

nova scotia real estate

COMMISSION

ANNUAL REPORT 2020



# ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

## ZOOM WEBINAR

April 22, 2021  
10:00 AM- 12:00 PM

### Agenda

1. Call to Order— Mary MacDonald
2. Introduction—MacDonald
3. Chairperson's Report—Mary MacDonald
4. Licensing Committee—Kim Fox
5. Complaints Review Committee—Aaron Millen
6. Discipline Committee—Nancy McGrath
7. Commercial Committee—Greg Taylor
8. Finance Committee—Linda Smardon
9. Recovery Fund—Susan Green
10. Education Committee—Clinton Wilkins
11. Election results
12. Open Forum
13. Adjournment

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# BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Top row: Aaron Millen, Susan Green, Greg Taylor, Mary MacDonald, Kim Fox.  
Bottom row: Clinton Wilkins, Nancy McGrath, Linda Smardon, Carol Beal, Anthony Brown.

Name	Term	Appointment	Location	Brokerage/organization	Attendance*
Mary MacDonald	April 2021	NSAR	Liverpool	Walt MacDonald Real Estate Ltd.	8/8
Kim Fox	April 2022	NSAR	Bedford	RE/MAX Nova	8/8
Aaron Millen	April 2023	NSAR	New Glasgow	Turning Point Real Estate Limited	6/6
Susan Green	April 2021	Elected	New Glasgow	Coldwell Banker M.B. Green Realty	8/8
Anthony Brown	April 2022	Elected	Dartmouth	Royal LePage Atlantic	8/8
Linda Smardon	April 2023	Elected	Dartmouth	Exit Realty Metro	8/8
Greg Taylor	January 2022	Commercial	Halifax	Colliers International (Nova Scotia) Inc.	8/8
Clinton Wilkins	December 2020	Public	Dartmouth	CENTUM Home Lenders Ltd.	7/7
Carol Beal	April 2022	Public	Halifax		7/8
Nancy McGrath	April 2023	Public	Bridgetown		2/2

\*The attendance record of the Commissioners serving on the Nova Scotia Real Estate Commission between January 1, 2020 and December 31, 2020. There were a total of eight Commission meetings held.

# MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR



**MARY MACDONALD**  
**WALT MACDONALD REAL**  
**ESTATE LTD.**

COVID 19 made this last year a very challenging one for the Nova Scotia Real Estate Commission. Thanks to the hard work and determination of our staff, we were able to move forward in a seamless way. We were able to delay payment of renewal fees until last September which we hope was helpful to licensees to get a handle on their business during this time.

The industry has seen one of the busiest years in a long time, which has surprised everyone. The numbers of people entering the industry has surpassed what we could have forecasted. This has proven to be a challenge for staff with providing exams in a safe and timely manner for all.

We have now entered into an agreement with a hotel that can provide a safe environment for all. This will make things much easier for staff as well as prospective licensees.

Many of our long-term projects have had to be put on hold until the pandemic is under control.

Audits have been streamlined to a modified format for the time being and are being conducted remotely. We

are hopeful that full audits will resume as soon as it is safe for all involved.

The By-law Review Task Force is working with the assistance of staff to move steadily forward on this on this project. We thank them for their work with this project.

The Board of Directors, Executive and all committees have been meeting virtually via Zoom.

The Commission has entered into an agreement with the NSAR to update the Salesperson's Licensing Course as well as the Broker Licensing Course. They will also be the provider for continuing professional development education. These course updates are a long range project, but are much needed.

It has been my honor to sit as Chair of the Nova Scotia Real Estate Commission and want to thank everyone for the opportunity. This is my last year on the Board of Directors. I had been Vice-Chair for four of the previous years and this last year as Chair. I will miss being part of the Board of Directors and wish everyone much success.

# MESSAGE FROM THE REGISTRAR



**BRAD CHISHOLM**  
REGISTRAR

Whatever preconceived notions we had at the start of 2020 they were quickly replaced with unexpected change and uncertainty. In early March, with the accelerated events unfolding, the Commission staff shut down the physical office and set up to carry out the Commission's operations remotely. Most businesses, organizations and government departments did the same. Still, this was no small feat of logistics and the staff at the Commission should be commended for what resulted in a relatively seamless transition. This could not have been so easily achieved had it not been for previous investments in remote-work access, online licensing and payments systems, online banking technology and, of course, staff training.

Leading up to and during the initial lock down, the Commission sought direction from provincial health officer, Dr. Strang, on a number of trading related activities. There were early calls from some sources to suspend trading in real estate entirely. This would have required an order from government. The Commission continued to direct licensees and consumers to provincial public health updates as they unfolded. In the meantime, the work of the Commission continued, albeit in modified capacity. An emergency measures by-law was approved by the Board of Directors which enabled temporary measures to be taken in response to the pandemic environment. This included shifting the licence renewal date to September, waiving reinstatement fees for a period, offering extensions to students and exam writers, modified audits, etc. Despite all these changes, Commission staff's priority was to continue to provide timely responses to licensees and consumers on all matters.

Not all challenges had perfect solutions. Licensing education could continue virtually, but the matter of exams posed a problem. Exams in Nova Scotia are in-person and have traditionally been offered in the HRM at the NSCC campus in Dartmouth, and at Access Nova Scotia offices in Sydney and Kentville. With the closure of these facilities, and with the ongoing health and safety issues

present, licensing exams halted in March.

In the months that followed, given that the COVID-19 pandemic was a long-term reality, planning began for re-starting the exam process. In response to the need for staff and exam writer safety, the decision was made to reintroduce exams on a limited basis at the Commission's offices in Bedford. Safety protocols were established, including sanitizing surfaces before and after exams, mandatory mask wearing, COVID-19 pre-screening questionnaires, etc. Before full staff returned to the office in June, two full weeks were dedicated to exams resulting in 12 writers per day. This cleared the backlog, and then from there forward exams have continued to be held at the Commission's offices each Thursday and Friday. Early in 2021 it became apparent that the increased demand for real estate licences was going to continue beyond the capacity for us to facilitate exams twice per week. In early April exams will be moved to another venue where the same health and safety protocols will be followed, but with larger capacity to meet the anticipated demand going forward. Unfortunately, with government Access offices closed for the foreseeable future, exams will only be written in the HRM.

