-Austin: Yes.

Dr. Douglas: Okay.

Dr. Wheeler: When you mentioned that some of the streets are very narrow, you can only do sidewalks on one side and not on the other, have you been able to determine the level of squatting in the area and the percentage of illegal immigrants that may be present? Do you know if this is a factor in limiting the ability for you to carry out and executing the projects that you might want to undertake? You also mentioned a significant percentage of the properties have pit latrines and no proper sewer disposal. I do not know if you have been able to access the level of squatting and the illegal immigrant population in that area.

Dr. Thomas-Austin: We have not been able to determine that, because we do not have the opportunity to ask immigration-type questions. There would be questions in the census that speak to where persons were born and how long they have lived in the present location, and if that is analyzed it can give you some indication of immigration into the area. It is not data that we find that we can always rely on because you are not sure that people are always giving the accurate information in those situations. So no, we have not looked at immigration levels.

In terms of squatting, again, we would have relied on the data published in the 2000 census and the way the questions are posed in the census it is difficult to say that you have an accurate picture of squatting from that. It is also related to the definition of squatting, because there are some people who are on rented lands, and because they are paying a rent for the lands they occupy, they are technically not considered squatters. So I cannot say with any degree of certainty what the level of squatting in the communities is.

Dr. Wheeler: The reason I asked that is, if you have to do any major development work, and as you have identified, you might have to clear certain parts and these factors will obviously become an issue.

Dr. Thomas-Austin: And so if we have to do that kind of project, then some very specific work

will have to be done in that community to determine land tenure patterns, ownership patterns and so on, but we have not got to that level of detail.

Mr. Jeffrey: Dr. Thomas, did I hear you right when you say that you made repeated request to make presentation to the Cabinet? Did I hear you right?

Dr. Thomas-Austin: We have made the offer that the plan is there and we want to make sure that we synchronize it with Government's strategy, so that we would welcome an opportunity to present the plan or have a discussion about East Port of Spain with a wider audience. We have not had that opportunity as yet.

Mr. Jeffrey: When last did you make that request?

Dr. Thomas-Austin: I cannot say for sure what date of a letter.

Mr. Jeffrey: No, not date, approximate time.

Dr. Thomas-Austin: We have done it, I think, as recently as June. We have written to the Ministry saying that we would like to have an opportunity to sit and discuss the mandate of the company, the plans and what needs to be done in East Port of Spain. So, it has been happening.

Mr. Jeffrey: I was wondering whether—I think it is pretty frustrating that if you made a request to make a presentation to Cabinet, and it has not been forthcoming that does not have anything to do with the low level of priorities as far as East Port of Spain is concerned. I am wondering the frustration, because we hear about the low allocation that you have got to do your affairs. I am wondering from your perspective, how you start up all these things for your operation.

11.50 a.m.

Dr. Thomas-Austin: I think it comes back to a belief in what needs to be done or what probably should be the approach that needs to be taken in east Port of Spain, and an understanding of the issues and the challenges of the community, and therefore, I think we continue to feel and we are supported by the new board in this but the approach that is being taken is an approach that is justified, and so we would want to continue that work. We also recognize that there are a number of things that need to be sorted out so we would need to be clear that we are all speaking the same language in terms of the mandate of the company what it is being asked to do, and to make sure that we can effectively carry out that mandate.

Mr. Jeffrey: How soon do you all expect to make another request, because certainly to get buyins of this administration that means something has to be done, you know, give us a timeframe as to when you are going to give a request.

Dr. Thomas-Austin: I do not have a timeframe right now, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Jeffrey: Well, I want to recommend that you should write quickly.

Dr. Thomas-Austin: Your recommendation is noted.

Mrs. Oudit: Dr. Thomas-Austin, for this committee's verification I would like to get a copy of the letter that was sent to the Ministry recently requesting that you resubmit the documents, however, I noted that this particular plan—

Dr. Thomas-Austin: Sorry, you want to get a copy of the letter that was sent?

Mrs. Oudit: MP Jeffrey, just asked you how recent did you submit a request to the current Cabinet and your response was just recently you submitted another request to present your documents to Cabinet, I would like to get a copy of the letter for this committee. I am asking as a member of the committee that you furnish this committee with a copy of that letter requesting a presentation be done to the current Cabinet, and two, I note here that you said that your plan was actually presented to Cabinet on March 2010, which was just two months before the last election, so that certainly this particular plan was already submitted to a Cabinet on March 2010, as per your documentation.

