

**Title:** Wednesday, August 29, 2007 Growth Pressures Committee

Date: 07/08/29

Time: 1:00 p.m.

[Mr. Dunford in the chair]

**The Chair:** Okay, folks, I think the appointed time has arrived. I'd like to welcome members and the staff. Let's do the normal procedure, for the record, of introducing ourselves. Denis, would you like to begin, and we'll just come around the table.

**Mr. Herard:** Thank you. Denis Herard, Calgary-Egmont.

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

**Mr. Martin:** Ray Martin, Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview, and I'm sitting with the task force here.

**Dr. B. Miller:** I noticed that.

**Mr. Webber:** Len Webber, Calgary-Foothills.

**Ms Dean:** Shannon Dean, Parliamentary Counsel.

**Mrs. Sawchuk:** Karen Sawchuk, committee clerk.

**The Chair:** Clint Dunford, Lethbridge-West.

**Mr. Taylor:** Dave Taylor, Calgary-Currie.

**Mr. Rogers:** George Rogers, Leduc-Beaumont-Devon.

**Mrs. Kamuchik:** Louise Kamuchik, Clerk Assistant, director of House services.

**Dr. Massolin:** Philip Massolin, committee research co-ordinator, Legislative Assembly Office.

**Ms Sorensen:** Rhonda Sorensen, manager of communications services at the Legislative Assembly Office.

**The Chair:** Okay. Thank you very much.

Now, the agenda with attachments was circulated to you, I guess, probably electronically. Hopefully, you would have your agenda in front of you, and we'd call for the approval of the agenda. Moved by George. Any discussion? All in favour? Carried.

Also, then, there would have been minutes from the August 13 meeting that, again, were circulated. Can I have a motion for their adoption?

**Dr. B. Miller:** So moved.

**The Chair:** Bruce Miller. Discussion? Any revisions or changes? Seeing none, all in favour? Opposed? Carried.

Okay. Now, Review of Priority Issues Identified by Committee Members. Each of you as committee members was – I don't know what the proper word is – surveyed, polled to indicate your top three priorities because we had a discussion at the last meeting as to what were some of areas that we would look into. The information that I have in front of me: has that been circulated to members?

**Mrs. Sawchuk:** Yes, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chair:** Each of you, then, should have a document that reads: summary of the results of a canvass of members. Now, who would like to start the discussion regarding the canvass of members?

**Mr. Martin:** Well, all these things are important, but if we're going by the long debate, it looks like the first choice is affordable housing. Now, I think this is a very useful topic to discuss. I think a number of us have discussed it for a number of months. There was obviously a difference of opinion, but the reason that I suggested something else to begin with was that maybe there was something that we could look at as a committee that hadn't had the same review. If people think that it's useful to go back and review the affordable housing file and maybe pick specific areas, I certainly have no objection to it.

My point was that the three of us have been down this route fairly significantly, and if there's nothing new, if it's down to a sort of ideological abyss between us, then probably the committee's time could be spent doing something more useful. But if we think this is a useful route to take, because it certainly seems to be the majority of the committee in the canvass that wants to at least look at parts of it, I have no objections. My only concern is: how many times do we have to keep going over it if we're not going to agree ultimately?

**The Chair:** Any other comments?

**Dr. B. Miller:** I realize that we have had that task force, but there are certain areas that I'm concerned about in terms of the next step after the task force. I mean, we have the government response. One of the areas in which the government did not accept the recommendations of the committee was the area of any changes to the Municipal Government Act, and now we're hearing from municipalities about things like zoning issues. You know, Edmonton wants to have 5 per cent set aside by developers for affordable housing. Calgary actually has that 50-30-20 model that they got from New York City, which is even better in terms of promoting more affordable housing.

When we were listening to municipalities, they all think that the MGA blocks their ability to move ahead on these issues, but the government response was that they didn't accept the recommendation. So I think that if we really want to have affordable housing built in this province, we have to look at the MGA and see whether it really is blocking and whether it needs to be changed. That's certainly something that this committee could promote or investigate at least.

**The Chair:** Any other comments?

**Mr. Taylor:** Mr. Chairman, if you'll permit me, perhaps this, then, is as good a time as any to bring back a similar motion to the one that I proposed at our inaugural meeting and subsequently withdrew on the advice of the committee. I think you all have copies of it now. You should have. The motion that I'm bringing forward today is a little more general than before.

