

Title: Monday, August 13, 2007 Managing Growth Pressures Committee

Date: 07/08/13

Time: 12:03 p.m.

[Mr. Dunford in the chair]

The Chair: Okay. I think we'll get started. I want to of course welcome all of the members and the staff. This is an orientation meeting for this Standing Committee on Managing Growth Pressures, but there are items of business, as you know from the materials that have been sent around.

In calling the meeting to order, I think the first thing that I would ask is that we introduce ourselves, and that would be for the record. It's always nice to have Dave Taylor on my right, so we'll begin that way. My name is Clint Dunford. I'm the chair of the Standing Committee on Managing Growth Pressures and the MLA for Lethbridge-West.

Mr. Taylor: I'm Dave Taylor. I'm the deputy chair of the Committee on Managing Growth Pressures and the MLA for Calgary-Currie. Today – this is correct – I'm sitting to the right of Clint Dunford.

Ms Dean: Shannon Dean, Senior Parliamentary Counsel.

Dr. McNeil: David McNeil, Clerk of the Assembly. I'm sitting in here today for Louise Kamuchik, the Clerk of Committees.

Mr. Rogers: Good afternoon. George Rogers, Member for Leduc-Beaumont-Devon.

Ms Sorensen: Rhonda Sorensen, manager of communications for the Legislative Assembly Office.

Mr. Prins: Good afternoon. Ray Prins, MLA for Lacombe-Ponoka.

Mr. Doerksen: Vic Doerksen, member of the Legislature for Red Deer-South.

Mr. Herard: Denis Herard, MLA for Calgary-Egmont and Dave Taylor's MLA. He forgot to mention that.

Dr. B. Miller: Bruce Miller, Edmonton-Glenora.

Mr. Martin: Ray Martin, MLA for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview.

Ms Rempel: Jody Rempel, committee clerk with the Legislative Assembly Office.

Mrs. Sawchuk: Karen Sawchuk, committee clerk, Legislative Assembly Office.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you.

The next order of business would be the approval of the agenda. Could I have someone move, please?

Mr. Rogers: So moved, Mr. Chairman.

The Chair: All right. Thank you.

Now, for the first item, then, Committee Orientation, we're going to hear from David McNeil. But before we do that, again for the record and for the information of the members, Karen Sawchuk has introduced herself as committee clerk. She, of course, is assigned to this committee, and she provides administrative, procedural, and general assistance as required. Karen will also work with Philip Massolin, committee research co-ordinator, to co-ordinate the

research and information needs of this committee. Philip is not in the room as we speak but certainly is there to provide us with information. Of course, Rhonda Sorensen, manager of communications services, will provide communications expertise to the committee. I for one need it desperately, so I look forward to working with her. Shannon Dean, of course, we'll hear from a little bit later. Louise Kamuchik was recognized as Clerk Assistant, Director of House Services, and will also provide assistance to our committee.

So with that, David, if you would go ahead with your portion, please.

Dr. McNeil: Thank you, Mr. Chair. At our orientation meeting in June with the chairs and deputy chairs of the four policy field committees changes to the information distribution process for legislative committees were discussed. We've implemented new, I think innovative methods of distributing information electronically for our committees, ensuring that committee members have access to this briefing information quickly and efficiently.

Committee members will have already seen the internal website developed for this committee. This website will contain all the materials, including the agenda and support materials, for upcoming meetings. Members and their staff can print these off for insertion in the binders that are being provided to the committee members. Also, this information can be accessed via the Internet here in the committee room if you bring your laptops to the meeting, which is your choice. You will also be able to plug into the electronic system here and access the information, as Jody is now, on your laptops right at your chair.

External websites will also be developed for each committee that will have links to bills being examined, transcripts, and other information that is released by the committee. The websites will have information on the committee mandates, the committee members with links to their bios, the individual clerking the committee, and the Parliamentary Counsel assigned to the committee. These procedures are environmentally friendly and will give all committee members and their staff access to committee materials in a timely manner.

If you have any questions on this process at any time, please contact the committee clerk, in this case Karen. In Karen's absence Jody is her backup, so Jody will be the backup person to contact in relation to any committee materials.

What we're trying to do is streamline and modernize our approach to providing materials to the committee members. Are there any questions about that?

The first three committees that we've dealt with have all seemed to have liked this approach. You know, it's a little more efficient from our perspective, anyway, in terms of getting the information to the members as well as providing public access to the information when the committee has approved that public access.

12:10

The Chair: Well, we don't want to necessarily fall in with the herd, so are there any comments that would like to be made?

Okay. Do you want to take us to the budget?

Dr. McNeil: Yeah. The other issue relates to the budgets that have been developed for the committees. This was something that was done when these committees were created. In fact, the budget was approved before the actual motion was approved in the House for these committees. We provided about \$58,000 for the pay to members, travel, and hosting for this committee. As well, we had a sort of more global budget estimate for advertising for all the policy

field committees of about \$80,000. My guess is that we will exceed that global advertising budget. The other proviso was that we would also be able to use other funds in the committees' envelope if the advertising expenditures went above that \$80,000, and my expectation is that that will likely happen. I don't know what this committee will want to do in that regard, but the other committees have been quite active with respect to public communication.

The Chair: Okay. Any questions for David?

Mr. Herard: Well, first, I want to thank David for making all of the efforts to bring us into the information age even though the information age has passed us by already. Certainly, any effort to minimize the amount of paper that we have to deal with all the time is great. I'm glad you took these initiatives.

I don't know, Mr. Chairman, if this is a question that should be directed to David or not, but one of the things that I am a bit confused about is what the mandate of this committee and others really is. In other words, what is the scope of the things that this committee can involve itself with?

The Chair: Actually, that'll come in our next presentation, Denis.

Mr. Herard: Okay. Thank you.

The Chair: Any other comments or questions?

Thank you, David.

Okay, Shannon.

Ms Dean: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I thought we'd give the committee members just a very brief overview with respect to the Standing Orders that are relevant to your operations, your mandate, et cetera. As you know, this is one of the new democratic reform initiatives arising from the March 7 House leaders' agreement, which was implemented through temporary Standing Orders approved by the Assembly in April. Policy field committees or similar committees bearing different names are commonly found in other Canadian jurisdictions, most notably in Ontario, Saskatchewan, B.C., and at the federal level. I would point out that the Standing Orders governing our policy field committees parallel quite closely those found in Saskatchewan.