With the development of new licensing education courses, new exams will also be developed with the intent of offering online writings. This will be a major project carried out simultaneously with the development of the new courses.

Other projects that began prior to the pandemic, for example By-law revisions and website modifications, made slower progress due in large part to the higher priorities of keeping regular operations moving. It is anticipated that as the vaccination program moves forward and we return to a near normal state, the pace of operational and non-operational work will resume to pre-pandemic levels.

Thank you to the Commission staff for your dedication, hard work, and flexibility over the past year.

As always thank you to the Board of Directors for the support you provided.

# LICENSING COMMITTEE



**KIM FOX**  
RE/MAX NOVA

The Licensing Committee works together to make recommendations to the Board of Directors on licensing matters.

Our direction, working with the Nova Scotia Association of REALTORS, is to increase the value of licensees through education, and improving professionalism with all licensees.

The Committee met three times via zoom since the last AGM. Some items of discussion were newly licensed agents not understanding the forms and some with a language barrier. It is suggested that brokerages look at a mentorship program to help with new agents. Ongoing discussions about dealing with safety and health precautions as set out by Dr. Strang.

I would like to give thanks to the committee members for their continued support in my second year as Chair of the Licensing Committee, and especially through unprecedented times like a pandemic, along with their input and experience. Thanks also to NSREC Staff Pam Crane (Licensing Officer) Peggy Kell (Communications and Technology Officer).

New applicants	2017	2018	2019	2020
Salespeople	116	147	175	179
Brokers/ MABs	17	9	8	14
Associate brokers	4	1	8	13
Industry totals	2017	2018	2019	2020
Offices	230	222	224	226
Licensees	1578	1607	1680	1761
Brokers	168	161	159	157
MABs	50	51	53	50
Associate brokers	102	97	89	91
Salespeople	1258	1298	1379	1463
Approved sales corps.	187	206	216	234

## Committee Members

Kim Fox, Chair, Commission Member, Dartmouth

Alex Astbury, Salesperson, Halifax

Lorena MacDonald, Associate Broker, Halifax

Nancy McGrath, Commission Member, Bridgetown

Jennifer Morrison, Managing Associate Broker, Halifax

Briana O'Grady, Lawyer, Upper Tantallon

Allen Chase, Chair, NSAR Education Committee\*

Nicole Kreiger, NSAR Director of Education\*

\*Non voting



# COMPLAINTS REVIEW COMMITTEE



**AARON MILLEN**  
TURNING POINT REAL ESTATE LIMITED

The Complaints Review Committee (CRC) is made up of licensed and public members who are tasked with reviewing all of the Registrar's decisions, which include proposed settlement agreements, no charges, and any dismissed complaints.

At CRC meetings, the Compliance Investigator presents the case to the committee, along with the evidence and the Registrar's decision. If the CRC approves the Registrar's decision of charges and sanctions, the licensee is presented with a settlement agreement. Should the CRC not approve the decision, the settlement agreement is rescinded and the Registrar may modify his decision or send the matter to hearing. The Commission follows the same process every time the Registrar offers a settlement agreement, determines there were no charges, or dismisses a complaint.

The Commission's compliance team fields daily calls and emails from consumers and licensees about trade practices and very few of these discussions result in

formal complaints being submitted. The compliance team makes every effort to engage brokers early and where possible, attempt to resolve issues before they result in a formal complaint and the opening of an investigation. This approach is not suitable for all cases and, depending on the allegations, an investigation may be in the best interest of both the public and the industry.

For example, if a consumer's complaint is service-related (i.e. the licensee is not returning phone calls and emails), the compliance team will likely contact the licensee's broker to discuss the issue and have the broker follow up with the licensee and the consumer. If the matter can be resolved satisfactorily, the consumer may choose not to file a complaint.

The CRC plays a key role in our complaints and investigation processes. I want to thank the members of the CRC and the compliance team for their hard work and dedication to the committee and the protection of real estate consumers in Nova Scotia.

## Committee Members

Aaron Millen, Chair, Commission Member, Liverpool

Jennifer Kyte-MacDonald, Associate Broker, Sydney

Jessica Kaulback, Lawyer, Truro

David Melvin, Lawyer, Halifax

Charlie Pace, Broker, Halifax

Ann Parks, Broker, Bridgewater

Patricia Roberts, Salesperson, Halifax

Derek Land, Lawyer, Bedford



# DISCIPLINE COMMITTEE



**NANCY MCGRATH**  
PUBLIC COMMISSION MEMBER

There were no disciplinary hearings in 2020. Very few investigations progress to the hearing stage because the majority of licensees facing disciplinary action choose to resolve the matter via a settlement agreement. Thank you to the members of the Disciplinary Committee for their willingness to serve in this role if required.

# COMMERCIAL COMMITTEE



**GREG TAYLOR**  
COLLIERS INTERNATIONAL  
(NOVA SCOTIA) INC.

COVID-19 brought great disruption to every corner of the world in 2020. The commercial sector was deeply impacted by quarantine measures, from vacated offices to empty malls and restaurants.

Thankfully, Nova Scotia, and Atlantic Canada for that matter, weathered the crisis with greater ease than our larger provincial neighbours. With low case counts, business were and restaurants were able to open their doors to the public and office workers were able to return to their desks, albeit under occupancy restrictions.

I encourage commercial practitioners to send any concerns or issues they may have to the Commission or to the members of the Commercial Committee. The Committee would like to be proactive on issues concerning the commercial community.