**The Chair:** Excuse me. If you don't mind, we're going to get to that.

**Mr. Taylor:** Okay. That's fine.

**The Chair:** I notice that there's another speaker, and maybe if we could just stay in this general area.

**Mr. Taylor:** Absolutely.

**The Chair:** Denis Herard.

**Mr. Herard:** Thank you. I would tend to agree with my colleague

Dr. Miller. You know, if there are things the government can do with respect to removing impediments from the MGA, then we definitely should hear from municipalities as to exactly how they would see us do that, and I would support what he's suggesting.

Going beyond that, I think it might be useful to look at some of the issues that were not accepted out of the task force that looked at this and see if there is further evidence required on any of those issues or if we need to debate it based on what we currently have. I think it would be useful to look at some of those issues in the light of new evidence, if there is any, but I would leave it up to the committee to decide if there's a need for further evidence.

**The Chair:** Len Webber.

**Mr. Webber:** Yeah. Just a quick comment. Thank you, Chair. I think about what Mr. Martin said with regard to not putting affordable housing as his first priority, the fact that it has been discussed and that the task force has done an extensive report on that area. But as you can see, I still chose affordable housing as the first priority because, of course, it is still quite a problem here in Alberta although the government is making some gains in the area of affordable housing here.

One area that I think we should be moving toward is looking into, I guess, the MGA, the act, and also trying to work with the issue of secondary suites again and somehow making them more available to the homeless. I know, in talking to my constituents, they have indicated many times to me that they would love to be able to put some type of a secondary suite into their home. I myself am looking at building a garage at my residence. I'm minutes away from the University of Calgary. I'd love to be able to put in some type of a suite to house a couple of students, but I can't because of the zoning. It's a problem, and it's an area that I think we have to look at and somehow get the municipal governments on board to allow these suites to be built and perhaps some type of a government incentive there also to build these suites.

I think that is an area that is doable. It is doable. It is something that can be done quickly, and we don't have to wait years to build apartment suites and condo complexes. We can quickly get secondary suites up and running. That's what I would like to focus on, and that's why I chose affordable housing as my first priority.

1:10

**The Chair:** George Rogers.

**Mr. Rogers:** Well, actually, I didn't have my hand up, Mr. Chairman, but I'm pleased to take the opportunity.

**The Chair:** I thought I saw you winking at me.

**Mr. Rogers:** Well, that's fine. Yes, very astute. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I'm going to make a comment that's going to be a little bit in a different vein. I mean, it's something I've been thinking about from some of the comments that have been made before. If you notice, I did not submit a list, and it was twofold: because of time, and frankly I'm going to be blunt in saying that I'm still struggling with what will be the real work or effort that will come out of this committee. I'm afraid that in going through some of these issues that are identified here, we're going to do one of two things. We're going to end up spinning our wheels, regurgitating efforts that are under way already or maybe partly under way with different opinions as to their success or lack thereof. A case in point: the housing issue. These three gentlemen right across from me sat on a task force earlier this year.

I'm of the opinion that the value of this committee will be more from the point of view of dealing with items that are referred to us from the Legislature through bills and so on. I realize that we're kind of struggling because we're one committee that hasn't had anything referred to it yet, so I'm quite willing to participate in the discussion that comes before us, but I have to be honest in saying that I approach it with some trepidation as to whether I believe we'll get any real value out of this approach that we're talking about right now.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Well, just perhaps if I could, it has placed the committee under, you know, some certain difficulties, I guess, in the fact that we haven't had it referred. Really, we've been developed by the Legislature, and it would seem rather ludicrous, I guess, in the time frame that we're in in Alberta not to have the managing growth committee looking into an issue. That's why we've been trying to be democratic here in terms of, then, canvassing people to see what it is that we would want to do. By any measurement the overwhelming responses of those that were made were affordable housing.

So, Deputy Chair, perhaps it would be timely now to move to your discussion on your motion. I'll let you go ahead.

**Mr. Taylor:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is a slightly different motion than the one that I brought forward at our last meeting a couple of weeks ago. It's a little more general, and it's a little more general so as to give the committee members the opportunity to determine the scope and direction of the investigation that I'm asking that we undertake. It reads as follows.