If you are falling under the Local Government Ministry and you admitted or you identified that you have been liaising with Local Government Ministry, you identified that you have had some consultation started or at least initiated by the Minister of National Security, as well as, and attended by the Minister of Local Government, et cetera, at stakeholders meeting, then is there another document that you plan or you wanted to submit to this current Cabinet that is different from what you submitted on March 2010, because this is the same document it has here, so it was already submitted; it is already a Cabinet document. Is there anything else that you would like to submit for the current Cabinet that is different from this? And the next point, you indicated that this is really for going forward and you would not really like to go back in the past to discuss what has taken place in terms of the problems of the past and you really would like to move forward. That is admirable, however you are a Town Planner you said by profession or qualification?

Dr. Thomas-Austin: Correct.

Mrs. Oudit: Which one?

Dr. Thomas-Austin: Both.

Mrs. Oudit: Okay, now if it is you are a Town Planner, I am thinking it is very difficult to undo infrastructural work if this company was established in 2005. Did you bring it to the attention in 2006 when you started operations 2007/2008/2009/2010? You are now bringing it to the attention that we need to move forward, but what was done from 2006 to, let us say, March 2010, that pointed the relevant authorities to say: We need to stop with this type of urban planning. We are talking of a period of roughly five years. Was there any attempt made within this critical capital area to say to any administration we need to stop this type of discriminatory housing. When I say discriminatory I do not mean as in any racial profile, I am saying discriminatory in

terms of the use and allocation of resources and the proper utilization of land, water resource, your space availability, even as you made reference to Town and Country Planning. So has there really been—we talked about mandate.

I said I was worried but this is really, really worrying. I do not know what your mandate has been, and I do not know if the mandate was to put box drains or fix pavements, and all of that was done only in 2010 recently. I am looking at the document that you have here. So you have your berm, I think the berm was constructed just before the previous CHOGM, so that was done in Beetham. Dr. Douglas pointed to the fact that most of your activities that you have identified as achievements are construction for a court, recreational facility, and four out of your eight achievements are berms. The berms that you have: 14-18th Seventh Street again and Laventille Road. I am not sure if this company truly had an original mandate and what the mandate was, because I really cannot see how you were able to achieve anything without understanding clearly what the mandate was and now identifying that after six years this list of achievements and pointing to the fact that you had stoppage of funding because you were doing activities that were not in line with your mandate.

This is really worrying for me and I do not know what is the next step and I think you really need to go backwards. You need to go back for East Port of Spain Corporation to actually know what was their original mandate. I do not see it in any of the documents here. I see as Dr. Douglas says, a lot of pretty words, a lot of pretty pictures, but I am not seeing anything that is substantive in terms of what you were supposed to be doing, how you went about it, and your actual achievements and accomplishments after six years.

I have heard a lot of troubles along the way through your own admissions, and please do not take this on a personal level it is not meant to indict you personally, this is an organization, this is a corporation with state funding and it is worrying when you see in a Joint Select Committee where you are looking at the activities of the organization and I do not know; I think I am not the only one, you had several members talk about what exactly has been done with this and the type of funding that came out of it. So I think there is a lot of work that needs to go back and come forward and maybe try and figure out what was the original mandate if you have to go forward at all.

Mr. Chairman: Okay, you wanted to comment Dr. Thomas-Austin or could we move on?

Dr. Thomas-Austin: I think I just want to clarify the issue about a request to present to Cabinet. What we have been saying is that we have been wanting to have a formal discussion with our line Ministry about the mandate of the company, so the letters that have been written are with respect to the line Ministry, and it is only when the line Ministry has been engaged at that level can we go forward to be requesting, so there is no letter that we have written to request to Cabinet, we have

been writing to our line Ministry to discuss the mandate of the company and several issues with respect to that. That is the only thing I want to clarify at this time, I do not think anything else is-.

Mrs. Oudit: So you are saying that was no request formally made?

Dr. Thomas-Austin: No, I am saying that I am clarifying that there was not a request made to present to Cabinet; there is a request to discuss with your line Ministry the mandate of the company and the interpretation of the mandate. There is only one mandate that we have that has not been changed. The mandate was spelt out in a Cabinet Minute and that is the mandate that we have gone with. Over several years it has not just started, we have had differences in the interpretation of that mandate coming out of from when we moved from the Ministry of Planning to the Ministry of Local Government; there have been some interpretations not in terms of the mandate, but the mandate speaks to improving economic, social and physical conditions in east Port of Spain and to improve economic and social conditions we have sought to implement certain economic and social development programmes, and what the Ministry of Finance has said to us and this has gone back several years, this is not something that has just been said, is that their understanding of the use of funds under the Infrastructure Development Act, it would suggest that it should not be used for that so-

Mrs. Oudit: Just to clarify, is it then that the company's understanding of the use of funds was different from that of the Ministry?