Now, the mandate of this committee is addressed under Standing Order 52.01.(1)(c), which refers to the areas of postsecondary education, technology, human resources, labour, immigration, rural development, municipal affairs, affordable housing, libraries, infrastructure, and transportation. The Standing Orders grant this committee a broad mandate and wide-ranging powers. Briefly, the committee can review any bill, regulation, or subject matter referred to it by the Assembly. The committee can conduct an inquiry into a particular subject matter at the request of a minister. The committee may examine and comment on the various annual reports of the departments and government agencies that stand referred to this committee. Lastly, the committee may on its own initiative conduct inquiries on subject matters within its mandate.

Now, one of the things that makes this committee unique as compared to a government committee is that as a committee of the Assembly it's cloaked with the immunities, rights, and privileges that the Assembly has. These are not committees of government, as I said. They are all-party in membership. They report to the Assembly. The meetings are public and recorded in *Hansard* unless the committee decides to go in camera.

In terms of parliamentary privilege and how that's relevant for your function, as you know, parliamentary privilege is what enables you as members of the Assembly and the Assembly as an institution

to carry out your work or the Assembly's work without interference, and these rights, privileges, and immunities flow down to committees of the Assembly, which is what this committee is.

Now, the most commonly known privilege is freedom of speech. This enables you to speak freely in the Assembly or in a committee of the Assembly without fear of being sued for your comments. On an historical note parliamentary privilege stems from article 9 of the English Bill of Rights, which can be traced back to 1689. Codification of this principle appears in section 13 of the Legislative Assembly Act, which is just being circulated to you now. Section 13 states:

A Member is not liable to any civil action or prosecution, arrest, imprisonment or damages by reason of any matter or thing brought by the Member before the Assembly or any committee of the Assembly by petition, Bill, resolution, motion or otherwise or by reason of anything said by the Member in the Assembly or any committee of the Assembly.

Now, privilege also extends to witnesses that appear before the committee. The key point here is that witnesses before the committee must be afforded some protection to enable them to speak openly and free from fear that their words will be used against them in subsequent proceedings. This committee also has the power to compel the attendance of witnesses through the issuance of a warrant from the Speaker. This is a long-standing power of committees of the Assembly. However, to our collective knowledge this power has not been utilized in Alberta. This power is also codified, and I would refer you to section 14 of the Legislative Assembly Act. Committees tend not to resort to exercising this power. Persons who are initially reluctant to appear before the committee typically cooperate once they are aware of the committee's power to summon them.

In response to Mr. Herard's questions about what the mandate of this policy field committee is, I'd like to refer you to some specific standing orders. Of course, this committee is in a unique situation as compared to the other three policy field committees because there has been nothing that's been referred to it. As you know, the Government Services and Community Services policy field committees both have bills that have been referred to them by the Assembly, and the Standing Committee on Resources and Environment is currently engaged in an inquiry at the request of a minister. Given that this committee does not have any instructions from the Assembly or a request from a minister, it's important to review the jurisdiction that you have to consider matters.

First, Standing Order 52.03 is relevant. It allows this committee to review regulations within its mandate. Standing Order 52.05 is also relevant. It allows you to examine the annual reports of government bodies within your mandate and report to the Assembly whether the report is satisfactory. Standing Order 52.07 is perhaps the most relevant for this committee in the sense that it's a broad mandate to initiate inquiries into matters of public policy, again within your mandate, and 52.08 is sort of a catch-all standing order. It allows policy field committees to examine matters within their mandate and report to the Assembly on the need for legislation in the area.

One thing that I want to draw to your attention is specifically Standing Order 52.04 and 52.07(3). The reason is that although you have the power to undertake an inquiry on your own initiative, if somewhere at some point in time the Assembly refers something to you, whatever the Assembly refers to you must take priority.

Finally, it should be emphasized that this committee is the master of its own procedures and processes regardless of how the committee chooses to pursue its mandate. You may decide to conduct public consultation whether through written submissions or public hearings.

You may vary procedures for different inquiries. You may advertise for public submissions in daily or weekly newspapers or both. Lastly, you may invite government officials to provide you with a technical briefing on a particular matter. As the committee decides how to exercise its mandate, these are questions that it should consider.

12:20

Finally, the other item on the agenda is Committee Reporting. The rules governing how and when the committee reports are dictated by the relevant standing order. For example, when the Assembly has referred a matter to the committee, typically the motion that refers the matter dictates when the matter must be reported back to the House. For instance, Government Services and Community Services have been directed to report back in the first week of the fall sitting.

Now, where a committee is conducting an inquiry on its own initiative under Standing Order 52.07 – and, again, that’s one provision which I think is probably most relevant to this committee – the standing order is clear that the inquiry must be concluded and a report presented to the Assembly no later than six months after the commencement of the inquiry.

Finally, if the committee chooses to exercise its power under Standing Order 52.08, there is no timeline mandated in that particular standing order. It would appear that the focus of the committee’s work is somewhat limited because the standing order makes reference to making recommendations for the need for legislation in a particular area. Again, there is no established timeline for the committee’s report under that provision.

That, Mr. Chairman, is a very brief overview, and I turn it over to you.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you. Questions? Gene, then Victor.

Mr. Zwozdesky: Thanks very much. I appreciate the overviews. I want to just ask a question with regard to membership on the committee, if I might, Mr. Chairman, and it’s more for purposes of clarification. I was asked to sit on this particular committee, and I’m very pleased to do so, but I was asked to sit on it prior to being appointed to cabinet. Since we are now convening after my appointment to cabinet, I want it just noted for the record, if nothing else, whether or not I am allowed to still sit on the committee and vote and speak and so on.

I am aware that committee membership as such would not be able to be changed officially, I think, until the House actually reconvenes, but I just think that in fairness to colleagues around the table I’d like that clarified for them and for me and my own conscience. Perhaps Parliamentary Counsel or the chair or someone else might alleviate the concern that I might have.

The Chair: Well, as far as I’m concerned as the chair, you’re here till you’re replaced. I think you’ve properly identified it, but I’d seek advice from our parliamentary experts.

Ms Dean: You’ve outlined the state of things accurately in terms of your membership on this committee. You are a member of this committee, and you remain a member of this committee until there’s a resolution in the House changing the membership. However, under the new temporary Standing Orders there is provision that if you feel that you’re too busy as a minister to fulfill your role in this committee, you can temporarily substitute a member in your place. That can be done on 24 hours’ notice to the Clerk and the chairman.

Mr. Zwozdesky: All right. Well, thanks for that clarification. That helps address the concern I had.

The Chair: All right. Anything else?