**The Chair:** Excuse me.

**Mr. Herard:** Could we have copies?

**The Chair:** Oh, do you not have copies?

**Mr. Taylor:** It was sent electronically.

**The Chair:** Okay. We'll get them.

**Mr. Herard:** I thought I printed everything.

**The Chair:** Maybe we can pause for a moment.

**Mr. Taylor:** Absolutely.

**The Chair:** Okay, Deputy Chair.

**Mr. Taylor:** Thank you. My motion reads 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 into the ongoing affordable housing crisis in Alberta with a view to making recommendations for legislative or other policy solutions.

If the committee passes the motion as it reads, that gives us, I think, wide, broad scope to discuss whatever areas related to affordable housing we wish to. I'm cognizant of some of the conversation and some of the discussion that's gone on here so far today. Some very interesting and, from my point of view, supportable points have been raised in terms of specific areas that members would like to look at. The committee or some of its members may wish to amend my motion to zero in or may wish to leave it as general as it is.

I think, Mr. Chairman, that introducing this motion at this time allows us to sort of stick with the agenda as we've approved it. We've selected, in broad terms anyway, affordable housing as the focus issue. Our next steps are to determine the scope of the review and the proposed timeline for the review, and if this motion is accepted, I think we can move on with that. So I'll turn it over to you to open it up for discussion at this point.

**The Chair:** Okay. Well, let's get into the discussion.

**Mr. Martin:** I'd say that the more important parts, if we move ahead and accept this, are (b) and (c), so we should move into those. I think the debate is pretty clear, that we're going to work on affordable housing.

**The Chair:** However, the deputy chair did point out in his discussion of his own motion that it is very general, and maybe that's the best thing for us.

**Mr. Martin:** Well, I think, then, we can limit it to the (b) part of the agenda.

**The Chair:** Okay. Any other discussion?

**Dr. B. Miller:** Well, not to repeat what I already said, but I like the focus here on recommendations for legislation because that's the problem I had with the response to the task force report.

**The Chair:** Okay. Any others?

**Mr. Herard:** I'm not particularly bothered with the scope of it. I think that we will probably come down to a more refined set of things that we want to look into after we pass this, so I would support it.

**The Chair:** Okay. All right.

Any other discussion? Okay. I'll call for a vote on the motion, then. All in favour? Opposed? Did you want that on the record?

**Mr. Rogers:** No.

**The Chair:** Okay. Passed by a majority of the committee. The minutes would show, then, that it would be a motion of this committee. Do we have to have another motion to pass it from the deputy chair?

**Mrs. Sawchuk:** No.

1:20

**The Chair:** Okay. Good.

All right. We have identified, then, the substance of our activities, which would be affordable housing. Now we need to determine the scope of the review, and I would look to the deputy chair to start the discussion on the determination of the scope.

**Mr. Taylor:** All right. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's not my desire or my intention to reinvent the wheel here. It's not my intention to have this committee go back to square one and redo all the very fine work that the all-party Affordable Housing Task Force did. It's my intention to see if we can sharpen the saw somewhat, to zero in on perhaps those recommendations and those issues which were not accepted by the government to this point, and to see if there are some of those in perhaps urgent or otherwise need of revisiting.

I think the notion, as raised by a couple of committee members already here today, of changes to the Municipal Government Act to facilitate some of the recommendations that have been made and, I think, some of the findings of the task force that in my consultation with stakeholders and constituents are pretty universally accepted as solutions to the affordable housing crisis, such as facilitating the creation of secondary suites, are areas that we want to go into.

I would hope – and I don't know – it will be the committee that decides as we get to point (c), the proposed timeline for the review, how much time we want to spend on this. I note that the Affordable Housing Task Force got its work done in what might be called lightning-quick speed as far as anything connected with the legislative process is. But I would hope that we can move with some dispatch, and I would hope that we can get down to some specifics here that we can as a committee recommend to the Legislature specific legislative or policy action on and get moving on solving the problem. I've said from the get-go that I think the affordable housing crisis is a problem that absolutely can be solved with the political will to do it. I think this committee gives us another opportunity to demonstrate that political will and work towards solving the problem.