Dr. Thomas-Austin: No, the company's understanding of—because we are getting the funds from the Ministry, the projects have to be first approved by the Ministry. When we first started with the Ministry, the Ministry of Finance allowed us to do it but over time when the Ministry of Finance clarified their position. But eventually we were told that and our line Ministry started to tell us as well as the Ministry of Finance that we should perhaps get the sectorial agencies to implement those social programmes rather than us doing it, and so we have taken some of them off of our list until such time as that is cleared up. But if the company has a mandate to improve economic, social and physical conditions and the source of funding does not allow us to implement certain programmes then we need to have dialogue to clarify how do we move forward, because two-thirds of our mandate cannot be funded from-.

Mrs. Oudit: And has that been clarified?

Dr. Thomas-Austin: It has not yet.

Miss Hospedales: Mr. Chair, in a more positive note I would like to ask the members of the panel whether or not you all have started the demolition of the buildings east of George Street, and if not what are some of the challenges and when exactly would that demolition programme begin?

Dr. Thomas-Austin: No, the company has no demolition programmes for buildings. We have no buildings east of George Street that we have responsibility for or that we have any authority to

demolish.

Miss Hospedales: Okay, I am just asking because I saw it listed in your plan as one of the objectives. Also—

Dr. Thomas-Austin: Sorry, what is listed in the plan as an objective—the demolition of buildings?

Miss Hospedales: Yes, citing and demolition of some buildings that are east of George Street.

Dr. Thomas-Austin: I am not familiar. I am not sure if we are talking about an HDC project but—

Miss Hospedales: What the plan stated is that there are some very old buildings located in that area and because of your developmental plan for the area you would seek to acquire the permission to demolish or whatever—

Mr. Chairman: Perhaps if I can assist, I think on page 47 of your plan, you spoke about extending east of the city, I do not know if that is what Miss Hospedales is referring to. But I recall in page 47 of your plan, I do not know whether if it is the same thing. Is that what you were referring to Miss Hospedales?

Miss Hospedales: Yes.

Dr. Thomas-Austin: Okay, again—

Mr. Chairman: Sorry, sorry, I was just intervening, could you kindly finish?

Miss Hospedales: Through you, Mr. Chair, I would like to ask, you said that there would be a comprehensive relocation plan for designated developmental areas whether not that has started, if not, when exactly would it start and what are some of the challenges as well?

Miss Hospedales: Would you like me to repeat?

Dr. Thomas-Austin: Yes.

Miss Hospedales: I was asking prior to our interruption whether or not the relocation plan for the designated comprehensive development areas have begun, and if not what are some of the challenges and when do you all hope to begin, because I know some of the areas that have been identified are areas you all plan to put specific types of infrastructure into.

Dr. Thomas-Austin: Again, I think I need to make the distinction between what the plan recommends and the reference on page 47. This is a strategy of the plan none of this can be actively implemented until the plan is approved, because the approval of the plan will then bring with it certain steps being taken to give the company authority or to designate the authority to some agencies for carrying out some of these things.

12.05 p.m.

Dr. Thomas-Austin: So this is a proposal, and the implementation of the plan can only proceed actively after the plan is approved. That is one. The second part about the areas designated as

comprehensive development areas, that is an ongoing exercise. While most of the plan was done internally by the company, that stage of work we were recruiting consultants to undertake. That aspect of the work has been restarted, and we expect that to move forward in the next six months or so.

Miss Hospedales: Earlier you mentioned the issues of safety and security with respect to contractors and workers on sites. What are some of the things that you have to ensure that these workers are safe whenever they go to develop areas?

Dr. Thomas-Austin: It has not been necessary on all projects sites because some projects, the work just continues without any major problems, but where there have been problem that have interrupted the work schedule of the contractors, we have had to bring in additional security, which was not budgeted for initially in the project cost. We have sought the approval of the line ministry to get additional funds to provide on-site security for the contractors through the police service. We would contact them, they would identify where the project is located, what the particular threats are and they would recommend a level of onsite police presence, and that is provided to the contractors.

Miss Hospedales: I have just one other question. You made mention of the citizen advisory committees. I want to know whether or not those are still established and what level of engagement you have in terms of whether it is weekly, fortnightly or monthly.

Dr. Thomas-Austin: The company had set up what we called community working groups in all the communities of East Port of Spain. We had some engagement with the working groups over time to talk about the role and how we saw them functioning in relation to the community and as a bridge between the company and the community. We provided some training, so that we understood the role and how they would function. The truth is, until we are clear where we are moving with the plan and the development of East Port of Spain, it has not been easy to maintain that engagement with the community working groups. But as and when we have development projects in an area, we certainly engage the community working groups at that time.