Thank you to the members of the Commercial Committee and to the Commission staff for your support.

## Committee Members

Nancy McGrath, Chair, Commission Member, Bridgetown  
Carol Alexander, Associate Broker, Bridgewater  
Raffi Balmanoukian, Lawyer, New Glasgow  
Marilisa Benigno, Broker, Halifax  
Sandra Chaisson, Salesperson, Halifax  
Valerie Chugg, Broker, Antigonish  
Al Demings, Salesperson, Dartmouth  
Carol Beal, Commission Member, Halifax  
Tim Margolian, Associate Broker, Halifax  
Kathy Whitewood, Salesperson, New Minas

## Committee Members

Greg Taylor, Chair, Commission Member, Halifax  
Tom Carpenter, Broker, Halifax  
Cathy Covey, Broker, Stellarton  
Bill Greenwood, Salesperson, Halifax  
Carlisle Norwood, Broker, Halifax  
Tim Margolian, Associate Broker, Halifax

# FINANCE COMMITTEE



LINDA SMARDON  
EXIT REALTY METRO

## 2020 RESULTS

The COVID-19 pandemic conditions that took hold in early 2020 had and will continue to have a substantial and lasting impact on the Nova Scotia economy. Thankfully, the coordinated response by government, real estate brokerages and Nova Scotians at large enabled real estate trading to move forward and the market continued. This enabled the Commission to maintain a stable financial position, though not without challenges.

Due to the initial interruption of trading in March and April the Commission decided to delay licence renewals until September 2020 to allow brokerages and licensed practitioners time to financially adapt to the temporary gap in trading activity.

With the unusual market conditions that followed COVID-19 protocols, there emerged a growth in salesperson applicants toward the end of the year that is anticipated to continue into 2021. As a result, some licensing and licensing-related revenue categories realized higher than expected levels. In regards to expenses, some categories like meetings, training, and travel were lower.

Other expenses like legal fees, amortization, salaries and rent increased in 2020. Looking forward, the Board of Directors has designated funds for future endeavours including governance/strategic initiatives and new exam development to coincide with the anticipated redevelopment of the broker and salesperson licensing courses by the NSAR. Finally, as a means of responsible financial management the Commission increased its operating reserve fund this year and will continue to do so going forward, with the long term goal of maintaining funds sufficient for six-months operating expenses.

## 2021 BUDGET

In addition to regular operations, and in keeping with the goals and priorities set out in the Commission's strategic plan, a number of projects will receive priority in 2021, including By-law revisions, new licensing courses, and new licensing exam development. The Board has decided there will be no licensing fee increases for the 2021-2022 licensing cycle. Thank you to the Finance Committee members and to the Commission staff for their hard work.

### Committee Members

Linda Smardon, Chair, Commission Member, Dartmouth

Mary MacDonald, Commission Member, Liverpool

Greg Taylor, Commission Member, Halifax

Clinton Wilkins, Public Commission Member, Dartmouth

# RECOVERY FUND COMMITTEE



**SUSAN GREEN**  
COLDWELL BANKER M.B.  
GREEN REALTY

The Fund exists to compensate consumers for losses resulting from fraud or breach of trust by a licensee.

The Fund principle exceeds the \$300,000 Nova Scotia Real Estate Trading Act regulation minimum that was set in 1997 and there have been no claims on the Fund to date. The Finance Committee oversee the monetary aspects of the Recovery Fund, including investment decisions.

The role of the Recovery Fund Committee is to ensure claims are processed properly, that the Recovery Fund is maintained at or above the minimum set by the Regulations and to make recommendations to the Board of Commissioners.

From an investment perspective the Fund entered 2020 in a defensive position. As the year progressed and markets began to sell off due to the impacts of COVID-19 it made a gradual shift to a more risk on asset allocation while still remaining consistent with the Fund's Investment Policy.

In 2020, the portfolio had a 6.41% net return. The positioning held up well throughout the worst of the market pullback. March was the weakest month for the portfolio, falling -5.96%, then posting positive quarters for the remainder of the year.

Looking toward 2021 and a gradual reopening of the economy there is an anticipation that further growth will be experienced.

As of December 31, 2020, 65% of the portfolio was invested in Fixed Income (bond) funds, 23% was invested in Equity and the remaining 12% cash and short term equivalents. The Geographic exposure was allocated 30% into Canada, 47% in the United States and the remaining 23% internationally. From a currency perspective, 73% of the portfolio is denominated in Canadian dollars and 27% in United States dollars.

There were no claims against the fund in 2020.

## Committee Members

Susan Green, Chair, Commission Member, New Glasgow  
Dennis Richards, Commission Appointee, Cole Harbour  
Donna Malone, NSAR Appointee, LaHave



# EDUCATION COMMITTEE



**CLINTON WILKINS**  
CENTUM HOME LENDERS LTD.

The Education Committee is the Commission's newest standing committee and was struck in the fall of 2019. The first action of the committee was to survey the industry about licensing and continuing education. Based on the results of that survey, the Education Committee moved forward on a number of initiatives in 2020.

One of the key findings of the survey was that licensees viewed the NSAR as the preferred provider of licensing education. In keeping with that finding, the committee made recommendation to the board to sign a new agreement with the NSAR to deliver salesperson and broker licensing courses for a period of five years.

The licensee survey indicated that licensees believed that the current licensing courses were insufficient to prepare individuals for entry to the profession. As such, the committee's recommendation included provisions to modernize and incorporate leading practices in real es-

tate education into the salesperson and broker licensing courses. The committee also requested the salesperson licensing course be the first course to be reformed. The board accepted the committee's recommendations and work on the salesperson licensing course will begin in 2021.

The Committee also made recommendations to the board regarding the CPE course topics for 2020-2021 and 2021-2021 in response to needs and issues identified by licensees.

