



Legislative Assembly of Alberta

The 30th Legislature
Second Session

Standing Committee
on
Private Bills and Private Members' Public Bills

Wednesday, March 24, 2021
10 a.m.

Transcript No. 30-2-17

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Standing Committee on Private Bills and Private Members' Public Bills

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Schow, Joseph R., Cardston-Siksika (UC), Deputy Chair

Amery, Mickey K., Calgary-Cross (UC)
Dang, Thomas, Edmonton-South (NDP)
Getson, Shane C., Lac Ste. Anne-Parkland (UC)
Glasgo, Michaela L., Brooks-Medicine Hat (UC)
Irwin, Janis, Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood (NDP)
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10 a.m.**Wednesday, March 24, 2021**

[Mr. Ellis in the chair]

The Chair: Okay. Good morning, everyone. I would like to call this meeting of the Standing Committee on Private Bills and Private Members' Public Bills to order and welcome everyone in attendance.

My name is Mike Ellis. I am the MLA for Calgary-West and chair of the committee. I'd ask that members and those joining the committee at the table introduce themselves for the record, and then I'll call on those joining in via videoconference. We'll begin to my right, please.

Mr. Schow: Joseph Schow, Cardston-Siksika.

Mr. Nielsen: Good morning, everyone. Chris Nielsen, MLA for Edmonton-Decore.

Mr. Koenig: Good morning. I'm Trafton Koenig with the Parliamentary Counsel office.

Mr. Kulicki: Good morning. Michael Kulicki, clerk of committees and research services.

Mr. Huffman: Good morning. Warren Huffman, committee clerk.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

I'll introduce those joining us via videoconference. I'll call upon them, and if they could introduce themselves. We'll start with Mr. Dang, please.

Mr. Dang: Good morning. Thomas Dang, Edmonton-South.

The Chair: Thank you.
Member Irwin.

Member Irwin: Janis Irwin, Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood.

The Chair: Thank you.
Member Lori Sigurdson.

Ms Sigurdson: Yes. Lori Sigurdson, Edmonton-Riverview.

The Chair: Thank you.
Mr. Shane Getson.

Mr. Getson: MLA Shane Getson, Lac Ste. Anne-Parkland.

The Chair: Thank you.
Mr. R.J. Sigurdson.

Mr. Sigurdson: Yes. R.J. Sigurdson, MLA for Highwood.

The Chair: Thank you.
Mr. Amery.

Mr. Amery: Good morning. Mickey Amery, MLA, Calgary-Cross.

The Chair: Thank you.
Ms Glasgow? Okay.
And Member Rutherford.

Mr. Rutherford: Good morning. Brad Rutherford, MLA, Leduc-Beaumont.

The Chair: Okay. Well, thank you very much.
We do not have any substitutions for today's meeting.
A few housekeeping rules, nonetheless, to address before we turn to the business at hand. According to the February 22, 2021, memo

from the hon. Speaker Cooper I'd like to remind everyone of the updated committee room protocols, which encourage members to wear masks in committee rooms and while seated except when speaking, at which time they may choose not to wear a face covering. Based on the recommendations from the chief medical officer of health regarding physical distancing, meeting attendees are reminded to leave the appropriate distance between themselves and other meeting participants.

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Those participating via videoconference are asked to please turn on your camera while speaking and to mute your microphone when not speaking. Members participating virtually who wish to be placed on the speakers list are asked to e-mail or send a message in the group chat to the committee clerk, and members in the room are asked to please signal to the chair. Please set your cellphones and other devices to silent for the duration of the meeting.

Next we'll move on to the approval of the agenda. Are there any changes or additions to the draft agenda?

Hearing and seeing none, could I get someone to make a motion?

Mr. Nielsen: So moved, Chair.

The Chair: Thank you. Mr. Nielsen will move that the agenda for the March 24, 2021, meeting of the Standing Committee on Private Bills and Private Members' Public Bills be adopted as distributed. All in favour, say aye. On videoconference? Thank you. Any opposed? Hearing and seeing none opposed, that motion has been carried.

We'll next go to the approval of the minutes. The draft minutes of our meetings on Wednesday, March 17, 2021, and Monday, March 22, 2021, are not yet ready for consideration and will be considered at the next meeting.

Private bills. We're going to go to the review of the procedure for private bills. Hon. members, part of the committee's mandate is to review private bills and petitions received for private bills. Yesterday, committee members, I received a memo from Parliamentary Counsel that reviews the mandate of the committee with respect to private bills. At this time I'd like to invite Mr. Trafton Koenig from the office of Parliamentary Counsel to provide you with an overview of the memo and answer any questions members might have about the committee's procedure for private bills.

Mr. Koenig, the floor is yours.

Mr. Koenig: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm happy to provide the committee with a very brief overview of the private bills process. I'll just start by noting that the rules that govern private bills can be found in chapter 8 of the standing orders. The important thing to keep in mind with private bills is that although it applies to a specific individual or entity, once a private bill is passed, it becomes a law like any other law in Alberta, with the same force and effect.

In terms of this committee's role, if the committee is satisfied today that the requirements of the petition for the private bill have been met as set out in Standing Order 94, the chair will report that to the Assembly, and the bill will then be introduced. The bill will then stand referred back to the committee, and typically the committee holds a hearing and eventually makes a recommendation that the bill proceed, not proceed, or proceed with amendments. Depending on the recommendation of the committee and whether or not the Assembly concurs with that, the bill will then either

progress through the normal bill process or it will be dropped from the Order Paper.

That's a very, very brief overview of the process, but I'm happy to answer any additional questions if members have any.

The Chair: Sure. At this time are there any committee members that have any questions? At the moment we don't have a list going, so please feel free to speak up if you have a question for Mr. Koenig in regard to this process.