Dr. Tewarie: Quick question. If you feel constrained to make requests on the basis of a plan that has not been approved, on what basis did you identify the projects, let us say for 2011/2012?

Dr. Thomas-Austin: The projects come out of need. There is a clear need in the community, that is articulated to us by the community, plus our own analysis of what is there. So there is a need to address in the community, whether or not there is a plan that approves an overall strategy, there is a need for certain facilities and improvement to certain facilities—

Dr. Tewarie: So the needs-based identified projects are different from the approach in the plan?

Dr. Thomas-Austin: There is a difference between projects and approach. This plan document itself does not list a series of projects. The plan sets out a framework for development.

Dr. Tewarie: Yes, it would give you a sense of what kinds of things.

Dr. Thomas-Austin: And so we feel that the kinds of projects that we would want to implement, would be ones that would be consistent with this development framework. Those are the kinds of projects that we would go forward with, in addition to other projects identified.

Dr. Tewarie: So there is some synergy between the needs-based projects you have identified and the kind of framework that you have set out in the plan?

Dr. Thomas-Austin: Yes. There is another mechanism through which projects have been identified as well. The Ministry of Local Government in this financial year just ended had sought the involvement of MPs and councilors in the area to identify projects that are needed in their communities and those projects we have been asked to implement as well.

Dr. Tewarie: Given your experience and knowing what the situation is and the role of your company, what would be the perfect mandate for you, in your view that would give you basically an excellent track to run on? What would be the perfect mandate?

Dr. Thomas-Austin: I think the mandate is clear. The mandate excites us.

Dr. Tewarie: So the existing mandate, as far as you are concerned, is fine?

Dr. Thomas-Austin: Yes; I think what we need to do is to match that with the funding and to get the approval of a strategy for carrying it out and sort out the coordination issues so we know who is responsible for doing what in the area.

Dr. Douglas: In section seven, the financial, we are looking at the change in directors' fees. The question is what accounts for the significant increase: \$204,000, \$314,000; \$484,000; \$448,000, et cetera. It goes up to around—

Dr. Thomas-Austin: Are you on page 27?

Dr. Douglas: Then operational costs, staff operating costs related to actual development, as we have seen, in my estimation it seems like we are just financing a group of people who are planning. Once again my dissonance level goes up. I do not know if you could relieve me or enlighten me.

Dr. Thomas-Austin: In respect of the Directors' fees, what would account for the difference between 2006—between all the years quoted here: 2006, 2007, 2008, would have been the number of directors that increased. When the company was first established, the first board probably would have had five directors at the time and then two were subsequently added and that brought us up to seven. The bye-laws provide for a board of up to 12 members.

Dr. Douglas: These are people on the board of directors getting paid month this money?

Dr. Thomas-Austin: Pardon?

Dr. Douglas: This money is paid to the board of directors?

Dr. Thomas-Austin: Yes, those are director fees; that is an established fee. So it would have

been gradual increases in the number of directors on the board, to bring it up to the strength as provided for in the company's bye-laws, because we did not start off with a full complement.

Dr. Douglas: "Advertising and public relations", what is that? What is advertising?

Dr. Thomas-Austin: That covers a number of things, and the reason for the significant increase between 2007/2008 and the 2008/2009, in 2008 you would recall from the document is when we had a series of public consultations. The funding of those public consultations would have come out of this line item, also the preparation of the plan documents as well, because they were available to some members of the public. We would have provided copies to various ministries, for Cabinet as well, at the time. So it is publication of the documents, including all the brochures and normal consultation charges. That would have been the bulk of it in 2008/2009.

Dr. Douglas: How much staff did you say you have?

Dr. Thomas-Austin: At present we have 18. We have had up to 21. I think that was the maximum number we had.

Dr. Douglas: This is probably an unfair question, and you do not have to answer it. I am concerned whether East Port of Spain Development Company is really making any difference in East Port of Spain. In my mind all I see is the berm. That is the only visible, tangible thing that stands out to have me in East Port of Spain. Sea Lots, Beetham, Trou Macaque, John John, whatever you want to call it; from my visual and practical folk level, if you want to call it that—just walking about and talking to people—I am not seeing "no" real difference, infrastructurally, culturally, economically. From my folk—I am using folk here as, if I just walk through the street and look around or ask a man a question—I am concerned whether this organization has done anything significant that could not be done without the organization.

The Ministry of Works and Infrastructure could have taken on the berm and finished it in ample time, or whatever it is. Bridges, roads, rivers, drains, I have had all those things done in stressful communities in my neighbourhood by agitating or quarrelling with somebody, as the case may be, and gotten them to do it, and some of these are expensive projects too. So I am not sure.