As a public member, my appointment to the Commission Board of Directors ended in December of 2020. I want to thank the members of the Education Committee, the members of the Board, and the Commission staff for their dedication and hard work. I have enjoyed my time serving the board and its committees and wish everyone the best in 2021.

## Education Committee Members

Clinton Wilkins, Chair, Public Member, Dartmouth

Anthony Brown, Commission Member, Dartmouth

Marg Bowlen, Broker, Dartmouth

Ryan Hartlen, Broker, Dartmouth

Greg Taylor, Commission Member, Halifax

Denise MacDonell, Salesperson, Halifax

# AUDITS AND INVESTIGATIONS

## AUDITS

From January to March, both trust audits and brokerage audits were conducted. As a result of the pandemic, modified trust audits were conducted for the remainder of the year. The number of and type of audits conducted are shown below. F2 indicates that the broker submitted a Form 2—*Declaration Respecting Absence of Trust Funds* and F3 indicates that the broker submitted a Form 3—*Declaration Respecting Absence of Trust and Transaction Files*.

### PRE-PANDEMIC REGULAR AUDITS (JANUARY – MARCH)

- Brokerage audits – 20 (4 F2s, 8 F3s)
- Trust audits – 19 (9 F2s, 2 F3s)
- Terminated brokerage – brokerage audit – 1
- Terminated brokerage – trust audits – 2 (1 F2)
- New broker brokerage audits – 7 (2 F2s, 1 F3)

### PANDEMIC MODIFIED AUDITS (APRIL – DECEMBER)

- Terminated brokerage trust audits – 2 (2 F2s)
- Terminated brokerage trust audits – 3 (3 F2s)
- New broker trust audits – 29 (6 F2s, 2 F3s)
- Trust audits – 90 (5 F2s, 4 F3s)

Trust and brokerage audits educate brokerages to understand and comply with the standards and procedures for trust accounts and transaction-file record keeping, which in turn protects the best interests of the public.

## INVESTIGATIONS

Origin of 2020 investigations	
Public	14
Registrar	2
2020 investigation status summary	
Outstanding investigations January 1, 2020	8
New cases initiated in 2020	16
Closed (investigated and presented)	19
Outstanding as of December 31, 2020	5
Dismissed complaints	3
2020 hearings	0
2020 licence suspensions	0
2020 licence cancellations	0

# ELECTION NOMINEES



**TAQI HASHMI, SALESPERSON,  
BETTER HOMES AND GAR-  
DENS REAL ESTATE ATLANTIC**

**TIME LICENSED:**

7 months

**DEGREES / DESIGNATIONS:**

- Post Graduate Diploma in Local Government & Administration

- Master of Science in Electronics
- Bachelor of Science in Electronics
- Canadian Transportation Agency: How to assist persons with disabilities.
- Certificate of Excellence for outstanding of performance and contribution in the organization of IT Commerce Network
- Training Course on National Human Development Reports

**DIRECTOR / COMMITTEE EXPERIENCE**

- Ground Transportation Committee Member, 2019-Present, Halifax Stanfield International Airport
- Board of Director, 2018-Present, PCANS Chief settlement officer-Real Estate
- Assistant Director, worked 10 years in an organization responsible for city Planning and Development of Sub-Division

**ABOUT ME**

Hi, my name is Taqi Hashmi, I immigrated to Canada and settled in Halifax, NS. I am proud to be a resident of Nova Scotia and very much involved in the community.

I am one of the founding members of PCANS. PCANS is a not-for profit association. Organization is also heavily involved in assisting newcomers in settling down in Nova Scotia.

I have been on the board of PCANS since 2018. Initially I volunteered to work on membership engagement and development. Currently, I am serving as chief settlement officer of PCANS, and my role is to provide settlement support to immigrants and Canadians coming to Nova Scotia from within Canada and outside. Attending to inquires of newcomers and potential as part of involvement in executive council committee.

My community involvement also extends to being a representative on the Halifax Stanfield International Airport Ground Transportation committee. I am very much involved in development and growth of Halifax Airport as a being major Hub of business and tourism. I also bring City development experience from abroad that makes me well grounded candidate for the position as Nova scotia is on the path of massive development and growth. My community involvement as well as my background in urban housing development helps me to understand the challenges and constrains faced by the Community.

I am ready to take on these challenges had on, so please consider me for the Position.



**GARY MAILMAN, SALESPER-  
SON, EXIT REALTY INTER  
LAKE**

**TIME LICENSED**

Eighteen years

**DEGREES / DESIGNATIONS**

Bachelor of Education, CRA  
P.App

**DIRECTOR / COMMITTEE EXPERIENCE**

Previously served on the NSREC Board from 2016-19, the Licensing Committee, and the Education Task Force. Also have served on multiple committees at NSAR and am a Past President

**ABOUT ME**

For those of you I have not meet, my name is Gary Mailman and I have been a licensed salesperson for 18 years with Exit Realty Interlake in Bridgewater. During those 18 years I have been very active within the Real Estate Industry, serving on numerous Committees with both NSAR and NSREC. I have also had the pleasure and humble experience serving as a President of NSAR, which allowed me to meet many Industry members across the Province and discuss issues and concerns in every Region of our Province.

If elected to serve on the Board at NSREC, I will bring experience, passion, and the willingness to listen and speak up on issues / concerns. NSREC has a very important role to play within the Real Estate Industry here in Nova Scotia. Although I believe NSREC has done a better job as of late communicating with Industry Mem-



bers I still see room for improvement, which can only help in serving and protecting the consumer. I believe my experience, especially in this crazy market over the past year, will be an asset to the Board, Industry, and the Public. I also feel the Board at NSREC needs to have equal representation of members from both urban and rural areas and from as many different Brokerages as possible. At this time I would like to thank you for your consideration and hopefully your support for my endeavour to serve the Industry and Public on the Board at NSREC.



