

Title: Tuesday, November 27, 2007 Managing Growth Pressures Committee

Date: 07/11/27

Time: 8:04 a.m.

[Mr. Dunford in the chair]

The Chair: I'd like to call the meeting to order. Welcome to members and to staff.

Typically we read our names into the record. Clint Dunford, Lethbridge-West.

Mr. Taylor: Dave Taylor, Calgary-Currie.

Ms Dean: Shannon Dean, Senior Parliamentary Counsel.

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

Ms Roth von Szepesbela: Good morning. Katrin Roth von Szepesbela, legal research officer, Legislative Assembly Office.

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

Mr. Prins: Ray Prins, Lacombe-Ponoka.

Mr. Webber: Len Webber, Calgary-Foothills.

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

Mr. Doerksen: Vic Doerksen, Red Deer-South.

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

Mr. Herard: Good morning. Denis Herard, Calgary-Egmont.

The Chair: All right. The agenda was circulated. Any additions or deletions? Would somebody like to move, then, the agenda? Len Webber. All those in favour? Opposed? Carried.

Also, the minutes of the November 6, 2007, meeting have been circulated. Any additions or deletions? All right. We need a mover, then, of the minutes. Ray Prins. Those in favour? Opposed? Carried.

Now, after the discussions of our last meeting members will recall that three items on the focus issues remained outstanding. The committee indicated additional research pertaining to items 1.4, Property Taxes, and 1.6, Condominium Conversions, was required before proceeding on these issues. As well, information from the Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing on the time frame for the review of the use of reserve lands for affordable housing was requested.

We'll go through these in order: property taxes, use of reserve land – land dedication, and condominium conversions. With property taxes, in order to proceed through the document in an orderly fashion, I'll begin by asking Dr. Massolin to review the briefing material pertaining to 1.4, Property Taxes.

Dr. Massolin: Thank you. If committee members could just turn to page 4 of the focus issues document, page 4 has those three issues that remain outstanding. I'll start with property taxes. Just to remind committee members, the research staff was tasked with the responsibility of providing further information on the authority of municipalities to cancel, reduce, refund, or defer municipal taxes as well as the authority of municipalities to tax student dormitories. I'll go into those straightaway.

In terms of cancelling, reducing, refunding, or deferring taxes the Municipal Government Act provides that if it is equitable to do so, a municipal council may

- (a) cancel or reduce tax arrears;
- (b) cancel or refund all or part of a tax;
- (c) defer the collection of a tax.

That's pursuant to section 347(1). So the municipality does have the ability, you know, to cancel, reduce, or refund taxes as it may desire to do so.

Second of all, the Municipal Government Act in section 361 also talks about municipal property tax exemptions. The Municipal Government Act currently expressly prescribes tax exemptions based on the use of the property in question. Section 361(c) exempts environmental reserves, municipal reserves, school reserves, municipal and school reserves, and undeveloped property reserved for public utilities. All of those areas are currently exempt according to the MGA.

Now, in terms of school dormitories I just wanted to clarify column 3 there. The municipalities already do have the discretion to waive the property tax for school housing. I just wanted to clarify that. According to the Municipal Government Act section 363(1)(d) indicates that student dormitories are exempt from taxation. However, section 363(3) enables a municipal council to make student dormitories subject to taxation to any extent the council deems appropriate except to pay certain requisitions, including for ambulance services.

That is sort of the overview on those questions, Mr. Chair. We're ready to answer questions should there be any.

8:10

The Chair: Okay. Any questions or discussion?

Mr. Taylor: Philip, can you give us a rundown of some of the reasons why municipal councils would decide to levy a property tax on student dorms, some of the acceptable reasons?

Dr. Massolin: Mr. Chair, I don't think I'm in a position to answer that one. We didn't do research per se into that.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you.

Any other questions or discussion?

We're in a position now, then, in dealing with this, that the item has been raised. There have been opportunities on the part of the municipalities, as I understand from the information that's been provided to us. Is there anything further, then, that this committee wishes to do on this item other than accepting it for information? Going once, twice. Ray Prins.