I will admit that the idea of the company and its ideas, are good and laudable, but in terms of whether it is making any sense in reality, since we have started to now, I have not heard anything that demonstrates that way. I do not know if you share my level of frustration or my level of angst, not really frustration about East Port of Spain Development Company. What is your take on that?

Dr. Thomas-Austin: I think the company has a valuable role to play. When we look at areas like East Port of Spain around the world, there are similar type areas. If we look at how they have been transformed, the approach to the transformation or the redevelopment of those areas has

been one undertaken in a particular way. It is not the approach we have committed to as yet in Trinidad and Tobago, for this area. Yes, I think we all share some concerns, given what we know the potential is and how we have been able to function in the five or six years of our operation.

Dr. Douglas: So you are saying a child was born but neglected?

Dr. Thomas-Austin: I would prefer to use my words, Dr. Douglas. I would say there has always been, or for a long time there has been a little disconnect between the mandate of the company and the way we have been allowed to function, for the things that we have been asked to do.

Dr. Douglas: You mean like normal discrimination against Laventille and Beetham “and ting”, we say we “going to help dem out”, but really and truly we just kind of bamboozling them.

Dr. Thomas-Austin: I think there has been a concern about how that is to be achieved. The idea that we can continue to do it by piecemeal interventions, by individual agencies, without the coordination and collaboration, without having a clear framework, without taking a comprehensive and integrated approach to doing it, those are the ideas that prevent us from moving ahead. We have put forward in the plan an implementation strategy, because we recognize— One of the challenges we have identified, was the fact that we have responsibility given by our mandate, but we do not necessarily have the authority to do what we have been asked to, so that has affected our operations. It is clear to us, staff and board, that what we are doing now does not fully reflect the mandate and potential of the company to act. That is what we would like to change, to move in a slightly different direction that is in keeping with the mandate of the company, because the mandate requires more of us than we are able to do or have been able to do since we have been in existence.

Miss Hospedales: I read that you all had established the *Voice* newspaper and it has been discontinued to date. Could you tell us why it has been, because I thought it was a very good communicative initiative in that you were able to get the positive side of East Port of Spain out to the public.

One other question; you said that you proposed two initiatives to address the issues of weak institutional coordination as well as high levels of crime against persons and properties, but we did not get an idea of what those two initiatives were.

12.20 p.m.

Dr. Thomas-Austin: The *Voice* Newspaper was an initiative that the company supported in order to communicate a more positive image of east Port of Spain. The main reason why it was discontinued is that we were not getting adequate advertising support to keep it running. It was a challenge to So we tried several different strategies to secure advertising for it but it was get advertising for the newspaper and we could not continue, for it to continue it would

have meant the company having to subsidize it in ways that we could not do. not enough to keep it going. So, it is something we would like to revisit and revisit the strategy that we employed.

In terms of the strategies for dealing with crime and safety, one of the things we had put forward a few years ago was the concept of the Beetham Strategic Partnership Initiative, and it was something that we went to the Ministry of National Security with because we were experiencing challenges in implementing development projects that were related to crime and violence in the area. And I probably need to perhaps clarify why so much of our work focused on the Beetham community. I think within four months of the company starting to operate in August 2006, if I am correct, we were asked at the time by then government to prepare a development plan for Beetham and to address some of the development needs of the community, so we had to produce. One of the first things we did was a Beetham Urban Village Plan in September 2006, with a list of development projects which was approved by Cabinet, and so over the years we have been trying to implement some of those projects.

So, we went to the Ministry of National Security with this concept to say, look we having challenges, the contractors face challenges in the area. We are proposing that the Ministry gives consideration to the establishment of an army core of engineers; to convert the engineering battalion of the defense force into army core of engineers which could help to implement projects in difficult communities, which would mean that they sort of project manage projects it would be a little bit more difficult for the elements in the community who were challenged contractors to challenging an army core of engineers.

So that that I think was one initiative that we proposed, it did not quite pan out in the way that we had wanted it to, and so we are still left without dealing with that.

And in terms of the other thing I would highlight is that, in the plan we have articulated as a development strategy (Strategy 3) which is “Safe by Design”, which is saying that we need to design and lay out our communities in such a way that we reduce opportunities for crime. And so in the developments that we do, development projects that we would like to do, whether it is by lighting, whether it is just by managing access to the facility, there are several things that could be done to make the community safer and to design with safety in mind.

Mrs. Oudit: Just one last question. I see in your developmental projects, could you tell me when the company hired Dover Kohl and Partners of U.S.? And to date has paid US\$90,000. Could you tell me what was the reason for hiring? I see detailed design solutions for comprehensive developmental areas, what does that mean? And is that reflected in any of these documents here? Because I also see that you did a strategic plan for east Port of Spain done in house, as well as the Beetham Urban Village, again done in house, so what part of the Dover Kohl documents are reflected here?