**Mr. Martin:** There was some discussion recently of a slowdown in the housing market. You know, the headlines have been certainly clear in Edmonton and Calgary. I don't know if that has any impact, but one of the things that happened during our task force was that CMHC came out and gave us what they saw happening. It's not exact science, admittedly. As part of this, I think it would be useful if somebody could update us on what they see happening in the next six months or a year. I'm not saying that we not go through and do the things that we're talking about, but I think it would be beneficial if we could get an update to see: is the problem going to be more severe or less severe? What do they see happening? It's their job to take a look at it. I would suggest that maybe fairly quickly into that, if we're going into housing, we bring them in for a session.

Then I don't know where to go. I think an obvious one, as Bruce was talking about, is that if there are problems in the legislation, that's clearly something that hopefully we could move on by the fall, and maybe there are some other areas that we could broadly hit. But I think it would be very useful to have an update again because things seem to have somewhat changed if we're to believe what we read in the papers.

**The Chair:** Okay. Bruce.

**Dr. B. Miller:** Yeah. Just to go further with what I was suggesting around the MGA, I mean, obviously we need to talk with the Municipal Affairs and Housing department, with the deputy minister or whoever. A lot of the recommendations were actually referred to a cross-department assistant deputy ministers' committee, which was not something that the task force recommended actually. We were trying to be more specific than that. I don't know who is taking responsibility for everything that was referred to them.

Anyway, if the department of Municipal Affairs and Housing thinks that the MGA is not a block, I would like some explanation of that because the municipalities do think it's a block. I don't know. I think we need to enter into dialogue to see whether we need to move forward on that. We need more information about that. I would include secondary suites too, but we heard that the MGA may be a block for that too.

I think there are a number of areas. Even the ability of municipalities to provide tax incentives for developers: they're not sure whether they can do that either. Finding surplus property that was

set aside for school sites, to move that into a possibility of affordable housing: municipalities are not sure they can do that. So there are all those uncertainties that municipalities have that we could at least clear the air on. Either it's a communication misunderstanding or the legislation needs to be changed, there's something wrong with it.

**The Chair:** I saw Denis Herard.

**Mr. Herard:** Yeah. I would hope that the two organizations that speak for municipal districts in the province, the AAMD and C and the AUMA, probably could be asked to present a brief to the committee to identify clearly from their perspective any problem with respect to impediments to affordable housing such as suites and/or school sites, you know, all of the ownership questions and things like that, and so on.

To me it would be useful to hear from them and then have the department provide their input with respect to what we've heard from both of those organizations because, you know, quite frankly, unless the people who actually deal with these things on a daily basis, where the rubber meets the road, present to us, then we're getting second- and third-hand information. So I would think that one of the processes that we would use is to hear from them, hear from the department, and then go on from there.

With respect to that, I think that we need to decide a list of issues that we want to tackle or look at with respect to this whole thing. As Bruce indicated, the effect of the Municipal Government Act on the ability to do these things is certainly a major point, and there may be others. Quite frankly, I don't recall, because I'm getting older, how many actual recommendations were not accepted out of that task force. I don't think we need to revisit all of them, but if some of the members feel strongly about particular ones, then they could make that submission to the committee, and we could decide what the priority is. You know, if we go through and sort of reinvent the whole thing again, it may take longer than is desirable.

**The Chair:** Well, just for the record, because it's under 52.07, we have six months but no longer than that.

Now, I saw George Rogers.

**Mr. Rogers:** Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wanted to follow up on a couple of points that Denis made. If we're going to have this discussion – regardless of how I voted to move with this to start with, I certainly support democracy – it's really important that we focus on new opportunities and not revisit what has been before this collective in the past.

**1:30**

Denis, your point about the MGA and looking at the MGA and trying to determine whether or not there are impediments to some of these innovative solutions, Member Webber talked about the potential of doing a student suite over his garage, et cetera. I think it's very crucial, as we move ahead, if we're going to be serious about trying to find a solution to what I agree is a very critical issue in our province. We have a sport in this country – and I call it a sport loosely – of different levels of government bashing each other and passing the buck. The reality is that once we determine what is allowable in the MGA or what changes need to be made to allow for other opportunities that may not be there or used today, then we need to recommend to the government that it be made clear to everyone concerned what is doable or not and what is at the purview of the municipalities.