Mr. Prins: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Are there examples of how the cities of Edmonton and Calgary are taxing or not taxing these student dorms even with the exemptions under the MGA?

Ms Roth von Szepesbela: I didn't really look particularly into that question. However, the submissions made by the University of Alberta and the University of Calgary appear to suggest that municipalities have decided to pass a bylaw to make those student dormitories taxable, as they're allowed to do under the MGA.

Mr. Prins: So there is a possibility for an exemption, but they have not used the exemption, then, and what you're saying is that they are continuing to tax.

Ms Roth von Szepesbela: The act exempts student dormitories. If

municipalities wish to tax them nevertheless, they may do so by passing a bylaw. Once again, from the submissions received by the universities, it appears that that's the case.

Mr. Prins: Okay.

The Chair: Anything further?

Mr. Taylor: It would seem logical that unless we want to recommend an amendment to the MGA that would absolutely make student dormitories nontaxable by municipalities, municipalities will continue to be able to decide what to do on their own, and based on discussions that we have had in this committee before, I would guess that the will of the committee would be not to interfere in that area.

However, one of the things that we were asked in representations by the two student unions was that the provincial government match municipally waived property taxes by waiving provincial education taxes on affordable housing. I wonder if I could get clarification on whether that is done automatically by the province or where we sit in terms of levying the education portion of property taxes on student dorms in the province of Alberta.

The Chair: Do we have information in front of us that would answer that question?

Ms Roth von Szepesbela: No.

Mr. Taylor: Well, Mr. Chair, seeing as how that was one of the requests of the two student unions, I would suggest that we need an answer to that question before we can proceed.

Mr. Herard: I would agree. Plus, I think that the earlier comments Mr. Taylor made with regard to amending the MGA to make it absolutely clear that they are exempt is probably doing something without having all the facts, and I would not want to do that without knowing what reasons the municipalities would have to tax them, as Mr. Taylor asked in the first place. So my suggestion would be that we get that information before we make any moves towards changing an act, that we may not necessarily totally understand the ramifications of.

The Chair: Thank you.

Just for the chair's clarification, is it a capital offence if the chair does not table the report while the Legislature is sitting?

Ms Dean: You have six months to report.

The Chair: Okay. All right. If the committee is in agreement, we'll instruct staff, then, to obtain answers to those questions raised by the co-chair and by Mr. Herard. Anything else on this particular item? Okay. Well, then, 1.4 remains outstanding, with specific questions to be answered.

Let's move, then, to Use of Reserve Lands – Land Dedication. Again, Philip.

Dr. Massolin: I think that what is indicated here in this focus issue document, column 2, that "the MGA does not [expressly] allow land designated as municipal reserve, school reserve or municipal school reserve to be used for affordable housing purposes," stands.

The other piece of information updates that second bullet point in column 2. Basically, we have received an indication from Minister Danyluk that his ministry as well as the Ministry of Education are working collaboratively to deal with this issue, this reserve land issue. However, no timetable has been indicated.

The Chair: Because we've already moved 1.4 off into the future, there would seem to be no pressure on us, then, at this point in time to deal with this particular item in the absence of the minister's report, that they are currently working on but have not come to any decisions. Shall we hold this one in abeyance, then, as well?

Mr. Martin: That's fine. There might be some impetus for them to work faster if this committee was making a recommendation. We don't have the final authority anyhow, so that may add some impetus to it. That would be the only other thing.

The Chair: Well, we've already agreed that we're not reporting until some time within the six months.

Mr. Martin: No. But you can pass it on.

The Chair: Okay. All right. I'll indicate, then, to the ministers our interest, not only the interest in the topic but the interest in finalizing our report. Does that deal with this matter? Any other comments?

All right. Seeing none, let's move then to Condominium Conversions. Once again, Dr. Massolin.