Dr. Thomas-Austin: The arrangement with Dover Kohl it is a following on to the planning that we would have been doing, so you would notice that in the development plan we identified these areas that we recommend for comprehensive development, as comprehensive development areas. There are six of them recommended in the plan. What the company felt was that we needed to have more detailed planning work done as to how those areas will be developed. How do you rationalize existing development challenges in those areas, and to be able to put forward solutions that people can visualize but also have an input into designing. So that exercise, that exercise went back to probably to 2008 when we started preparing the terms of reference for the exercise. We would have invited locally, advertised for consultants to prepare these urban designs solutions for the comprehensive development areas in east Port of Spain.

Several firms responded to the ad that was placed locally, including foreign firms, firms from the UK, from Canada and many of them partnered with local firms. And we went through a tender and evaluation process that was over several months, including shortlisting firms, inviting them at their expense to come to Trinidad and see the area and then decide to submit proposals, and out of that we selected the firm Dover Kohl and Partners out of Miami, because they presented the best technical proposal, particularly a methodology that we were quite interested in, which is a methodology that engages the residents of the communities to participate in this design process .

Mrs. Oudit: Before you go on, at that point when that contract was awarded, was the company very clear on its mandate? Because you said at different times the mandate shifted and definitions and interpretations shifted, so was it very clear at that point in time because in handing out a contract for such a comprehensive developmental plan must speak to a mandate that is across the board understood and bought into.

Dr. Thomas-Austin: The company has always been clear. Our interpretation of our mandate has not changed in the company over the years. The company's understanding of its mandate has not changed. We have had challenges with other people's interpretation of the mandate of the company but our interpretation of the mandate has been—

Mrs. Oudit: But no, forgive me. How can you explain other people's interpretation of the mandate, when you speak from the company's point of view therefore it is not really—I do not know first of all how you can identify what other people's interpretation of the company is, unless it was reflected in via the Ministry of Finance or the Ministry of Local Government in terms of how you were able to implement your policy. And if you are saying that the other people's interpretation or agencies' interpretation then, is it that the Ministry of Finance was wrong in its interpretation or the Ministry of Local Government was wrong in its interpretation or maybe it was so different in some way from your interpretation of your mandate?

Dr. Thomas-Austin: As I said the mandate to the company is to develop and re-develop east Port of Spain, to improve economic, social and physical conditions. I think where we have had some differences of opinion and when we first started under the Ministry of Planning, I think the Ministry of Planning accepted and understood and had the same understanding of the mandate as we did. After time when we moved to the Ministry of Local Government in December of 2007, questions started to arise as to whether or not the economic, social and physical improvement to east Port of Spain meant that we should be carrying out social programmes or should we just be developing physical structures in which certain programmes might take place over time? So it was going back to them that there was a slight discussion on the emphasis on the social and the economic programmes.

Mrs. Oudit: And was what the more reasonable understanding at that point, was it more the social programmes or the infrastructural?

Dr. Thomas-Austin: I do not know if there is a reasonable understanding there. There has always been that difference of opinion, and so we have not been able to do certain things because the Ministry—

Mrs. Oudit: No, no. You are saying in 2007 when you moved from Planning to Local Government there was some change in your interpretation of your, right—the reason that I am asking that is because I started off by asking, when was Dover Kohl hired? You indicated in 2008 so that it would have fed directly from the change from the Ministry of Planning to Local Government and as you are explaining now there was some discussion as to whether or not it should have the focus infrastructure or—so how did that feed too the hiring contract?

Dr. Thomas-Austin: I did not say that Dover Kohl was hired into 2008 I said we started the process in 2008 that led to selection of that firm, as the preferred firm.

Mrs. Oudit: Which was when?

Dr. Thomas-Austin: The contract with the firm was actually signed in 2010, so we had selected the firm since 2009 and we were in discussions with them about different terms and conditions in the contract.

Mrs. Oudit: Could you tell me what date that was signed in 2010?

Dr. Thomas-Austin: I cannot tell you off-the-cuff. The contract was signed in March of 2010. They would have been selected since November 2008 and we were in discussions to agree the details and terms and conditions of the contract, and when that was agreed the contract was eventually signed in March of 2010. *[Interruption]* No, I do not.

Mrs. Oudit: Again, as Dr. Douglas says the *[Inaudible]* you started a process in 2008, the contract was awarded at the end but only signed on March 2010.