Mr. Doerksen: I just wanted to go back to the mandate and a couple of questions on the mandate that I’m curious about. One of the things that we can consider is at the request of a minister. Does the committee have any authority? Can we do a request of the minister and compel the minister to act?

Ms Dean: This committee is a committee of the Assembly, so essentially you’re a delegate of the House, and you report back to the House with respect to matters in your mandate. If you wanted a minister to appear before you to give you a briefing on a particular subject matter, that’s something that this committee could do, but in terms of compelling something outside of what I’ve just enumerated, I don’t think so.

Mr. Doerksen: Okay. So indirectly we could ask a minister to appear to address a particular report.

Ms Dean: As long as the general subject matter is within this committee’s mandate and this committee has decided to conduct an inquiry or examine a particular matter, it would be within your powers to obtain a technical briefing from ministerial staff or from the minister.

Mr. Doerksen: Okay. My second question would relate to the use of the word “inquiry,” and I think it’s written into the Standing Orders. Most of us are familiar with the use of the word “inquiry” as a fairly serious matter. Maybe it’s an unfortunate choice of wording in the Standing Orders because it might connote a more serious matter than we would otherwise like to intimate, if that’s the right word to use. I just am curious. If we were to accept a motion that would actually use that word, I’m not sure what that really means.

Ms Dean: Well, again, I mentioned earlier that this committee is the master of its processes, and there’s no prescribed set of rules with respect to the inquiries that policy field committees undertake. I mean, you can tailor an inquiry to a particular issue. I appreciate your comments about the word “inquiry.”

Mr. Doerksen: Can we choose different words and still be acceptable?

Ms Dean: Well, what I would say is that you are constrained by the Standing Orders, so if the word “inquiry” seems problematic, too onerous, there is Standing Order 52.08, which uses the word “examine.”

Again, the difference between 52.07 and 52.08 is that 52.08 specifically states that you “may examine any matter within [your] mandate and recommend to the Assembly on the need for legislation in that area.” So it seems to be tailored to a specific point.

Mr. Doerksen: Okay. Thank you.

The Chair: Any other member?

Okay. Thanks, Shannon. I appreciate that.

Now, item 5 on the agenda, Consideration of Motion by Mr. D. Taylor. Dave, this will be your opportunity. You can preamble it,

or you can get right into the motion and then speak to it, whatever your pleasure.

Mr. Taylor: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In light of the comments from the Member for Red Deer-South I wasn't going to preamble it. I was going to go straight into the motion, but I think I will speak very briefly to it because I, too, wrestled a little bit with the word "inquiry." I mean, it conjures up in our minds full judicial inquiries, that sort of thing, and I don't think that what I'm about to propose goes anywhere near that far. By the same token I'm leaning in favour of a motion that references Standing Order 52.07 rather than 52.08 simply because I think it broadens our mandate as a committee to look a little more broadly and perhaps a little more deeply and come up with some recommendations or an agreed-upon course of action that we can take as a result of that. So that will be the extent of my preamble right now.

Mr. Chair, with your permission once I've introduced the motion, I will speak to it as briefly or as completely as you wish. The motion goes as follows:

Be it resolved that the Managing Growth Pressures Policy Field Committee initiate an inquiry in accordance with its powers under temporary Standing Order 52.07(2) into steps that can be taken to encourage the development of additional affordable housing and ensure that tenants are adequately protected from unreasonable rent increases.

Do I need to pause for a seconder at this time, Mr. Chair?

The Chair: No seconder is required, so you can keep going.

Mr. Taylor: All right. Good. Thank you.

Mr. Herard: Mr. Chairman, could we have a copy of that?

The Chair: The refined motion has not been circulated. Can staff provide us with a copy? Let's just pause, then, before we get into it.

Mr. Martin: Just before we get into the motion, I guess we haven't laid out as a committee how we are going to bring forward motions and how we deal with them. This one was there, so I understand that we have to deal with it, but I think we probably should have had or maybe the next time should have a discussion about certain issues that we want to do simply because, as was pointed out, we've had no referrals from cabinet. So we'll deal with this motion. We'll see where that goes, but I think that as a group perhaps we should have an attempt to look at some issues that we want to deal with in a broader way after we deal with this motion.

12:30

The Chair: Excellent point, Ray. What I would suggest is that we deal with the motion. We have an item 6, Other Business. Perhaps under Other Business that would be one thing that we would be able to do. It's unfortunate the way things have unfolded. The original plan was to have a meeting at the end of June to deal with all of this sort of stuff. We were not able to schedule that particular meeting, so we're here today. I think that with the flexibility of the committee we can deal with it either today or at the next meeting.

Mr. Zwozdesky: Mr. Chair, I wonder if I could just briefly follow up on that as the motion in written form is being circulated. I, too, was curious exactly about the point that Mr. Martin has raised because I would really like to have a chat with the committee about issues that I have discovered having been out on the so-called barbecue circuit and in consultation meetings and travelling the province. I'm sure other colleagues have as well. I am acutely

aware of additional issues that could be of concern to this committee and to various ministries, including my own on capital planning, for example. I know we're a little bit late in the year in terms of when we're getting started, but why couldn't we have had that kind of a meeting earlier to get this ball rolling a little differently?

The Chair: Do you want to comment?

Mr. Taylor: Sure. I'll speak to that. Very simply, the chair approached me right around the end of session and initiated discussions about when we could have our organizational meeting. At the time my mother was dying of cancer down in Nova Scotia, and I requested, if it was all right with the chair, if we could put that off until that had been dealt with. He generously agreed, noting that we did not have anything compelling us from either the Assembly or a minister to sit down and meet. It's left us with a bit of I suppose a scramble – that is as good a way to describe it as any – to sort of catch up to the other policy field committees, and I'll take the responsibility for that. That's the situation.

Mr. Zwozdesky: I'm sorry. I wasn't aware of the details here surrounding that, but I appreciate the clarification. Perhaps at a subsequent meeting, if Mr. Martin is agreeable, we could have that open, frank discussion on issues in addition to formal motions that are of concern to us.

Thank you.

The Chair: Okay. Would you like to proceed now.

Mr. Taylor: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I guess we'll begin from a couple of broad concepts that I think define what we're trying to do here. First of all, these policy field committees were created to take up issues outside the heat of session in a bipartisan fashion or multipartisan fashion and try and make real progress towards good policy and good law and to good legislation. I've brought that to bear as a consideration in crafting my motion.

The other concept that I have used as sort of a defining concept, I guess, is the very simple concept that everybody needs a home. We can all wait for things we want, but we can't wait for the basic necessities of life. At least, we can't wait very, very long.