Dr. Massolin: Thanks again, Mr. Chair. I just would like to point out that column 2 of the focus issue document there: again, that comment stands. However, we were asked to do additional research pertaining to the issue of the so-called condo conversion loophole. Now, as committee members remember, the concern was that some landlords are circumventing the one-year notice requirement for condo conversions. However, the issue that was raised by the stakeholders pertains to buildings for which a condo plan had already been registered. This means that the owner could sell units without triggering the one-year provision. In fact, in that scenario, as we point out in the research paper, no condo conversion actually takes place, so this so-called loophole really isn't a loophole as stated by the stakeholder.

Mr. Martin: I disagree.

The Chair: Recorded.

Mr. Martin: Well, that may be the case, but what I see in the city of Edmonton figures is that they now have 6,915 condo conversion registrations. That must mean that almost all the apartments didn't have that recognition. That's their latest figures, as at the end of October. To me, that is a tremendous loophole one way or the other. It seems to me that if they're saying that these are the ones that they have to okay, those 6,915, and the previous record was about 4,700 in 2004, there's something happening there. Is it your opinion, then, that these were all registered as apartment buildings before, all of these, and therefore that's why they're registering, which means, it seems to me, that there's hardly any that were registered as condos before?

8:20

Dr. Massolin: Well, Mr. Chair, I don't know the figures per se. We didn't research the actual figures.

Mr. Martin: I have.

Dr. Massolin: I would imagine that there's a bit of both going on in terms of, you know, the pre-existing condo plan registration: condos that are availing themselves of the market opportunity to do the conversion as well as units that were not initially registered through a condo plan. It's probably a mixture.

Mr. Martin: Well, again, I can tell you that these are the city of Edmonton figures, and this is what they classify as condo conversions. So I would take it that they were apartment buildings before. That's a significant number of condos. You know, when we're trying to move ahead with affordable housing – the government's talking about 11,000 new units – we lose 7,000 in Edmonton in 10 months.

Dr. Massolin: Just one point of clarification, then, Mr. Chairman, if I may. If the case is that the building wasn't originally registered through a condo plan, then that notice period applies. I mean, that's all we're talking about; we're not basically saying that those condo conversions cannot happen. It's just that the one-year notice needs to apply.

Mr. Martin: Yeah. And then we find, you know, the loopholes. I can tell you horror stories of loopholes that are occurring, and even Service Alberta agrees with that.

I think that in the short run we have to be able to do something. If they were registered as condos, you know, when they were built 30 years ago – I would be surprised if there were a lot that were done then. Certainly, that doesn't seem to be the case in Edmonton, so we still have a problem. There are all sorts of ways that I found to get around the condo conversions if they want to do it. I can go through it. I won't bore you right here right now, but trust me that there are ways that they are getting around, you know, the year's notice that was meant in Bill 34.

The Chair: David and then Len.

Mr. Taylor: Yeah. I want to weigh in on this, and I suppose my comments are by nature somewhat speculative. I don't question that this loophole exists, but I do question that it exists so commonly, that we have a bunch of condo conversions in the hundreds or thousands or, you know, tens of thousands. If you put Calgary and Edmonton together, you're getting up into 10,000-plus that are conversions that aren't really conversions.

I can understand that through market conditions, in the case of a building that was registered as a condo property 30 years ago, you might have a lot of individual owners of individual units who decide, "This is a good time to sell my investment and take my profits," but those individual units are going to by nature be sold individually. You're not going to have entire buildings, I wouldn't think, going through the experience of a condominium conversion, where everybody living in that building who for whatever reason thinks of themselves as a tenant is suddenly booted out onto the street in, you know, a very short notice period so that the entire building can be converted to condos.

You know, it seems to me that certainly in the Calgary experience – and maybe Mr. Martin can add a little bit of Edmonton experience to these comments; I don't know – when we talk about buildings going condo, we're talking about entire buildings, every suite in the place being emptied out and converted and then resold as condominiums, resold by one agent who may or may not be representing one owner, I suppose. But it's a bit of a nose stretcher to me that all these buildings and all these units that somehow are coincidentally going through the conversion process at the same time were always condominiums to begin with.