It's quite convenient for the cities, towns, villages, be they big or

small, to turn it back and say, "Well, province, it's your problem; there's nothing that can be done in our community," when in fact there may very well be things like secondary suites and so on, and some communities are saying: "Well, not in my backyard. I don't want those people living down the street from me."

So I think it's very important, if we move in those directions and when we get that clarity, that we make sure that some kind of a document or process is arrived at where we make it clear to everyone concerned who is able to do what, and if innovative solutions are avoided, the monkey is put where it belongs, plain and simple.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Okay.

Len, any comments?

**Mr. Webber:** Not just yet. Thank you.

**The Chair:** So that's through all the members. Anybody want to get in on a second round of speakers here?

**Mr. Martin:** You know, we have limited time. I wouldn't suggest that there will be an election this fall, but the legislative session is the first week in November, so the bulk of the work that we'd want to do – I'm sort of talking in this seat now, but I'm trying to bring it back. It seems to me that the major thing we're talking about is what we can impact in terms of legislation, one way or the other, whether there needs to be. I would suggest that we maybe go through the task force report and take out the items that deal with the possibility of legislation or not and focus on that in the time that we have.

**The Chair:** Okay. So is that something that we could get research to do between now and the next meeting?

**Mr. Martin:** Well, I think it would be relatively easy. We're not going to try, as George says, to reinvent the wheel. We're going to pick on things where there's at least some confusion about whether there's legislation there or not and concentrate on that for the time being because that could have a quick impact even, if we did it fast enough, on the possibility of legislation in the fall.

**The Chair:** Okay. Any further comments?

**Mr. Taylor:** Mr. Chairman, I would just say that I can support Mr. Martin wholeheartedly in that. I think that that narrows the scope to something that's doable between now and the first week in November, and I would recommend that we go that route.

**Mr. Herard:** Well, I think that Mr. Martin suggested that we hear from CMHC, was it?

**Mr. Martin:** Yeah.

**Mr. Herard:** I would say that we hear from them as well as the AAMD and C and the AUMA and that that process begin today.

**Mr. Martin:** And the municipal affairs department.

**Mr. Herard:** Yeah.

**The Chair:** So let me summarize what I feel we're hearing. If I've got it, we've got it; if I don't, then we correct it. Basically, then, under the general motion that we've passed, we've really given ourselves a wide-open field, and as we've talked, we've talked on

the specifics of secondary suites and the MGA and sort of the legislation that might or might not be blocking us, and it started to evolve or refine itself into now that we focus, then, on legislative solutions and that in order to do that, we need to have some specific people in front of us.

So we would want to of course have department officials, I think, to make clear what's been accepted and what hasn't been accepted of the old report. We need the research and also, I guess, the department's response as to, yes, these are legislation-related issues that we're going to focus on. Then to help us with point of view, we would have CMHC representatives and the AUMA and AAMD and C, the latter if they want to participate. They'll be invited, and staff would arrange, then, for those hearings to take place.

So have I got it?

**Mr. Martin:** That's why you get the big money.

**The Chair:** There's always a reason.

The idea being that if we can get this done in time for the fall sitting, we may have something to present at the appropriate time, then, in that legislative sitting. Okay? All right. Well, I think we have a determination, then, of the scope, and we also have the proposed timeline.

Any further discussion?

**Mr. Taylor:** Is there any need, Mr. Chairman, for any more motions to formalize the scope and the timeline?

**The Chair:** I think it's on the record.

**Mr. Taylor:** It's on the record. Good. Okay. Fine.

**The Chair:** Well, we hit the easy button on that one, didn't we?

**Mr. Rogers:** Mr. Chairman, if I may. You know, I think we're fine with the outline that we've done so far, but in terms of timeline, moving this forward, I'm just wondering when we might get together again with the AUMA and the AAMD and C, and so on. I'm just wondering if we should talk about that. Or should we leave that at the call of the chair?

**The Chair:** I would ask that you leave it at the call of the chair because we're already finding – and today's attendance is a good example of that – that there are lots of conflicting itineraries. So we'll do that. Now, we're not forced to meet the fall session because we do have six months, based on how the motion was presented, but if we're going to be able to meet that November time frame, then that sort of forces us into a series of meetings that we'll have to almost enforce perhaps.