I represent, of course, a predominantly residential inner-city community with skyrocketing property values, rental accommodation that is rapidly being converted to condominium, and skyrocketing rents as well. By skyrocketing rents I mean rents going up anywhere from 75 to 250 per cent when the notice of a rent increase comes to tenants. It has been for 14 months now far and away the single biggest issue that we have heard about in my constituency office, and of course we've all talked a great deal about the affordable housing crisis in our work over the last year. Vacancy rates are near zero. We have taken some initiatives as an Assembly and as a government to deal with the crisis, but the initiatives that we've taken so far have tended to be sort of one off in nature, and I would argue that they haven't achieved or haven't shown yet the desired results.

For instance, the rent supplement program, the homelessness and eviction protection fund: both oversubscribed, which suggests that perhaps the extent of the problem was underestimated initially. Confusion around some of the legislative changes brought about by Bill 34, both for renters and landlords, although according to the feedback that I'm getting – and to be blunt about it, the feedback that I'm getting constitutes anecdotal evidence, not statistical evidence – perhaps the changes are more confusing and the confusion is more prevalent in the minds of landlords, who don't seem to know the

new law, than among renters, at least renters who get in touch with their local MLA.

Rent increases, as I alluded to before, have been astronomical and continue to be astronomical for many. There's evidence, again anecdotal, to suggest that restricting landlords to increasing rent once a year on a rental unit without also putting a cap on how big that rent hike can be is actually making the crisis worse for renters rather than alleviating it, and I think that when we all started down the road of tackling the affordable housing crisis, our collective interest was in alleviating the problem, not making it worse.

There are loopholes in the extended notice period for condo conversions that are failing to protect renters. There is no significant evidence of progress that I can find on creating an inventory of affordable housing, and of course, as you'll notice from my motion, I am coming at this issue from two perspectives: one, ensuring that tenants are adequately protected as a shorter term measure from unreasonable rent increases and, secondly, encouraging the development of additional affordable housing; in other words, creating a sustainable supply so that the crisis on the demand side is in fact taken away by the market. We want to go back to the market ruling this as quickly as we can because if you look back at evidence over the last 20 years, I would argue that 18 or 19 years out of those 20 the market has worked very well for tenants. It's only been in the last couple of years that things have gone a little crazy.

I think the evidence indicates that we need to revisit some if not all of the recommendations of the Affordable Housing Task Force that were not accepted by the government. I think that more than anything else this crisis needs action, and it needs this committee to help define what those actions should be in terms of solutions. In anticipation, if I might, Mr. Chairman – I could be overstepping my bounds here, and if I am, I'm sure you'll put me back in my place.

The Chair: Oh, we haven't said anything yet.

Mr. Taylor: In anticipation of any questions around whether or not my motion is in order, I would suggest here that my motion is not attempting to predetermine outcomes. It's simply setting out the main issues as I see them for inquiry and examination: the encouragement of development of additional affordable housing and ensuring that tenants are adequately protected from reasonable rent increases.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, what I guess I'm really asking our committee to determine here today in voting on this motion is whether there is more to do on the affordable housing front. If so, then I guess this motion will pass, and this committee is where we can and should be doing that work.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Thank you.
Ray Prins.

Mr. Prins: Thank you. I know that some of these are big issues.

The Chair: Oh, I'm sorry. I've gone ahead of myself here, unfortunately. We don't need a seconder for a particular motion within this committee, but were you going to speak in favour of the motion or opposed to the motion?

Mr. Prins: I'm just going to make some comments, but I'll wait.

The Chair: Yeah. What I'd like, I think, is someone that's clearly going to support the motion, perhaps, speaking next.

Mr. Prins: Yeah. I was not going to support it.

The Chair: So who am I going to recognize?

Mr. Herard: Mr. Chair, on a procedural thing first, we have before us here four different motions, and quite frankly I think we ought to know which one we are being asked to support.

The Chair: Number 1, with the asterisk.

Mr. Herard: Okay. So that's the one. We can ignore the others?

The Chair: Well, we never ignore unfortunate folks.

Mr. Herard: But I'm not going to vote on four things.

The Chair: That's right.

Mr. Herard: Thanks.

The Chair: Is this procedural, Victor?

Mr. Doerksen: It is. Mr. Chair, I apologize for bringing up the procedural thing, but in many senses I'm going to go back to Mr. Martin's earlier comments. We're kind of setting a precedent before we've decided what the rules are. I'm not entirely comfortable with that because you've now signalled that you're going to have a pro and con kind of approach to motions. Well, there may be a middle-of-the-road comment and amendments, so I would be more comfortable actually knowing what the procedures are, how we're going to operate, before we get into the debate. I mean, I'm at your mercy, and I will enter into the debate when you want, but I'm expressing my frustration.

12:40

The Chair: Well, I don't know if this would be particularly unusual. What I am suggesting in getting started is that we frame, I guess, somehow the debate in the sense that clearly the mover is in favour of the motion. I want to get a feel if there's support around the table for that motion from at least one person. Then I was hoping that we could get the con parameter, perhaps, and then away we go. I'll develop a speakers list, but maybe I'm too anxious to get to the meat of the matter.

Mr. Rogers: I'd like to speak on procedures, obviously, when you'll have me.

The Chair: Well, I know that you've been trying to get on, so we'll recognize George and then Bruce.

Mr. Rogers: Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. First of all, I would say that it's a laudable goal that's behind or certainly where the member hopes to go with this particular motion. But before I would debate pro or con, I'm still concerned as to this committee's sense whether this is, in fact, within our mandate. Assuming that we get through that discussion and debate and then determine that it is within our mandate, as we proceed through – now we're only talking about option 1, the starred one – again in terms of process, what form? How do we get this out of this committee to the Leg. and then in terms of trying to get some meaningful progress, assuming that we come to something here, whatever that something is, and we take it that next step?

From my notes earlier on the information given by Ms Dean, it said that the committee can review matters within its mandate and ask the Legislature to provide required legislation, so I'm assuming that it would move along some kind of path like that. I'm just wondering. Again, I'm still struggling with process and how this thing would rumble along or not. At the end of the day what do we end up with? Do we end up with something that just becomes a political football, be it for any of the parties seated around this table? I'm still concerned about process, how we get to something, before I start deciding whether I support the something or not. Maybe that's rambling, but that's the struggle I'm having, Mr. Chairman.

The Chair: Well, perhaps we'll hear from other members before we make a comment. Bruce.