**LOGAN MORSE, SALESPERSON, ROYAL LEPAGE ATLANTIC**

**TIME LICENSED**

Two years

**DEGREES / DESIGNATIONS**

Bachelor of Business Administration

**DIRECTOR / COMMITTEE EXPERIENCE**

- Treasurer/Director of Valley Regional Hospital Foundation
- President of Annapolis Valley Apple Blossom Festival
- Director of Centreville District Community Development Association
- Committee member of County of Kings Audit Committee
- Committee member of Town of Kentville Investment Advisory Committee

**ABOUT ME**

Logan has lived in the Annapolis Valley his whole life and is a passionate entrepreneur. He is an active community volunteer and a member of several community-interest organizations. Logan holds a Bachelor of Business Administration degree from Acadia University, majoring in Accounting. Along with being a licensed REALTOR®, Logan owns and manages a real estate portfolio investment portfolio in the Annapolis Valley. While his professional career focuses on real estate, he dedicates many hours to community initiatives. Logan is the treasurer and a director of the Valley Regional Hospital Foundation, president of the Annapolis Valley Apple Blossom Festival, and a director of the Centreville District Community Development Association. Logan has volunteered for Junior Achievement Nova Scotia and Inn From the

Cold. Logan was an army cadet and is now employed by the Department of National Defence as a reservist officer, and works with the Canadian Cadet Organization. In 2018 and 2019 he was selected as an escort officer for an Army Cadet international exchange to Netherlands, Belgium, and France.



**KIMIA NEJAT, SALESPERSON, EXIT REALTY METRO**

**TIME LICENSED**

One year, seven months

**DEGREES / DESIGNATIONS**

Bachelor of Arts with Honours in Psychology

**DIRECTOR / COMMITTEE EXPERIENCE**

Psychology Society, MSVU

**ABOUT ME**

Hi, my name is Kimia Nejat and I'm hoping to be elected to the Board of Directors. I have been a Salesperson since August of 2019 and although I am relatively new to the business, I believe that is an advantage. Though I have not yet sat on a committee in organized Real Estate, I was part of the Psychology Society in university so I understand the importance of varying opinions and active listening.

Being new to the industry, one positive stands out: I am gaining lots of experience with the added benefit of not being jaded by the industry yet. If all of the industry members are highly experienced, a fresh perspective is missing. As a young person, I look at the world a little differently and the cohort I am from would bring a different outlook to topics and issues. One thing to point out is that I am a very just person. If something is not fair, I am not afraid to stand against it. With that being said, I do not make such decisions or opinions without giving them thought; I use an unbiased, critical approach while maintaining ethics and honest treatment. As the new By-laws come forward, this way of thinking would be beneficial as I will merge together what is practical for industry members and what is best for members of the public.

I believe the Commission should reflect the public that it serves; it should reflect the industry members it governs. Members of the public, as well as industry members, are different ages and races and to not reflect that around the table would be a disadvantage. A piece of the puzzle seems like it's missing and I think I would be a good fit!



*Financial Statements of*

**NOVA SCOTIA REAL ESTATE COMMISSION**

*December 31, 2020*

## Independent Auditor's Report

To the Board of Directors of the  
Nova Scotia Real Estate Commission

### *Opinion*

I have audited the financial statements of the Nova Scotia Real Estate Commission (the Commission), which comprise the balance sheet as at December 31, 2020 and the statements of revenue and expenses, changes in net assets, and cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies.

In my opinion, the accompanying financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Commission as at December 31, 2020, and its results of operations and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations.

### *Basis for Opinion*

I conducted my audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards. My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements* section of my report. I am independent of the Commission in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to my audit of the financial statements in Canada, and I have fulfilled my other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

### *Information other than the Financial Statements and Auditor's Report Thereon*

Management is responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the Annual Report, but does not include the financial statements and my auditor's report thereon.

My opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and I do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with my audit of the financial statements, my responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or my knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If, based on the work I have performed, I conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, I am required to report that fact. I have nothing to report in this regard.

### *Responsibilities of Management and Those Charged with Governance for the Financial Statements*

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these financial statements in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations, and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, management is responsible for assessing the Commission's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters relating to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the Commission or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.



## Independent Auditor's Report (continued)

Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the Commission's financial reporting process.

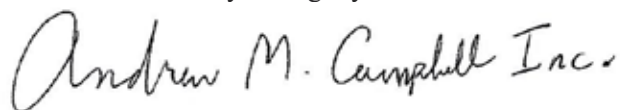
### *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements*

My objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

As part of an audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards, I exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit. I also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Commission's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by management.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of management's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Commission's ability to continue as a going concern. If I conclude that a material uncertainty exists, I am required to draw attention in my auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify my opinion. My conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of my auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Commission to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

I communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that I identify during my audit.



Chartered Professional Accountant  
Dartmouth, Nova Scotia  
March 26, 2021

# NOVA SCOTIA REAL ESTATE COMMISSION

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December 31, 2020

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# NOVA SCOTIA REAL ESTATE COMMISSION

## Balance Sheet

As at December 31, 2020

	2020	2019
<b>ASSETS</b>		
Current		
Cash	\$ 871,503	\$ 426,499
Trust funds	58,163	31,764
Short term investments	28,656	315,509
Short term investments - Trust funds	-	14,113
Accounts receivable	800	-
Prepaid expenses	1,516	2,503
Inventory - manuals and guides	968	1,020
	<b>961,606</b>	<b>791,408</b>
Recovery Fund investments (cost - \$696,793; 2019 - \$655,646) (Note 3)	750,315	678,926
Capital assets (Note 4)	60,996	81,629
Intangible assets (Note 5)	37,334	52,861
	<b>\$ 1,810,251</b>	<b>\$ 1,604,824</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>		
Current		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	\$ 153,965	\$ 72,669
HST payable	39,160	25,394
Funds held in trust	58,163	45,877
Deferred revenue	468,030	416,455
	<b>719,318</b>	<b>560,395</b>
Deferred lease incentives (Note 6)	52,481	56,321
	<b>771,799</b>	<b>616,716</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		
Reserve Fund (Note 7)	181,643	131,643
Strategic Planning Fund (Note 7)	25,000	25,000
Exam Development Fund (Note 7)	20,000	-
Recovery Fund (Note 8) (Schedule 1)	750,315	678,926
Capital and Intangible Assets Fund (Note 9)	60,783	89,903
General Fund	711	62,636
	<b>1,038,452</b>	<b>988,108</b>
	<b>\$ 1,810,251</b>	<b>\$ 1,604,824</b>