I think, Mr. Chair, that I'm looking for a couple of things here. Number one, I think we do need to take relatively rapid action on the issue of condominium conversions, certainly not wait, you know, the entire six-month period that we have to prepare a final report to make a recommendation in this area or at least to decide what our

recommendation is going to be. Secondly, I think we need that to be based on more hard data. We need to try and get a handle on how many condo conversions really are condo conversions and how many are – this is not a very sophisticated way to put it in *Hansard* where it will live forever – this loophole thing.

The Chair: Before we go on, just to clarify where we're at right now. We asked for some information. It's been provided to us. We're now back into the political discussion about policy, if there should be one on the part of this government. That's fair enough.

However, I don't know that we're in a position to start dividing up our report. We've gone into this, in my view, based on six issues, and it would seem to me that it would be appropriate to come out with comments on the six issues. There was an earlier one that we just discussed, in this meeting, that you felt needed more information and weren't shy about extending it off six months. Here's one now that is particularly gripping to some of the members, and we want to have a report on it, if I'm interpreting your comments correctly. I would want to caution members of this committee in proceeding in that kind of fashion.

Len and then Denis.

Mr. Webber: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I understand this loophole here with regard to condos and their original registration. Back 20, 30 some years ago it was registered as a condominium although it was rented out for those 20, 30 years, but it is still registered as a condominium. I understand that.

Mr. Martin, you mentioned that you had a number of other examples of loopholes. I think that if you could share those other loophole examples with us, then perhaps we can look at those in more detail also and go from there. But with respect to this particular loophole, they're technically registered as condominiums. If they're sold, then they basically have not been switched over from rental to condo. They've always been condo. That, to me, I guess, is a legitimate loophole. I don't know if there's anything that this committee can do about it, but we can at least talk about it. If Mr. Martin would like to share some other loopholes with us, I would be more than interested in hearing them.

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Herard: I guess my concern is similar to the first concern that I voiced, and that is that there certainly seems to be expressed more urgency to deal with this. The comment was made that it probably shouldn't wait. I find myself at a loss again because we're dealing with a situation where we don't have the facts. I have great respect for Mr. Martin, and I know he has done his research, but he should really share that information and the documents with us. I think that Mr. Taylor's comments are valid as well. In Calgary I think the condominium phenomenon did not get its start as early as in Edmonton, so I think we're looking at two different scenarios.

But, again, to make any kind of a recommendation, we need information. Otherwise, we're imposing our ill-advised will on something. Thus the concern I have is to come up with a decision and a request for action that is based on well-intended, I suppose, but perhaps not accurate information.

The Chair: Any other comments?

Mr. Taylor: Yes. Mr. Chair, I would just add very quickly to what Mr. Herard was saying and refer back to my own remarks about the urgency of this condominium conversion issue. It is an urgent issue.

I am in full agreement with Mr. Herard that we need better information, more information before we can make a decision, but the urgent nature of this issue suggests to me that we should try and get that information as quickly as possible and perhaps step up our timeline for submitting our final report. We have six months to do it, Mr. Chair. I'm just suggesting that we not take that long.

8:30

The Chair: Well, just for the information of the committee, it's not six months from today. February 13 would be our report day, so perhaps it's not as dire as what I might have indicated.

All right. On this particular item we've had a number of people speak in favour of more information. I'm at the will of the members. We are all together next week. Would we try to find a meeting for next week? Do you have enough information, Ray, at your fingertips to be able to handle it?

Mr. Martin: Well, maybe I can just respond quickly.

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Martin: What I have is from the city of Edmonton, their figures to the end of October. At that point there were what they called 6,915 condo conversions. Now, the fact that they're calling them condo conversions would lead me to believe that they were rental properties that were transferred. I'm not sure of that. I reckon we could check that out if you'd like. But those are the figures that we have from the city of Edmonton, and that can be confirmed with them at any time.

The Chair: If I can, again, just to clarify, this seems to be more of an issue, though, than just numbers on a piece of paper, right?