Dr. Thomas-Austin: Yes. Because sometimes these things take time to work out. We

went through a selection process from the time we put out a request for Expressions of Interest to provide urban design solutions. We got responses from about 17 or 18 firms. We put together a team of people, not from within the company, some external people to help evaluate those submissions, when we shortlisted we felt it was necessary to invite the consultants for discussions at their expense to come to Trinidad to have pretender discussions to be able to do site visits in the area, to understand what the area required and to have that first-hand experience.

They were able to meet with several stakeholders from Ministry of Planning, Local Government, different agencies, we were introducing them to consultants at the time who were looking at the Rapid Rail project, all the things that could impact on what they were doing. Then the shortlisted consultants after that went back and prepared their proposals and submitted, then those proposals were evaluated. Once we selected the proposals that met our needs, we were discussing with them some of the fine-tuning of some of the elements that we wanted to have included in that project before we got to the sign-off on the contract and that is when the contract was signed.

So the firm has been engaged, the moneys that would have been paid to them would have been an advance payment of 10 per cent of the contract sum, and then they did some of the initial analysis, two site visits and some initial analysis that was done and the work has been resumed. The current board of directors had reviewed the process and felt that it was important to continue the project and so that is continuing.

Dr. Tewarie: Did the US consultants provide a report for you? Do you have it?

Dr. Thomas-Austin: The only report they have provided so far is an inception report since the work was started but we have their detailed proposal.

Dr. Tewarie: I want to ask, given all you have done and your experience over the last few years, and knowing what you know now, and understanding the community based on the kind of research that you have done which reveals basically the underbelly of the community, do you believe that the problems of east Port of Spain can be solved within a reasonable time frame to create the conditions for sustainable development and the creation of sustainable communities? I want to know that, not in a way that you articulate but what does your gut of feeling tell you about the solution of these problems within a reasonable time frame?

Dr. Thomas-Austin: I think my gut feeling tells me and my professional feeling tells me that this problem is entirely solvable.

Dr. Tewarie: Okay.

Dr. Thomas-Austin: I think what we may have to discuss is what you consider to be a reasonable time frame.

Dr. Tewarie: I am thinking within a decade.

Dr. Thomas-Austin: I do not think it could be solved within a decade, I think considerable progress can be made within a decade. I like to refer people to some historical information we found as we were researching east Port of Spain, and that was in quote in one of their books, *The Book of Trinidad*, that spoke to a large, over-crowded, insanitary slum developing over the river and behind the bridge, in 1770 something. So I think problems that had developed over that period of time, I think it is unrealistic to suggest that they can be solved in 10 years. I think we can make progress towards addressing them, but the re-development of east Port of Spain is not a project, it is long-term development programme that can take several years to achieve all the desired results but it can be tackled in phases, and there are things that can be done in the short-term, in the medium-term and long-term before we start to see the kind of sustainable transformation that—

12.35 p.m.

Dr. Tewarie: Within a 10-year period do you think that we can bring things—let us say we got some of the things right, like the coordination, the strategy, the sequencing of interventions, et cetera. Do you think within a decade we can bring things towards—what you might call more manageable proportions in the sense of seeing tangible progress in communities? Things like these for instance is what I am talking about, keeping more children in school who are successful, getting more unemployed people who have dropped out of the system skilled. Bringing more business into the community that engages larger numbers of people who are now unemployed or disconnected from the economic system. Creating the conditions in which the community can strive for greater ambition in terms of the younger group of citizens that is to say, school-aged children, seeing a way out in terms of opportunities. Do you think within a 10-year period with the right kinds of integrated intervention we might be able to achieve some of that?

Dr. Thomas-Austin: I am absolutely sure that we can, absolutely sure.

Dr. Tewarie: Okay. Now if you had to do three things given what you know, three things that we could do, one, two, three. What would those be?

Dr. Thomas-Austin: For me it would be:

1. to agree on a development strategy for doing it;
2. would be to create an appropriate development authority. And I say that, because it has to be one that has not just the responsibility but has the authority in law. The mechanisms for funding and sustaining itself to be able to carry out the task that has been given;
3. and I would say that we need to also have the commitment and buy in of the communities to the strategy and to the approach that needs to be taken.

So a clear development strategy, a development of authority with the powers and the

resources to be able to do the work that needs to be done, and the engagement and support of the community.

And in the case of East Port of Spain I will add a fourth one:

4. and that has to be creating a safe environment for development to take place, because it is only with that that you can attract the private sector or business development into the communities.

Dr. Tewarie: I think you have given some thought to these and I think the answers are quite credible answers in the context and I want to let you know that I appreciate it. I just wanted to ask one question and this is really of the Chairman which is that—given that the board would have come in March, is that it? March 2011. So you have had a short time on the board and in the company as a board. What is your perspective on what might be done differently that would allow us to achieve more in the company? Have you had time to reflect on that?