Commitment (Note 11)

See accompanying notes to the financial statements



**NOVA SCOTIA REAL ESTATE COMMISSION**  
**Statement of Revenue and Expenses**  
Year ended December 31, 2020

	2020	2019
<b>Revenue</b>		
<b>Recovery Fund (schedule)</b>		
Assessment income	\$ 20,800	\$ 20,700
Investment income	27,423	17,398
Unrealized gain on investments	30,242	19,266
	<b>78,465</b>	<b>57,364</b>
<b>General Fund</b>		
Licensing fees	926,845	904,737
Examination fees	36,550	28,300
Fines and penalties	5,800	33,400
Reinstatement of license	25,545	34,550
Hearing and investigation recoveries	-	28,245
Other fees	10,889	9,170
Lapsed trust funds	14,470	28,100
Investment income	29,021	34,126
	<b>1,049,120</b>	<b>1,100,628</b>
	<b>1,127,585</b>	<b>1,157,992</b>
<b>Expenses</b>		
Advertising	441	1,554
AGM and conference	260	2,436
Amortization - capital assets	13,593	9,564
- intangible assets	15,527	15,527
Bad debts	-	(629)
Bank service charges	31,223	33,437
Computer maintenance	6,401	4,755
Conferences	2,423	17,351
Directors and Committee member fees	37,100	40,050
Dues and fees	4,697	3,817
Focus groups and task forces	13,543	31,689
Hearing and investigation costs	3,743	26,114
Insurance	1,888	2,077
Internet hosting fees	4,169	6,097
Investment broker fees (schedule)	7,076	8,963
Office	10,618	8,440
Postage and courier	1,063	3,430
Printing	6,494	7,594
Professional fees	56,835	32,018
Rent, cleaning and utilities	75,370	65,199
Repairs and maintenance	1,842	3,159
Salaries and employee benefits	766,458	720,358
SPL and BL exams	4,901	5,442
Staff travel and training	284	11,618
Telecommunications	10,525	12,116
Travel and meetings	767	11,640
	<b>1,077,241</b>	<b>1,083,816</b>
Excess of revenue over expenses	\$ 50,344	\$ 74,176

See accompanying notes to the financial statements

# NOVA SCOTIA REAL ESTATE COMMISSION

## Statement of Changes in Net Assets

Year ended December 31, 2020

	<u>General Fund</u>	<u>Capital and Intangible Assets Fund</u>	<u>Recovery Fund</u>	<u>Reserve Fund</u>
Net assets, beginning of year	\$ 62,636	\$ 89,903	\$ 678,926	\$ 131,643
Transfers from General Fund	(70,000)			50,000
Excess of revenue over expenses (expenses over revenue)	8,075	(29,120)	71,389	-
Net assets, end of year	\$ 711	\$ 60,783	\$ 750,315	\$ 181,643

	<u>Strategic Planning Fund</u>	<u>Exam Development Fund</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2019</u>
Net assets, beginning of year	\$ 25,000	\$ -	\$ 988,108	\$ 913,932
Transfers from General Fund		20,000	-	
Excess of revenue over expenses (expenses over revenue)	-	-	50,344	74,176
Net assets, end of year	\$ 25,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 1,038,452	\$ 988,108

See accompanying notes to the financial statements

# NOVA SCOTIA REAL ESTATE COMMISSION

## Statement of Cash Flows

Year ended December 31, 2020

	2020	2019
<b>NET INFLOW OF CASH RELATED TO THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES</b>		
Operating activities		
Excess of revenue over expenses	\$ 50,344	\$ 74,176
Items not affecting cash		
Amortization	29,120	25,091
Step rent	3,200	3,200
Unrealized gain on investments	(30,242)	(19,266)
Changes in non-cash operating working capital items	159,162	40,289
	<b>211,584</b>	<b>123,490</b>
Investing activities		
Purchase of Recovery Fund investments (net)	(41,147)	(29,135)
Purchase of capital assets	-	(1,963)
Purchase of intangible assets	-	(2,700)
Decrease in short term investments	286,853	265,909
(Increase) decrease in trust funds	(12,286)	16,400
	<b>233,420</b>	<b>248,511</b>
<b>NET CHANGE IN CASH</b>	<b>445,004</b>	<b>372,001</b>
<b>CASH, BEGINNING OF YEAR</b>	<b>426,499</b>	<b>54,498</b>
<b>CASH, END OF YEAR</b>	<b>\$ 871,503</b>	<b>\$ 426,499</b>

See accompanying notes to the financial statements

# NOVA SCOTIA REAL ESTATE COMMISSION

## Notes to the Financial Statements

December 31, 2020

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### 1. DESCRIPTION OF BUSINESS

The Nova Scotia Real Estate Commission (the “Commission”) was established by the Province of Nova Scotia Bill No. 31 assented to December 20, 1996. Bill 31 is an Act to Provide for Regulation of Trading in Real Estate in Nova Scotia. The Commission is exempt from income taxes.

Included in these financial statements are the transactions of the Nova Scotia Real Estate Recovery Fund, which is administered and supervised by the Commission. The purpose of the Fund is to provide a self-insurance fund for licensed members in the Nova Scotia real estate industry within limits outlined in Note 8.