Dr. B. Miller: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I support this motion, and I really like 52.08, too, if this one didn't succeed. I think we can look at the legislative implications of the task force, for example. There were a lot of suggestions about changing the Municipal Government Act and so on that I think are really important. But I sympathize with what Ray and Gene raised. Before we even debate this, I would really like to hear everybody's comments about growth pressures in general because it's not just the housing crisis that we are facing. Coming back from PNWER, I mean, job strategy is huge in this province.

The Chair: No. We're not going to do that. We've had presented to us prior to this meeting an intention on a motion on affordable housing. Under Other Business we might be able to do something like that, Bruce, but we're not going to bring that into Dave's motion.

Dr. B. Miller: Well, Mr. Chairman, I mean, I'd be prepared to move that we postpone definitely this kind of motion till the next meeting, until we could have that discussion.

The Chair: Well, that's an alternative.
David, did you want to bring up something?

Dr. McNeil: Yeah. The only thing I wanted to say is that there's no requirement that the debate be framed in any way in terms of the Assembly committees. I think the speaking order is really determined by who gets their hand up and is recognized by the chair as opposed to trying to frame the limits of the debate early on. That's just in terms of the experience with other committee chairs.

The Chair: Okay. Well, I'll accept the criticism of being too task orientated.

Denis, you had something?

Mr. Herard: Yeah. In the Legislature when we're dealing with motions, we have a process that allows Parliamentary Counsel to check the wording of that motion to make sure that it passes all of the parameters that it needs to. I'm wondering if that wouldn't be a good process here as well. In other words, rather than have a big debate as to whether or not a motion is, in fact, within our mandate, wouldn't it be better if we get a motion where Parliamentary Counsel has said: "Yeah. This is a good motion in terms of your mandate." Is that something we could look at to sort of try and shorten a lot of the debate on this thing?

The Chair: Well, as the chair I am, of course, subject to the desires of the committee, but on the record I believe that we have informa-

tion that the idea of affordable housing is within the mandate. Your question is whether or not the wording substantiates that it's within the mandate. Is that my understanding?

Mr. Herard: Yeah. In other words, I heard another member suggest that perhaps we need to debate whether or not this is within the mandate. I don't know that we want to waste a lot of time with that if, in fact, we have an opinion from Parliamentary Counsel that this is a motion, that it's all duly done and all this kind of stuff like we do in the House. We would have the same onus back there.

The Chair: If I might as chair again just provide some explanation. What has changed here today isn't the idea of discussing affordable housing. What has changed, with due respect to the co-chair, is that we had no indication of the wording until right now, and that seems to be causing some of the members some difficulty. Might I ask Parliamentary Counsel: does the wording now that we're looking at alter in any way our ability as a committee to move forward on this at this time?

Ms Dean: Mr. Chairman, I don't see anything that would give rise to a point of order about the admissibility of this motion.

The Chair: Okay.
Now, Ray Martin, I think you had your hand up, didn't you?

Mr. Martin: Yeah. Can I make a motion that we defer this motion until we have a general discussion about growth pressures and what the committee wants to tackle in the next meeting? It's not taking it away but having it deferred until we've had this general discussion.

The Chair: Okay. I should ask the co-chair if he's okay with having his motion stand aside for a moment. Perhaps more than a moment.

Mr. Taylor: Mr. Chairman, like you I'm at the mercy of the will of the members of this committee, and if you wish to allow a vote to proceed on a deferral motion, I'm not going to fight that. I'm also not going to support that motion simply because I think that under temporary Standing Order 52.01 it's clear that affordable housing has been identified as part of our mandate. I would think that the hon. member would know that we have a very serious problem – I call it a crisis, and I think he would support that – on our hands in terms of affordable housing, and I think that it is something that we can proceed on.

Unless I'm misunderstanding the mandate and the rules governing committees such as this, I think we can be working on more than one order of business at a time, more than one issue at a time, so I would argue that we go ahead with affordable housing specifically and continue, then, as a next order of business to have a discussion about the other growth pressures that we wish to tackle.

12:50

The Chair: Again for the record your letter to me said:

I wish the committee to consider a motion to initiate an inquiry or examination of the ongoing affordable housing crisis in Alberta, with a view to making recommendations for legislative or other policy solutions.

So I think it was reasonable to expect that people would have arrived at this meeting expecting, you know, to deal with that kind of a situation.

However, the motion that's in front of us now is "into steps that can be taken to encourage the development of additional affordable housing and ensure that tenants are adequately protected from

unreasonable rent increases.” So this thing has gone from general to very specific. There’s nothing wrong with that. It’s just that there seem to be some members wishing to defer, now, a discussion on that until they have had time to examine that. Is that the intent of your motion, Ray Martin?

Mr. Martin: Well, yes.

The Chair: Gene, you’re trying to get in.

Mr. Zwozdesky: Just very briefly. I’m inclined to agree with what Dr. Miller suggested, and that is that we – I can’t remember the exact words – delay perhaps indefinitely, I think he said, or words to that effect, and also with what Mr. Martin has indicated, which is to defer the motion. That isn’t to suggest that affordable housing isn’t an issue of importance, because it clearly is to both the gentlemen I just referenced and to all the members of this committee. I think what I’m saying and what I’m hearing others say is that we simply want to have a chance to discuss in a more global, general sense not only affordable housing but other growth-related pressures that come under the mandate of our committee before we plunge into and pick one. We’re quite liable to get totally absorbed with just one, perhaps at the time expense of many others.

We’ve all been out there talking with constituents. We all have things that we want to bring forward. With due respect to the deputy chair he’s in a closer position there as deputy chair and has brought something forward that he feels strongly about, but given the opportunity I might have brought something forward too. I just didn’t realize we were going to proceed that way. I’d like the benefit of the discussion which Messrs. Martin and Miller have brought forward.

The Chair: All right.
Further discussion?

Mr. Doerksen: Well, I guess I would want to hear – and, unfortunately, this is what I did not look forward to in this committee, that we turn this into a political football. If the mover, frankly, is going to oppose the deferral motion, then I would question the motives for doing that in terms of him making a statement that this committee has rejected his motion to address a very serious issue that he finds in his constituency, and that’s not something that I wanted to get into. But if we want to get into it, I mean, I’ll support the deferral motion because we had the Affordable Housing Task Force, which made a number of recommendations – and they weren’t all accepted – that did an awful lot of work across the province and made a report.