**Mr. Herard:** I would expect that student housing will be part of that. It certainly will be timely, I think, between now and then. We're already hearing the issues in that respect. But I'm wondering, again because of deficiencies in memory, whether or not presentations were part of your task force. Is there a need to get updated? You know, I think it's always good to get an update on what's happening now because six months ago things were a bit different. I heard just this morning, in fact, that 2,500 more apartment units have been approved in the city of Edmonton, which certainly will have an impact on things, where in the past it's always been condos. So things are changing a bit. I think it would be a good idea to get updated with respect to what the current situation is for this fall for

our students. I don't know exactly how you'd do that, but I would suggest that that would be part of what we look at.

**Mr. Martin:** Well, I think the students' unions have some system at both the U of A and U of C. In regard to the presentation, I remember the president of the U of C making perhaps the best proposal about student housing, predicting what would happen this year.

**Mr. Herard:** Would it be appropriate to ask those bodies to give us an update in writing, not necessarily having to present it but telling us?

**Mr. Martin:** Yeah, I think that would be a very good idea.

**Mr. Herard:** Okay. Thanks.

*1:40*

**The Chair:** As sort of ancillary to our legislative review we'll also, then, as a secondary issue take on the postsecondary housing. I don't suppose we need a limit, though, in terms of doing something by November, do we, Denis? We could use the six months on that one, could we?

**Mr. Herard:** Well, I think that the sooner we get the information, the better, and I think we're right in the middle of it now.

**The Chair:** Right. But it doesn't supersede what we've already discussed here as the prime issue.

**Mr. Herard:** No.

**Mr. Martin:** I think it's just collecting the information; that's the main thing he's talking about.

**Mr. Taylor:** That should be a fairly quick process.

**The Chair:** So I'm not hearing other than the specific groups that we've talked about.

We need to have discussed, though, whether or not we see public hearings being involved in our efforts on this one. Anybody wish to comment?

**Dr. B. Miller:** We've already had the public hearings even on the student issues. We had one of our public hearings at the University of Calgary, so we heard from lots of students about the issues. Some of them are not very impressed by the U of C as a landlord. Anyway, I think we've had those public hearings, so I think we're looking specifically at legislative possibilities. I mean, that might lead us to want to have a broader inquiry, but I don't see that at this point.

**Mr. Martin:** Well, this is public anyhow.

**Dr. B. Miller:** That's right.

**The Chair:** I think I'm acting on behalf of the committee. Everybody knows that we are entitled to have public hearings. I just wanted to make sure for the record, then, as we at least delve into this in the initial part of our meetings, that we feel public hearings have already been held. We do have the option, of course, at any time of opening that up further if we so desire. So we'll ride on the back of the previous committee in terms of the public input that they had, making sure that that's available to members of our committee.

**Dr. B. Miller:** Mr. Chairman, if I could. Yeah, I was thinking about that too. I mean, there is lots of documentation that we received as a task force and some really good documentation from the municipalities with lots of ideas and expressing their issues. I don't know how that can be made available because there is quite a lot of material. I think we'd go through it and choose what is relevant.

**The Chair:** When you say "we," are you talking we with the research staff?

**Dr. B. Miller:** Well, I think all the materials are still available.

**The Chair:** But you're not talking about the two chairs doing it.

**Dr. B. Miller:** No.

**The Chair:** Thank you.  
Okay. Anything further?

**Mr. Herard:** Well, I think we're all used to multitasking, and I would hate to think that we only have one job to do because there were, you know, a number of things that were suggested by committee members with respect to issues that they felt were important to look at. So I'm in your hands as to whether or not we add to the list of things that we should be looking at between now and then.

**The Chair:** Can I suggest, Denis, that we do have the list, and we'll keep that. Let's start on these two things. I mean, we're an ongoing committee. When we've dealt with them, then we can go back to the list or other specifics under affordable housing, whichever the committee would determine.

**Mr. Herard:** Yeah. I just thought we could do more than one thing at once.

**The Chair:** Well, unfortunately, most of us haven't been able to devote the rest of our lives to this one activity.

**Mr. Herard:** Oh, gee, I'm surprised.

**The Chair:** Further discussion? Okay. I'm going to indicate, then, that we've dealt with item 4 on the agenda.

We do have a draft news release that Rhonda made with some fill in the blanks. I imagine you've been working away – have you? – to determine how we would now do that.