### 2. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

The financial statements were prepared in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations in Part III of the CICA Handbook and include the following significant accounting policies:

#### *Fund accounting*

Revenues, expenses, assets, and liabilities related to service delivery activities and administration are reported in the General Fund.

Investment revenues, expenses, assets, and liabilities related to the Nova Scotia Real Estate Recovery Fund are reported in the Recovery Fund.

The Commission internally restricts the use of portions of its externally unrestricted net assets for specific future uses. When incurred, expenses are charged to operations and the balance of internally restricted net assets is reduced.

The Capital and Intangible Assets Fund reports the assets, liabilities, revenues and expenses related to capital and intangible assets.

#### *Cash*

Cash is comprised of cash on deposit with financial institutions.

#### *Short term investments*

Short term investments consists of an amount on deposit with a financial institution with a maturity that exceed three months at the date of acquisition. Maturity is in September 2021 and the investment bears interest at 0.60%.

#### *Financial instruments*

The Commission initially measures its financial assets and financial liabilities at fair value. It subsequently measures all of its financial assets and financial liabilities at amortized cost, except for Recovery Fund investments which are measured at fair value as at the balance sheet date.

# NOVA SCOTIA REAL ESTATE COMMISSION

## Notes to the Financial Statements

December 31, 2020

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### 2. ACCOUNTING POLICIES (continued)

#### *Financial instruments (continued)*

Investment income earned on short term investments and Recover Fund investments is recognized as revenue in the statement of revenue and expenses.

Transaction costs related to financial instruments measured subsequent to initial recognition at fair value are expensed as incurred. Transaction costs related to other financial instruments are added to the carrying value of the asset or netted against the carrying value of the liability and are then recognized over the expected life of the instrument using the straight-line method.

With respect to financial assets measured at cost or amortized cost, the Commission recognizes in excess of revenue over expenses an impairment loss, if any, when there are indicators of impairment and it determines that a significant adverse change has occurred during the period in the expected timing or amount of future cash flows. When the extent of impairment of a previously written-down asset decreases and the decrease can be related to an event occurring after the impairment was recognized, the previously recognized impairment loss is reversed in the period the reversal occurs.

#### *Capital assets*

Capital assets are recorded at cost and are amortized over their estimated lives using the straight-line method at the following annual rates.

Furniture and equipment	10%
Computers	25% - 50%
Leasehold improvements	10%

#### *Intangible assets*

Intangible assets are comprised of website and software development costs which are recorded at cost and amortized over an estimated life of five years, using the straight-line method, when the asset is put in use.

#### *Impairment of long-lived assets*

Long lived assets, such as capital and intangible assets, are tested for recoverability whenever events or changes in circumstances indicate that their carrying amount may not be recoverable. An impairment loss is recognized when the carrying value of the asset exceeds its fair value at the date of impairment.

#### *Recovery Fund Investments*

Investments are recorded at fair value. The fair value is determined using closing published price quotations in an active market.



# NOVA SCOTIA REAL ESTATE COMMISSION

## Notes to the Financial Statements

December 31, 2020

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### 2. ACCOUNTING POLICIES (continued)

#### *Deferred lease incentives*

Lease incentives include landlord funded renovations, recorded as leasehold improvements, and step rent adjustments. Lease incentives are amortized on a straight-line basis over the term of the lease. Leasehold improvements amortization is netted against related capital asset amortization and step rent adjustments are added to rent expense.

#### *Revenue recognition*

The Commission follows the deferral method of accounting for contributions. The Commission's revenue is derived primarily from the assessment of fees which are recognized on a monthly basis as earned. Deferred revenue represents the unearned portion of fees billed. Recovery Fund investment income includes interest, mutual fund distributions, and net gains on investment disposals. Investment transactions are recognized on the transaction date and resulting revenue is recognized on an accrual basis. Lapsed trust fund revenue is recognized when funds held in trust exceed six years from the date originally deposited to a brokerage trust account. Other revenues are recognized as revenue when received or receivable, if the amount to be received can be reasonably estimated and collection is reasonably assured.

#### *Use of estimates*

The preparation of financial statements in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of assets and liabilities and disclosure of contingent assets and liabilities at the reporting date and the reported amounts of revenues and expenses for the reporting period. Actual results could differ from these estimates. Significant financial statement items that require the use of estimates are as follows: amortization of capital assets, intangibles and deferred lease incentives, deferred revenue, accrued liabilities, and the allowance for doubtful accounts. These estimates are reviewed periodically and adjustments are made, as appropriate, in the statement of revenue and expenses in the year they become known.

### 3. RECOVERY FUND INVESTMENTS

The recovery fund investments are comprised of cash and mutual funds as follows:

	2020		2019	
	Fair Value	Cost	Fair Value	Cost
Cash	\$ 58,300	\$ 58,300	\$ 37,500	\$ 37,500
Fixed income funds	548,375	510,428	460,026	441,763
Mixed funds	143,640	128,065	181,400	176,383
	<u>\$ 750,315</u>	<u>\$ 696,793</u>	<u>\$ 678,926</u>	<u>\$ 655,646</u>

The Recovery Fund balance, end of year, includes an accumulated unrealized gain on investments of \$53,522 (2019 - \$23,280).