There were some programs put into place, some legislation that was changed that needs time to work. There was money given to municipalities. I have to check my math here. I’m looking at two different figures. Well, just for the category one municipalities, I’m reading a total of \$133 million. I know that in my own community of Red Deer there was \$5.2 million granted. That is at their discretion to address these very issues in their own communities, a place where they are best equipped to deal with the issues, and they need time to put those in place.

For us now to suggest that we should go out and suddenly question everything that’s put into place before it’s even had a chance to act is irresponsible, in my view. I don’t want to get into a political fight here. I was hoping this committee could actually deal with some issues that were important to our province and do as much as we could to keep the politics out of it.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I will support the deferral motion

because I think we need to have a further meeting that actually discusses the broader issues of growth pressures and decide which direction we’re going to take.

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Zwozdesky: You know, from my perspective and having just heard Mr. Doerksen’s eloquent comments, frankly in a more perfect world I see this as, I hope, a nonpartisan committee. I know that’s in quotes, but I think we’re dealing with significant issues here that require that type of approach. I personally would prefer the mover to actually withdraw the motion and then keep us out of that potential political football because it puts the mover of the motion into a squeeze too. That would be the more – well, I’ll use the word – honourable approach, in my view, if Mr. Martin is agreeable to that and if the mover is agreeable to it.

The Chair: Okay. Ray Martin, your motion is what we have to deal with because it supercedes his motion. So you could withdraw yours, and he could withdraw his.

Mr. Martin: Well, not knowing what he’s going to do, okay, I’ll defer my deferral.

The Chair: All right.

Mr. Taylor: Mr. Chair, I will pull my motion at this time to bring it back, hopefully at our next meeting.

The Chair: Now, do we need to vote on that motion? I wouldn’t think so.

Ms Dean: As long as it’s the will of the committee on a consensus basis that these things are being withdrawn.

The Chair: I like having votes. Let’s get a sample, then, of the will of the committee.

Mr. Doerksen: If the mover has withdrawn his motion, there’s nothing to vote on.

The Chair: Well, I realize that.

Mr. Doerksen: I heard a withdrawal, I thought.

Mr. Rogers: Yeah. We had some discussion, and it’s done.

Mr. Taylor: I will be bringing the motion back at a future date.

Mr. Rogers: Fair enough. We can cross that bridge then.

The Chair: All right.

This will give us an excellent segue now into other business, to maybe discuss, then, how motions in the future will come to this committee. George.

Mr. Rogers: Thanks, Mr. Chairman. I’m wondering if it wouldn’t be helpful, not necessarily that we would have Parliamentary Counsel sanction motions before they come here, but if we had some indication from Parliamentary Counsel as to the relevance of the motion relative to our mandate, the Standing Orders, and so on, which would help us from a procedural standpoint. It doesn’t preclude any member, as in any other committee or even in the Leg.,

from bringing something forward that could or may never get the support of his colleagues. I just think it would be helpful for those of us around this table, understanding that we operate under rules and that rules are made for a reason, that when something comes before us, we know that it's had some review. Then it will help us to move to that next step of the discussion whatever we may decide to do with that proposal.

The Chair: As your chair I want it to be clear, though, that we are all elected members and that within the Standing Orders that have been approved, we as individual members should be able to represent our views as clearly or as specifically or as generally as possible.

We appreciate the work of Parliamentary Counsel, but they would have to be there in an advisory stance only, not as somebody that could necessarily – well, they could not veto anything that comes forward unless, of course, it was clearly outside of the mandate. We would want to use them, then, in a proper format as a consultative process to make sure that a motion is parliamentarily correct because ultimately that's where we would have to return any of this to. Shannon.

1:00

Ms Dean: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Obviously, whether a motion's in order or not is up to the call of the chair. In terms of process I would presume that if the chair had questions about the admissibility of a motion, he would seek advice, and again it's up to the call of the chair.

The Chair: Yeah. Let's for the record just reaffirm that. I want it to be known that on receiving from a member a notice of a motion that's to be presented at a meeting, it's clearly my intention that would be one of the obligations of the chair or the co-chair standing in my place, that we would seek that advice.

Mr. Doerksen: To the deputy chair's credit he did indicate that he was bringing forward a motion. That was appreciated because it gave us some forewarning so that we could at least look at the issue, although the motion that he then tabled was quite different in terms of what actually was presented. I think that out of common courtesy it would be nice to know ahead of time the exact wording of motions that the committee is going to debate so that we can actually do some work on it and get our thoughts around what's coming forward. I think that's just a way that our committee should operate as a common courtesy.

Mr. Martin: Well, we're a work in progress, obviously. But to come back, the problem with motions right away is that very specifically it says what you deal with. We've spent a fair amount of time dealing with this. I would have really liked to have had just a general discussion before we started to bring motions in. We all might have different motions, and we might want to deal with two or three of them and turn some down and accept one, but we haven't had an attempt, as Mr. Zwozdesky was talking about, to sort of have a general overview about growth pressures and where we might want to go.

My problem is that I've been on the housing committee. I certainly agree, and I think it's pretty clear where I stand on housing issues, but if it just becomes a matter of us debating it here and we're not going to change government policy – maybe there are some growth pressure areas that we can look at. But I really think we need a general discussion. I mean, if people want to bring motions in, they will, but I would really like an opportunity to sort of discuss

many different areas. P3s is an important one. There may be other ones that you talk about, sort of a general discussion about where we're going, and then that might lead to some motions where we could all agree and do some very valuable work, but we haven't had that general discussion yet.

The Chair: Well, let's have it. We're into item 6, Other Business. It's 5 after 1, so we've got time to have a discussion.

Mr. Zwozdesky: Just before we get into the discussion, one other procedural point following up on Mr. Martin's comments. I, too, would favour, obviously, having that general discussion. From it perhaps we could develop a list of what our I'll use the term priority items will be that we as a committee are going to follow up on.

But my comments are specific to how we do that follow-up. For example, if it turns out at the end of the general discussion that affordable housing is right at the top or roadways are at the top or wastewater management facilities are at the top, whatever it happens to be, I wonder if it would be agreeable to the folks at the table to get some officials, including the ministers that are responsible, to come here and be part of that discussion because none of us would know everything that perhaps is going on. There might be information that can be shared also by certain officials and/or ministers with respect to some partnerships that we have with the feds, for example. I was just finding out a little bit of information on the Canada/Alberta affordable housing project, and it goes back to some funds that have been given out over the years. I'd like more information on Habitat for Humanity projects that we are cofunding, for example. I mean, there are some good things happening.