Mr. Martin: Yeah. Well, the loopholes that I've seen – it was alluded to by Mr. Taylor. The favourite one, that Service Alberta says is happening quite frequently, is that the owner condo-converts and then sells individually. Then you're down to three months because individually people do it. That's the major loophole.

There is where your blood relatives – we know cases where they say that these are their relatives, and we know that they weren't. That's another way to get around it.

Leases are not covered. If you have a six-month lease or a three-month lease, at the end of that lease, you know, they can raise the rent again. When leases come due, we think it's almost a forced eviction.

We've checked all these things with Service Alberta and they admit that there are ways to get around it. These are loopholes, just to give you a couple of examples.

The Chair: Okay. So we have information from the city of Edmonton, and we can get information from Service Alberta to find out, then, of all of these numbers whether there's – like, I'm still not satisfied that we've any idea at all of the actual loophole, how it's used and how many are actually taking advantage of it, versus the fact that under legitimate rules as they've proceeded, 95 per cent of them might be converting on that basis. I mean, if this is an issue, we need more information than what we have at this table right now.

Ray.

Mr. Prins: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I agree with that. Mr. Martin has just said that there are 6,900 and some condo conversions, but I don't know how many apartments there are in the first place or over how long a period of time that is, what percentage of the rental units

in Edmonton that would actually be, and I don't know, like, how long people are actually out or if they could rent those condos back. There's a whole lot of information missing here for me to make an informed decision.

Mr. Martin: Well, the reality is that no matter what, if as a goal we're putting 11,000 units that the province wants to build and we're losing 7,000 in 10 months, we'll never keep up to that point. Regardless of percentages, that tells us a lot right there. How could we ever keep up?

The Chair: As the chair if I seem reticent, it's because I don't want to get into a property rights argument with this particular committee because that wasn't a mandate that we started out with. Now, I don't have any problem moving it into a discussion of that sort but not under the guise of what we originally started out to do. If we're going to take on condominium conversions as a property rights issue, then there's going to have to be a motion and we all agree that that's what we're going to have a look at.

Mr. Rodney: Chair, I've been listening intently. I can't say I've enjoyed it because this is a topic no one can enjoy. I'm like other members around the committee – it doesn't matter the party – who want to help find some solutions and make some recommendations.

I wasn't too pleased to hear six months. I was pleased to hear that it's February, though, and that gives us a little bit of time. I believe that information like we've started to hear, we need to continue to hear. We need to see it in its fullness before we can make any sort of wise decisions on recommendations, and I would trust that we would stick to the focus of the original mandate of this committee rather than opening up other issues. Perhaps another time, another place, another committee. I'm glad we're working towards February, and in the meantime I just hope we can get timely information so we can make some good decisions here.

The Chair: George.

Mr. Rogers: Thanks, Mr. Chairman. I apologize; I missed some of the earlier parts of this discussion. I think it's important, Mr. Martin's information, if we're able to collect more of that information or at least have the opportunity to review it in context. Mr. Prins raised the issue of: what percentage? What does 6,900 mean? It sounds like a very large number, and sure those are a significant number of homes if you take it right down to that level. But what does that mean in context in terms of the whole marketplace, the inventory across the city? I think it's very important, if we're going to have an intelligent discussion around this point and then try to extrapolate something out of that and put something on paper as our opinion based on that, that we gather that information and look at it in context.

The Chair: Now, there seems to be consensus among the members, though, that we need to look into this. Am I reading that correctly?

Mr. Doerksen: There's probably a consensus, Mr. Chairman, but just for the record something that we have never talked about. Maybe this is just right out of the blue, but we never talked about the importance of home ownership and making it better. Frankly, I have always been of the opinion that home ownership is a much better solution to renting and has always been. If you look at seniors who are in difficulties, it's usually those who have not owned their own home during their lifetime.

There is a place for temporary rental situations, apartments. I've

lived in them myself. But I think we're missing something by not looking at: what are the barriers to home ownership? For me that would be a much more important issue to talk about. It's not just about condo conversions. Those units don't become suddenly not available for people to live in. It's not that we're losing living units. That's not the problem. There's more to this than just this particular, in my view, narrow issue.