# NOVA SCOTIA REAL ESTATE COMMISSION

## Notes to the Financial Statements

December 31, 2020

### 4. CAPITAL ASSETS

	2020			2019
	Cost	Accumulated Amortization	Net Book Value	Net Book Value
Computers	\$ 43,263	\$ 42,512	\$ 751	\$ 2,781
Leasehold improvements	110,647	51,636	59,011	70,076
Furniture and equipment	81,341	80,107	1,234	8,772
	<b>\$ 235,251</b>	<b>\$ 174,255</b>	<b>\$ 60,996</b>	<b>\$ 81,629</b>

### 5. INTANGIBLE ASSETS

	2020			2019
	Cost	Accumulated Amortization	Net Book Value	Net Book Value
Website	\$ 21,187	\$ 17,717	\$ 3,470	\$ 7,707
Billing Software	56,443	22,579	33,864	45,154
	<b>\$ 77,630</b>	<b>\$ 40,296</b>	<b>\$ 37,334</b>	<b>\$ 52,861</b>

### 6. DEFERRED LEASE INCENTIVES

	2020			2019
	Tenant inducement	Step rent	Total	Total
Balance, beginning of year	\$ 44,587	\$ 11,734	\$ 56,321	\$ 60,161
Increase in step rent accrual	-	3,200	3,200	3,200
Amortization	(7,040)	-	(7,040)	(7,040)
	<b>\$ 37,547</b>	<b>\$ 14,934</b>	<b>\$ 52,481</b>	<b>\$ 56,321</b>

### 7. INTERNALLY RESTRICTED NET ASSETS

The Reserve Fund was established by the Commission as a contingency fund for future unexpected expenditures. The Strategic Planning Fund was established by the Commission for future strategic planning expenditures. The Exam Development Fund was established by the Commission for future exam development expenditures. Transfers to these Funds are approved by the Board.

# NOVA SCOTIA REAL ESTATE COMMISSION

## Notes to the Financial Statements

December 31, 2020

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### 8. NOVA SCOTIA REAL ESTATE RECOVERY FUND

The Recovery Fund exceeds the required minimum amount of \$300,000 in cash and investments, and no longer carries insurance for indemnification purposes. Under the regulations, the maximum amount that may be paid from the Recovery Fund arising from a single real estate transaction is:

- a) \$25,000 to any claimant for a claim against a salesperson;
- b) \$50,000 to any claimant for a claim against a broker or manager; and
- c) a total of \$100,000 if there is more than one claim against a brokerage.

### 9. CAPITAL AND INTANGIBLE ASSETS FUND

	<u>2020</u>	<u>2019</u>
Capital assets (Note 4)	\$ 60,996	\$ 81,629
Intangible assets (Note 5)	37,334	52,861
Less: Tenant inducement (Note 6)	(37,547)	(44,587)
	<u>\$ 60,783</u>	<u>\$ 89,903</u>

Capital assets amortization expense was comprised of the following:

	<u>2020</u>	<u>2019</u>
Capital assets amortization	\$ 20,633	\$ 16,604
Less: Tenant inducement amortization	(7,040)	(7,040)
	<u>\$ 13,593</u>	<u>\$ 9,564</u>

Intangible assets amortization was \$15,527 (2019 - \$15,527).

### 10. FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

#### *Fair value*

The fair value of cash, short term investments, accounts receivable, and accounts payable and accrued liabilities approximates their carrying value due to their relative short-term nature. Recovery Fund investments are recorded at fair value.

#### *Market risk*

This is the risk that the Commission's investments will fluctuate as a result of changes in market price. The Commission manages this risk by maintaining a diversified portfolio.

**NOVA SCOTIA REAL ESTATE COMMISSION**  
**Notes to the Financial Statements**  
**December 31, 2020**

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**10. FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS (continued)**

*Credit risk*

The Commission performs an evaluation of accounts receivable and records an allowance for doubtful accounts as required. As at December 31, 2020, the allowance for doubtful accounts which offsets trade receivables was \$Nil (2019 - \$Nil).

*Liquidity risk*

Liquidity risk is the risk that the Commission will not be able to meet its financial obligations as they become due. The Commission is exposed to liquidity risk in its ability to finance its working capital requirements and meet its cash flow needs. Given the Commission's currently available liquid resources, as compared to its contractual obligations, management assesses the Commission's liquidity risk to be low.

**11. COMMITMENT**

The Commission entered into a ten year lease agreement for office space that commenced May 1, 2016. The agreement requires monthly lease payments of approximately \$5,300, plus HST for the first five years and approximately \$6,100 per month, plus HST, for the remainder of the term.

**12. COMPARATIVE FIGURES**

Certain of the 2019 comparative figures have been reclassified to conform with the current year's presentation.

# NOVA SCOTIA REAL ESTATE COMMISSION

## Schedule of Recovery Fund Transactions

Year ended December 31, 2020

	<u>2020</u>	<u>2019</u>
Net assets, beginning of year	\$ 678,926	\$ 630,525
Revenue	78,465	57,364
Investment fees	(7,076)	(8,963)
Net assets, end of year	\$ 750,315	\$ 678,926



# BUDGET 2021

Revenue		
Recovery Fund		
	Assessment income	15,000
	Investment (loss) income	18,000
	Unrealized gain (loss) on investments	0
		33,000
General Fund		
	Licensing fees	976,220
	Examination fees	25,000
	Fines and penalties	10,000
	Reinstatement of license	22,000
	Hearing and investigation recoveries	0
	Other fees	7,000
	Lapsed trust funds	20,500
	Investment income	28,000
		1,121,720
Expenses		
	Advertising	1,000
	AGM and conference	500
	Amortization	22,000
	Bad debts	0
	Bank service charges	28,000
	Conferences	7,000
	Consulting	5,000
	Directors and Committee member fees	57,700
	Hearing and investigation costs	0
	Insurance	2,150
	Public awareness	1,000
	Miscellaneous	5,800
	Office	17,000
	Professional fees	36,000
	Rent	70,000
	Salaries and employee benefits	713,698
	SPL and BM exams	5,000
	Staff travel and training	8,500
	Telecommunications	11,000
	Travel and meetings	6,000
	Internet hosting fees	4,000
	Investment Account Fees	6,000
	Hardware/Software	4,500
	Tech Support	9,000
		1,020,848
Excess of revenue over expenses		100,872

# GOT A QUESTION? CONTACT US

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