I'm not taking away from the fact that there is some need to discuss and act in some other areas more aggressively perhaps, but the point that I want to make, Mr. Chairman, in conclusion here, is simply that we should at the same time as we're identifying issues for priority discussion also discuss how our follow-up to those issues is going to flow out and who we might compel to attend and join us and help us out with this. We're all trying to do the best we can for our constituents and for Alberta in general.

The Chair: I'm developing a speakers list. Bruce is next.

Dr. B. Miller: I just concur with that comment, Mr. Chairman. I alluded to the fact that at PNWER – no, maybe I didn't; it was in my head; I didn't actually speak it – Ulysses Currie, the Deputy Minister of EII, gave a PowerPoint presentation, which was very good. It dealt with growth pressures, for sure. He said, you know, that in the next five or six or seven years we'll need about 300,000 more workers and that we're going to have a hundred thousand shortfall. He gave a kind of synopsis of economic growth in this province, but I had more questions after his presentation. I mean, what is the economic growth that's happening? The housing crisis is a consequence of the economic growth in this province, the hot economy, but I'd like more information, as Mr. Zwozdesky is saying, you know, about what the economic trends and shortfalls are that we can anticipate in the future. So we need to bring in some people to put us in the picture, I think. I agree with that.

The Chair: Anybody else want to comment? Ray?

Mr. Prins: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You first asked me to speak about half an hour ago, and what I was going to say was exactly some of these types of comments, that the housing situation is critical right around the province, probably more so in the big cities than in my constituency. In my constituency we experience some of

this as well. Many projects are happening. There are a lot of things happening, government supporting different projects. So I think the government has responded in many positive ways.

But one of the areas that we haven't touched on either, and if we want to move forward to go where Gene has said, maybe get some expert advice, is the whole issue of the infrastructure that municipalities have to build in order to get housing going. I look at the town of Blackfalds in my constituency, which is one of the fastest growing municipalities in the entire country. They just don't have enough credit to build water, sewer, and roads to build the houses. The housing is being built fast, but they're going to hit a wall. So what I would like to be able to talk about and get somebody to explain to us or maybe see what we can do is the whole issue of credit to municipalities going forward when they can't afford to build the infrastructure needed to build the houses. I don't think the government has to build the houses because people will do that. There are lots of people building apartments and condos and actual housing, but the trouble is that the municipalities in the smaller areas cannot keep up with the infrastructure demands, and I think they have limits on their credit or the amount of credit that they can get.

This is one of the issues that I would like to deal with in addition to some of the other issues that Dave has brought up. So I think there are lots of things that we can look at going forward, maybe making recommendations or investigating these challenges. Just a little comment

The Chair: Okay. Dave.

Mr. Taylor: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. What Ray Prins just said was exactly the kind of discussion that I hope to get going on the motion that I withdrew and will bring back at a further meeting. For the record I just want all of my fellow committee members to understand that in bringing forward my motion, I assumed that we would get into this sort of discussion.

I assume that going forward, whether it's on affordable housing specifically or whether this committee in its wisdom decides that there are other issues that we need to pursue as well – and, again, I hope we don't just restrict ourselves to one growth pressure issue; I think there are more than one – we do call experts and we do ask for technical briefings from government officials and we do consult with other levels of government not only to find out, as in the case of the federal/provincial affordable housing program, what is out there on offer that may be working very well, where some gaps may be, what is out there on offer that we may not be taking full advantage of but also to find out, as Ray pointed out, what some of the issues and pressures are that other levels of government and other organizations are experiencing that we at the provincial level might very well be able to do something about.

So I'm very much in support of all this. For the record I hope that you all understand that not only was I not trying to play politics with this, but I was just trying to move the ball down the field, and it sounds to me like I've got a number of people on this committee who feel much the same way.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

1:10

The Chair: Ray Martin.

Mr. Martin: Yeah. There are a lot of issues that we can look at. One that's huge is the whole infrastructure deficit. Just recently we had a vivid example in Minneapolis of what can go wrong.

I guess I have a concern that the government may be moving forward with P3s being the major answer. I don't think we've had

a very good discussion on Henday and the others, about the public-sector comparators that I think we should be taking a look at here. If it works well and the public-sector comparators are there, fine, but I think that with this whole infrastructure deficit and how we deal with it and the amount of P3s that could be coming forward, we should at least take a look at P3s.

The Chair: For the information of the committee I've exercised the privilege that chairs have. TV cameras will be coming into the room. Also, of course, I guess just to let you know that while I appreciate democracy, it doesn't mean that I necessarily operate in that way all of the time.

Any other comments?

Mr. Herard: Well, I guess I learned a long time ago that you ought to listen to your constituents. I was quite prepared to listen to my constituents with respect to his motion. It's too bad that you withdrew it.

I guess what I'm hearing around the table, though, is that matters that come before this committee essentially are important matters. They're important to all of us around the table, but they're important to our constituents. Therefore, to do them justice, I think we need some notice as to when something like that would take place rather than being provided with the details on a particular thing at the table. So I would suggest to you that one of the things that we need to discuss is, as someone else mentioned earlier: how is this committee going to operate with respect to that? How is the actual process going to take place when we do have a particular issue to discuss and people to call and evidence to hear and questions to ask?

I think one of the things that might be useful is if we establish a process so that we don't get into procedural things at every meeting. If we're going to have a discussion, for example, on affordable housing, you know, that includes many things, like currently what's happening in all of our places where we have postsecondary institutions where students can't find places to live. I mean, this is a big issue. It's more than just one thing. For us to do it justice, I think we need to set a time and a date that says that on this day this is what we're going to do. Then we've got some time to engage our researchers and to engage perhaps witnesses and ministers and others, deputy ministers or whoever needs to provide evidence. So I'm just looking for some direction as to how we're going to proceed.

Mr. Doerksen: Since we're into a general discussion, I want to just put a few thoughts on the record, and I'm going to start off where my colleague left off. There is one specific component to the Affordable Housing Task Force that has not yet been talked about a lot, and probably with the school year advancing quickly upon us, it could become apparent rather quickly, and that's the whole question of student housing. If I do go back to the task force, there was a recommendation on there addressed to the Minister of Advanced Education and Technology to actually do a study on that. There's one element going right back to the report that probably would be appropriate. I'm just going to put that out and say that there's an item that we could talk about.

Another one probably is not in the mandate of this committee but certainly, in my view, is growth pressure is one that relates to an issue that's been significant in Red Deer, and that's the allocation of fresh water. I think the whole allocation management of our freshwater resources is an outflow of growth pressures, but I do think it belongs probably in a different committee. Again, for the record I wanted to make sure that people were aware of that particular issue. I think the current situation that highlighted that

around the Balzac development has been resolved now, but that's only the beginning of many more calls on fresh water in all of our watersheds. It's an outflow of growth pressures, but it probably belongs in a different committee, unfortunately, because I'd like to talk about that one.