That's just for the record, Mr. Chairman.

The Chair: All right. Thank you for that.

Now, we've got an agreement that we're going to look into this further. We've had some numbers put forward. We've had some suggestions about Service Alberta. What are the suggestions, then, as to how we proceed on this particular item of condo conversions? Do we go into another series of public hearings by inviting people? Do we have the city of Edmonton and Service Alberta come in and each be given 20 minutes? Or are we expecting staff to provide us with some sort of, "Here's the issue, and here are the options for us to look at"? What's the pleasure?

Mr. Rodney: To me, it's fairly obvious that if we want to do this fairly quickly, we won't be embarking on a province-wide tour and we won't be having people from across the province come in front of us and spend an hour or whatever it would be. I'm quite happy with the research that we've had. If it's the will of the committee, as you suggested, to perhaps have them look into these sorts of issues and report back to us, that might be the most timely issue, if we even want to go there. So all I'm saying is that if time's a factor, we need to strongly consider how wide we want to open this.

8:40

Mr. Taylor: I would just add that if we do decide to go that route, I'm okay with it because I think that we can move forward in a more timely fashion if we task research with bringing this information back to the committee.

Mr. Herard made reference to the fact that the situations in Calgary and Edmonton are not identical. I think we should ask for information from Service Alberta, information from the city of Edmonton, and information from the city of Calgary as well.

The Chair: Okay. Any other thoughts, suggestions?

Mr. Martin: I think that if we have to have it by February, with Christmas and that we really don't have time to do public hearings, I would suggest.

Mr. Webber: Mr. Chair, just information, again, on all the loopholes that are out there. Mr. Martin mentioned a couple. Of course, we already took a look at this one here, with the original registration of new buildings, but if we can look into what Mr. Martin has said and look at his loopholes to see if they're actually loopholes or not.

Mr. Martin, in one of the loopholes you had mentioned that the apartment owner would give the one year's notice, sell the apartment, convert it over to a condominium, and then – I guess, those individual condo units would then be rented – give three months' notice of eviction if that's the case.

To me, yet again we go back to property rights, and is this something that is – I don't know what the word is.

The Chair: How about this? How about we peel it like an onion? We can get the numbers of actual condo conversions. So that'll be the outer layer. Then what we do is we peel it back and say: okay; here's what happened in 5 per cent of them, 10 per cent of them, 15 per cent, whatever. Then the last part of the onion that we deal with is: okay; what are the loopholes, then, that were used in order to

convert, and what is it that we as a committee want to recommend that we do about that? Would that work?

Mr. Herard: I think that if we can also get some Service Alberta information with regard to the number of condos purchased and rented out. There has been so much speculation in the last few years with respect to people just simply buying a condo, waiting a year or two for it to get built, renting it or selling it, flipping it, doing all those kinds of things, which really clouds the picture. If we can find some way of getting Service Alberta to give us some insight into that aspect as well.

The Chair: George.

Mr. Rogers: Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. If I may just follow up on Denis's point, I don't think you're going to find that information anywhere. The only thing that's kept track of by our zoning system is what the intended use of the property is. So it's either intended to be used as rental accommodation or owned accommodation, which is either single-family or condominium or what have you. Once it's purchased as a condominium – again, a couple of the members mentioned property rights – that owner has the ability to do whatever he or she chooses to do with it, which might include a rental. There is no place in this province where that rental is then logged. Let's not even go down that road because that information is just not there, Denis.

The only use that's registered on the title is the intended use that's through the zoning process from the various cities, wherever these properties are built. Once the owner decides to use it for a different use, unless it becomes, for example, a business – let's say it was in the city core, where the opportunity is to convert it to a commercial use, then they would have to go back to the city to have it converted to a commercial use. But if it's for residential accommodation, then residential accommodation can either be rented or owned, and there is no logging, then, of the subsequent rental of that piece of owned accommodation. So that's not the kind of information we're going to find.