**Ms Sorensen:** Yes, Mr. Chair. I'll just wait until everybody has a copy in front of them, but when you do get it, you'll notice that there are some highlighted areas that were left open so that we could fill them in following the discussions today. Clearly, a lot of the areas will change.

The first highlighted area was simply identifying the issue that the committee wished to deal with. There has been some media coverage already on what the committee's intents were, and I think it's important that we as a committee get our own message out there. What I would propose is that I could fill in the blanks based on today's discussions and distribute another copy either to the chair and deputy chair or the entire committee for approval.

**The Chair:** Give it to the entire committee.

**Ms Sorensen:** Okay. And if we could get it out, you know, fairly soon.

I'm not clear on one of the things, just based on the discussions that were just held. You'll see on page 2 of the news release that there's a highlighted area where it says that members of the public are invited to make written submissions to the committee before a certain deadline, and details about this would be available on the website. I did hear you say that you weren't intending at this point to hold public hearings, which would be more oral, but I wasn't quite clear if the intent was to invite written submissions.

**The Chair:** No. Not at this time.

**Ms Sorensen:** Okay. So we'll probably just take that entire paragraph out and focus more on what the discussions were at the table today.

**The Chair:** Okay. Any comments by any member?

**Mr. Herard:** Well, on the previous page there's also that other one, that talks about: "The process . . . is intended to encourage an open dialogue with Albertans."

**Ms Sorensen:** That'll be revised a little bit. I still believe that we are encouraging an open dialogue. A lot of that dialogue has just already taken place, and we'll utilize that information in this review.

**Mr. Herard:** Okay.

**The Chair:** Okay. Other thoughts?

Rhonda will take this away and electronically get us a copy back. I don't want to be the meat in the sandwich, so you would respond directly to her. If there is sufficient concern, then she'll notify the deputy chair and myself, and we'll have to resolve in some way if there are issues.

**Mr. Herard:** The way I see this, we had the deputy chair bring forth a motion that passed. I see room here for a comment from the chair, which is fine, but I think that the deputy chair should also have a comment in here as well because it's his motion.

**The Chair:** Sure. Great. Boy, we've changed since '93, haven't we, Denis?

**Mr. Herard:** No. We were always this nice.

**The Chair:** I know we were. It's just that we were never recognized for it.

**Mr. Herard:** That's right.

**The Chair:** This is on the record, isn't it? I knew my mischievousness would get me in trouble.

Okay. Anything further on that point?

**Ms Sorensen:** Not on that point, but I believe you were also handed a second document, which is mainly just for your information and perhaps your interest, hopefully your interest. We haven't done a lot of formal communications strategies for this committee as of yet, but there has been media coverage, as mentioned before, and I think it's interesting to note that one of the things we do have in place for the committee is an external website that the public can access.

If you look under the title Managing Growth Pressures Website, there's already been significant activity on that, which I think just shows you that there is an interest out there. So far there have been

over 17,000 hits on that site, with just over 4,000 people taking time to really look around at what that site has on it right now. The main Managing Growth Pressures site has had 225 people hitting it.

If you look at the dates of the media coverage, the week of August 6 to 10 and August 13, there was a story about your initial meeting on Global. Then you go down to the bottom, where it shows activity spikes on the website. You'll see that they correlate with one another, so you do know that when you are getting some public interest from the media, it is having an effect on how people are viewing the committee information. These reports also can be provided as the process goes, and we'll see how the activity is working on the website.

**1:50**

**The Chair:** Good. Thank you. Any comments from any of the members?

Okay. Now, I think in our summarization of point 4 we may have dealt with item 6, Identification of Research Needs. Philip, do you think you got your instructions?

**Dr. Massolin:** Yeah. I think I do, actually. I mean, I was going to present you with some options, but I think that you have been proactive and already have given me my marching orders. But if I could just get a clarification just so I know exactly what I am doing with respect to the task force on affordable housing, the recommendations, and what the legal implications were. Could you just sort of restate that for me so that I know exactly what you'd want me to do?