Mr. Kistow: What we have been doing for the period that we were there, is reviewing the documents. And one of the major things that we have noticed is that the development plans form a basis for developing detailed designs. One of our main objective has been to promote the government intention and we have been trying to identify this based on our meetings with our Minister, based on what has been said by the hon. Prime Minister, based on what has been said by the Minister of Finance, and I think that some of these things you had mentioned earlier. So we have been looking at these issues and seeing how we can incorporate it into the development plan. But the development plan is a broad spectrum. I do not want to say it is easy, but it is not very difficult to incorporate some of those things into it. That is what we have been focusing on.

Dr. Tewarie: In your view a greater alignment you think—did I get you right? You think that there is room for greater alignment which can be reasonably achieved as we proceed with a mandate for the company, from the board's point of view.

Mr. Kistow: That is correct. Because even the projects that we are proposing for this financial year, we are putting those aspects as justification for those projects that we are going to be selecting.

Dr. Tewarie: So there is some integration taking place from your point of view?

Mr. Kistow: That is correct.

Dr. Tewarie: All right.

Mr. De Coteau: Mr. Chairman, I would like to take the opportunity to really complement Dr. Deborah Thomas-Austin. And I am saying this without any prejudice. They say this is the year of the people of African descent and so on, and I think she is a fine example of where the woman can be and I really compliment her. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Chairman: Any closing comments, Dr. Thomas-Austin. We are about to [*Interruption*]

Mrs. Thomas-Austin: No. I think I have pointed all out.

Mr. Chairman: Okay if I can just make a few comments. There was just one or two other things I do not need to get a response, but I would like you to certainly think about. In your documentation I also notice that you proposed as a strategy that the companies that you have projects with should employ 75 per cent of the labour of skills from within the communities. Is that correct?

Dr. Thomas-Austin: Unskilled labour, 75 per cent, yeah.

Mr. Chairman: Unskilled labour, 75 per cent. Okay, I noticed that—I think it is a very good proposal, but exactly how you are going to—it was not clear to me how you are going to achieve that, because if the project is on the East Port of Spain that is fine. If it is not, there is a cost to it. In other words, to do that it means that the contactors or whoever might be executing the project would tell you, well look I do not have time with that I have other people to employ and this sort of thing. So it is something that it is a policy that will have to be also adopted at a much higher level, an international level. For instance, one of the things that I thought about—in fact I was very surprised about the level of unemployment, 30 something per cent in some communities; the educational situation. So that it is very clear to me that East Port of Spain is perhaps one of the most depressed communities in East Port of Spain. They are the most depressed in the country. I have looked at the indicators and I could not find any—there are no other indicators as far as I was able to determine that would compare with what is happening in East Port of Spain. So I think it is something that really needs to look at. The problem that I see also has to be one with implementation and how you might be able to link East Port of Spain to a number of the Government Ministries where other works are ongoing, because as Minister Tewartie asked, you said 10 years. Ten years fine, but 30 million would not achieve what has to be done in East Port of Spain. It has to be a vast amount of resources in order to do that. Please be assured that we have listened very attentively to your presentation as indicated. We do appreciate it, we think it is very detailed, it is very informative, and that this committee certainly will do everything within our power to make recommendations to the appropriate channels so that the constraints that you have identified and that we have identified would be addressed in the not too distant future so that we can really deal with a problem that has been with us for a very, very long time. I also made a recommendation that some of the projects that are taking place now, that you may wish to talk to the appropriate Ministries to ensure that—I mentioned for instance, the Red House where there is a major project taking place. You talk about skills in East Port of Spain, could you link that to some of the major projects in the city centre. Those kinds of things, those kinds of innovative strategies that would require further consultation with the government. I do not think there are any other comments. I just want to ask Sen. Oudit, do you still require the letter you were

referring to or was that matter resolved?

Mrs. Oudit: It is not quite resolved in terms of any documentation showing some request. At first I thought it was to the Cabinet, but Dr. Thomas-Austin said it was to the line Minister.

Mr. Chairman: So do you still want that document?

Mrs. Oudit: Yes I would like to see because then clearly if you have a letter then there should have been a response and may be from there the committee could say well a request was made and so far nothing has come to the way. That is for clarification.

Mr. Chairman: So any further documentation that we require we will communicate with you so that you can submit any additional documentation. If there are any further queries then we need to consult you further we will also do that. I wish to thank you very much. Mr. Chairman I do not know if there are any concluding statements that you want to make.

Mr. Kistow: [*Inaudible*]

Mr. Chairman: Okay. I wish to thank you all for attending, and this meeting is now adjourned.

Adjourned at 12.46 p.m.