The last one that I think we probably should have some discussion on is the whole aspect – and this has been mentioned a few times already today, so I'm just agreeing with people – of the labour market, whether it's training, whether it's access to qualified people, whether it's inflow of labour to our province. There, I think, if we're looking for themes to get our heads around and spend some time with a focus, I would agree with that one.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you.
Gene and then Dave.

Mr. Zwozdesky: Thank you. Just one additional comment flowing out of the good exchange that we've had so far. I wouldn't mind if we thought about organizing our approach around two central kind of channels. One could be with regard to global issues that are part of the Managing Growth Pressures Committee mandate, and by that I mean a discussion on P3s such as Mr. Martin has advanced. That's a global issue that applies to a whole bunch of potential areas. Flowing out of that would be public-sector comparators because that's what the P3 process includes.

Another one would be looking at the partners that we have on the P3s that are already out there. Another aspect could be cost escalations, for example. I mean, when you're talking about managing growth pressures, you're also talking about how many projects at a time you can bring on stream and whether we're driving the costs up in trying to help out, or we are doing the right thing by proceeding at all costs? Now, it's a debatable point, obviously. Central to that would be what the industry capacity is out there. No point in advancing a whole bunch of projects if you haven't got anybody who can take them up and tender on them and build them, and we've seen examples of that. Impact of growth on quality of life is another generic sort of comment. Population growth, immigration stats: these are what I would call global issues.

The second channel would then be specifics: schools, hospitals, roads, or postsecondary institutions. That kind of specific. I wouldn't mind if we sort of harnessed that thought of addressing global issues on the one hand here and then getting into some specific projects over there. It would help me organize my thinking and perhaps allow us to have some win-wins coming out of this committee's valuable work.

Dr. McNeil: I'll just respond to Mr. Herard's comment about committee process. The process the committee is going to follow is going to be a function of what issue or issues the committee identifies as being the subject matter of your deliberations. If you look at the other committees that are operating, the two that have had bills referred to them are doing, you know, one process, and the one that has an issue referred to them is doing a little different process. What issue or issues you define that you want to tackle is going to determine just how you go about it. Whether the committee staff from the Legislative Assembly can do some work to help define what you want to look at is another aspect to the process. Whether you summons expert witnesses, what external experts you want to have come to talk about the issue, whether you want to have any kind of public input, and so on is all going to be determined as a function of what particular issue or issues you want to tackle.

I think the key thing, first, is to define what issue or issues you want this committee to address. Then the process sort of flows from

that. Again, it's up to the committee then to define what that process should be although the staff, you know, may have some suggestions as to what works in other jurisdictions and so on. Those would be just some comments on the process that you want to adopt.

1:20

Mr. Martin: Well, you know, the time is coming to an end. I'd like to make a suggestion. We've had a bit of a general discussion about some issues that are important. I would suggest that maybe the chair and the vice-chair take this and set up a list of topics that we may want to talk about at the next meeting with some feed-in from us through e-mail or whatever. Then once we've gone through that, we may have a direction about who we want to come and future dates and that sort of thing.

The Chair: Well, let's see if we have a general agreement, then, that Dave and I, within a reasonably convenient time of this meeting, do get together, then, to discuss some of these comments that have been made, get with Karen and Shannon and whoever else we need to to make sure that we know, in terms of the procedures, how we'll move forward. I think we all hear, which I believe to be appropriate, that the process will actually be defined by the issue rather than us setting down: this will be the process. We can do all of that.

The next item if I can move, then, would be the date of the next meeting. How are we looking on your calendars for when we could get together again? It can't be next week, but might it be the following week?

Mr. Zwozdesky: Mr. Chair, are you asking us to try and choose a meeting date that works well for all of us right here, right now?

The Chair: Well, we'll have to do that.

Mr. Martin: Karen will send us out a choice if we get the right week, right?

Mr. Zwozdesky: Yeah. That's better. I don't think I have my whole schedule here right now.

Mr. Martin: What about the week of the 27th? That's the Monday.

The Chair: That would be the week I'm looking for right now. The co-chair and I will in advance of that meeting, of course, do our work.

Karen, anything else?

Mrs. Sawchuk: Mr. Chairman, I believe we only have one conflict with another committee, on the 30th. Other than that, our week is free.

The Chair: Okay. Any other points to be made?

Mr. Zwozdesky: Just a very brief point. You know, I've been thinking about the affordable housing thing for this last hour and a half. I wouldn't mind if, when you and the co-chair get together – is it co-chair, or is it deputy chair? Deputy co-chair?

The Chair: Deputy chair.

Mr. Zwozdesky: Okay, the deputy chair. When you guys have your chat, would you mind looking at the affordable housing issue through three lenses at once, if you will, just to give it a little bit of additional shape? One is, obviously, low- and moderate-income

families, the second one would be students at the university/college/technical institute level, and the third one would be the disabled. I, for one, would appreciate that approach between the chair and the deputy chair as you develop that issue to come forward.

The Chair: Okay.

Any other comments?

Mr. Herard: I don't know if this is even possible, but I hate to see a lot of good, productive time go to waste. I said earlier – and people thought I was kidding – that I was in support of Mr. Taylor's direction. You know, if we're going to have this discussion and we're going to have it at the next meeting, then I think we need to get some work done with respect to research, with respect to documentation, with respect to thinking about who the people may be that you might want to call. I don't want this time to be lost, because it is an important issue.

The Chair: Well, my sense of the direction that we've been given is to look at all of the information that's been provided to this

meeting, look at all of the different issues besides affordable housing that have been called for, and come back, unless I've not been here, with sort of a menu. Then we let the committee decide which items are to proceed in some kind of order. I think that's what I heard.

Mr. Herard: Okey-doke.

The Chair: If the deputy chair wants affordable housing to be on there, then he's got some work to do to convince all of you that it needs to be there. Likewise, if it's to be P3, then you've got some work to do too, sir.

Okay. It seems like everything I say elicits further reaction and reaction. Any last comments? Seeing none, I'll entertain a motion for adjournment.

Mr. Zwozdesky: I'll move that we adjourn the inaugural meeting of this committee in favour of one to follow soon on its heels.

The Chair: All in favour? You did get to vote. Okay. Carried.

[The committee adjourned at 1:26 p.m.]