**The Chair:** I may have misspoken if I said legal. I should have said legislative.

**Dr. Massolin:** Legislative.

**The Chair:** Yes.

**Dr. Massolin:** That's my word. My mistake. Legislative you did say.

**The Chair:** Oh, okay. I suppose if I really focused on the list of recommendations, I could probably get an 85 per cent mark, but I think we need a more in-depth look by research to see that, yes, this item number, however you're going to number these things, does have a legislative component to it.

**Dr. Massolin:** Yeah. Okay. That's fair enough. Thank you.

**The Chair:** Anything else on that?

**Mr. Webber:** A quick observation here with respect to the news release title: Committee Seeks Public Input. That'll be taken out altogether, correct? There's no more public input.

**Ms Sorensen:** No. No more.

**Mr. Webber:** We've done enough. The task force did it all. I do agree that we have to perhaps meet with the students' union again just to see what the situation is now. It may have changed a little bit since our time with the task force. It would be interesting to meet with them again to find out what the student housing is going through right now. Other than that and perhaps AUMA, I think that that would probably suffice because, again, the task force did do extensive public input.

**The Chair:** Well, we need Canada Mortgage and Housing, though, too.

**Mr. Webber:** Canada Mortgage and Housing. Yes. That one also.

**The Chair:** Ministry officials.

**Mr. Webber:** Okay. Good. So Committee Seeks Public Input will no longer be part of the news release?

**Ms Sorensen:** No.

**Mr. Webber:** Okay. Thank you.

**Mr. Herard:** Just again for clarification, is it research that will then contact these organizations that we've agreed should present information to let them know what the scope of it is and timetables and all that stuff, or is that the responsibility of the chair?

**The Chair:** Well, research would hand me a list, I think, with contacts, and then I would phone them directly. I think that's how that would work, would it not? Is that a good suggestion?

**Mrs. Sawchuk:** We could draft letters for you to sign.

**Mr. Herard:** We'll leave it in your good hands.

**The Chair:** Okay. I hear Karen saying that they'll draft a letter for me to send to them so we do it officially.

**Mr. Herard:** Great.

**The Chair:** We're likely to have some time to be able to do that because I don't think we can meet now until probably mid-September sometime because of, again, itineraries and that sort of thing. So I think we've got some time, but once we start, we're going to have to get at it.

**Mr. Rogers:** Just to lend my thoughts on that, Mr. Chairman, and contacting the organizations. I think it's important because of, again, the importance, the stature of this committee that a request be from the chair to these organizations to provide their input. You as the leader of this committee on our behalf are requesting that they provide us with their valued input.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** And I'll certainly measure my normal bluntness. I won't say: be here or else. I'll be nice. Let the record show I said that I won't do that.

Any other thoughts?

Okay. Other Business. Any other business to be brought before the committee?

Hearing none, the date of the next meeting will be at the call of the chair but would not be before September 16. Is that the date?

**Mr. Taylor:** September 16 is a Sunday. The 18th, actually.

**The Chair:** Okay. Not before September 18. So you can work on your calendars that way. But lots of activity by Philip and others will have taken place in the interim, including getting lined up and the agreement of these people to appear in front of us with some idea of what those dates would be, and they may in fact be at our first meeting.

**Mr. Martin:** One thing, too, you alluded to is that people have busy schedules. I just remind people that if sometimes they can't make it, somebody else can be at the meeting. Right? You can have a stand-in, and that's important, I think.

**The Chair:** Again for the record, Shannon, what are the actual logistics of doing all of that?

**Ms Dean:** Twenty-four hours' notice. If you'll just bear me with, I'll cite the Standing Order. I believe it's notification to the chair and the Clerk.

**Mr. Martin:** Twenty-four hours' notice.

**Ms Dean:** Yeah.

**Mr. Webber:** Voting status too?

**Ms Dean:** Yeah.

**The Chair:** Well, I know that from my observation of activities in the House, Ray Martin and Ted Morton have developed such a relationship that you might want Ted to come on your behalf, Ray.

**Mr. Martin:** I'll take that under consideration.

**Mr. Rogers:** Morton and Martin.

**The Chair:** My thoughts entirely. It wouldn't take up any more room in *Hansard*. We'd be efficient that way.

Okay. Any last-minute other business? Going once. I'll call for a motion for adjournment.

**Dr. B. Miller:** So moved.

**The Chair:** I saw Bruce Miller out of the front of my eye. Thank you very much.

[The committee adjourned at 1:57 p.m.]