The Chair: Thank you for that, but I think we're in a position as a committee where the consensus is that we're going to have to go, you know, through those doors to get to where we finally need to get to. With all due respect, I don't think we can get to the point of just taking the word of a member that we can either find information or can't find information. I think we have to go at it through research.

Mr. Martin: Well, I think the one thing that has me curious now from his statement is the figures that Edmonton gave us. How many of those condos that were set up are they're classifying as condo conversions? Or are they actually apartments that were changed? Because that gives a different perspective of what we can or cannot do. I think that information is fairly easy to get. I think George is right that it might be difficult to get some of it, but whatever information we can get, you know.

The Chair: Well, I think research provided us with most of the answer to that question. However, what we're caught into here now is empirical evidence versus anecdotal evidence. Clearly, in this committee we are not going to be able to get to any kind of a consensus to put in a report until we drill into this more deeply. I think on this matter, then, that we're going to have to go at it again. That's my sense of what I'm hearing around the table.

Denis.

Mr. Herard: Yeah. Perhaps the discussion on the source of the

information may not have been right. I certainly trust the information I get from the hon. member, but I think that perhaps the people who register mortgages with respect to Canada Mortgage and Housing may have information that might be helpful as well. So maybe we don't do it as a municipal entity or municipal affairs, but there may be other sources where we can find that kind of information. I think that if you buy a condo and put a mortgage on it, Canada Mortgage and Housing would probably know if it's intended as a rental property or not because I think it makes a difference to whether or not you qualify for it.

The Chair: Well, once again we're speculating, so we need the information. What I've heard is to get information from the city of Edmonton, from the city of Calgary, from Service Alberta, but we would be doing it through research rather than through any sort of public hearing.

Ray Prins.

Mr. Prins: Yeah. I would also like to know as part of the information how many of the condos – and I think we've been talking about this – are going right back into the rental market after they're converted to condos. I think that's what we're trying to get at. I know that the building where I live is a condo, but there are always notices for rent. I'm thinking that it's part of a continuum of housing. When you convert a rental into a condo, you're not losing space. There's still somebody living there, whether it's being owned or rented. I agree with Victor that ownership is a very, very important part of the whole continuum that we need to look at.

The Chair: But within the context of affordable housing, when something is converted into a condo, there might be an issue there.

All right. Now, research folks, have you got enough to proceed with?

Dr. Massolin: I think we have more than enough.

Seriously, Mr. Chair, one caveat. Definitely we can investigate all these questions, but I've got a feeling that with some of them – for instance, the condos back to rental ownership – I mean, I don't think it's tracked with a hundred per cent precision. Therefore, you might get some anecdotal information that will provide some insight, but it will be distorted in a sense, I think.

The Chair: We agree. All you can give us is what you can find. I think that even though you're going to be retracing some steps, probably the question asked from you now to whoever you're talking to may be from a bit of a different angle. It might clarify, then, for our purposes. But don't be shy about coming back without the clarification if there's no clarification to come back with.

8:50

Dr. Massolin: Yeah. Absolutely.

The Chair: All right. Well, any further points on this?

On the agenda the rest of the meeting was pretty well to be tied up in final drafts and that sort of thing, but we've kind of punted that, I would think. So we'll skip over, then, Consideration of Draft Final Report and Printing and Tabling of Final Report.

Let's go to Other Business. Any other business to be raised by the committee?

Date of Next Meeting. What about at the call of the chair? We'll have to work with Philip and see what we can do about that. We won't make any commitment that it can be next week because I know that research have lots on their plate. It won't be Christmas or Boxing Day. How would that be?

An Hon. Member: Or New Year's Day.

The Chair: Or New Year's Day. Okay. It might be New Year's Eve.

Mr. Taylor: Move replacement of the chair.

The Chair: I'll second.

Okay. Motion to adjourn?

Mr. Rogers: So moved.

The Chair: George Rogers.

Thank you very much.

[The committee adjourned at 8:52 a.m.]