Hearing and seeing none. Okay.

Very well articulated, sir. Thank you very much.

We will, then, go to the review of the petition received for a private bill. As discussed in a memo from Parliamentary Counsel, one petition for a private bill was received this year before the March 12 deadline. At this time I'd invite Mr. Koenig, once again, to provide a brief overview of this petition.

Go ahead, sir.

Mr. Koenig: All right. Thank you again, Mr. Chair. The documents that are required to petition for a private bill are set out in Standing Order 94, and that includes two letters of petition, one addressed to the Lieutenant Governor and one addressed to the Legislative Assembly. A statutory declaration is also required confirming that the petitioner has provided public notice of the petition by advertisement in a daily newspaper in Alberta once a week for two consecutive weeks, a certified cheque in the amount of \$500 for bills that are 10 pages or fewer, the name of the member of the Assembly who has agreed to sponsor the private bill, and two copies of the draft private bill in the appropriate format. The fees and documents must be submitted, as you've noted, Mr. Chair, to the Clerk of the Assembly by the relevant deadline, which in the case of this year was March 12, 2021.

As I noted in the memo that was circulated to committee members, one petition has been received this year requesting the passage of The United Church of Canada Amendment Act, 2021. Reverend Michael Blair, general secretary, has submitted the petition on behalf of the United Church of Canada, and I can confirm for the committee that the petitioner has submitted two letters of petition, a statutory declaration confirming that they have advertised in the *Edmonton Journal* and the *Calgary Herald* once a week for two consecutive weeks, that they provided a cheque in the amount of \$500, and I can also confirm that I've been advised that Ms Phillips has agreed to be the sponsor of Bill Pr. 2.

A draft of the proposed bill has been provided on the committee's internal website, and it's my opinion that the petitioner has fulfilled the requirements set out in the standing orders. As noted in my memo, any member of the committee that wishes to look at the petition documents can do so. I have them with me here today, or you can contact the office of Parliamentary Counsel if you wish to see them.

At this point I'm happy to answer any other questions about the petition for Bill Pr. 2.

The Chair: Sure. Well, thank you again, sir.

We'll open the floor to any questions again from committee members. Does anyone have a question? Feel free to speak up if you do. Mr. Nielsen, go ahead, please.

Mr. Nielsen: Yes. Just a quick question. Maybe it's just that we were spoiled with the last few that were so straightforward, this one being a little bit different and because it's in draft form – normally it seems like the other ones were ready to go – but what's the difference here in what we're looking at?

The Chair: Sure. Mr. Koenig, go ahead.

Mr. Koenig: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yeah. You're absolutely right. The bill is in draft right now. The bill will only become finalized once it's introduced for first reading. Before that can happen, this committee just has to be satisfied that the petitioner has met all the requirements in the standing order. Until that happens, the bill can't be finalized.

In terms of the actual content of the bill and what it is trying to do, that's usually discussed at the hearing stage. I mean, I'm happy to sort of talk briefly about that. Typically the petitioners will be invited to make a presentation before the committee, and they'll explain what they're asking for. Then the committee can make itself comfortable with sort of the content of the request and then make the recommendation. At this stage sort of the threshold is: have the required documents been submitted by the deadline? At this stage that's the only thing that the committee has to decide upon.

The Chair: Thanks, Mr. Nielsen and Mr. Koenig.

Mr. Nielsen: Just one quick follow-up.

The Chair: Go ahead.

Mr. Nielsen: It kind of looks almost like we might be considering amending federal legislation. Am I correct or not?

Mr. Koenig: I'll do my best to answer. My understanding of this specific situation – and keep in mind that I'm familiar with the bill in that I've reviewed it to ensure that it reflects the formatting in Alberta; in terms of the content, that's probably something that will come out during the process – is that the United Church undertook some kind of internal restructuring process, which occurred federally because it is a federally incorporated entity through a private act. However, the property owned by the church in the various provinces is governed by individual legislation in each of those provinces. The legislation here in Alberta, from 1924, needs to be amended to reflect the new structure of the church. However, I am providing that as only my general understanding of this process. I think that certainly the petitioner would be able to speak to the intent of why they're doing this a lot more thoroughly and more comprehensively than I can.

10:10

The Chair: All right. Thank you very much, and thank you, Mr. Nielsen, for the question.

I guess that before we move on here, Member Glasgo has joined us. If you could just introduce yourself for the record, Member Glasgo, please.

Ms Glasgo: Terribly sorry, Chair. I had technical difficulties. MLA Michaela Glasgo, Brooks-Medicine Hat.

The Chair: No problem. Thank you very much.

Do we have any other questions for Mr. Koenig? It sounds like we're just going through a bit of a process stage. Really, that's all that's happening at this time. We're not debating the bill.

Hearing and seeing none. Okay. Ladies and gentlemen, as this petition seems to be in compliance with standing orders 90 to 94, this will complete this aspect of the committee's review of the petition unless members have any comments or concerns that they wish to raise at this time.

Hearing and seeing none, in accordance with Standing Order 99(1) I'll provide an oral report to the Assembly on Thursday on the committee's review of the petition, following which Bill Pr. 2 may be introduced by its sponsor, Ms Shannon Phillips, Member for Lethbridge-West.

Next we'll go to the scheduling of a hearing and deliberations. There's one final matter for the committee to deal with regarding Bill Pr. 2, and that is scheduling a hearing with the petitioner and the committee's deliberations on the bill. Past practice of the committee has usually been to schedule the hearing about three weeks after the committee has reviewed the petition in order to provide the petitioner ample notice to allow Parliamentary Counsel to report any observations or recommendations on the bill to the committee.

With this in mind, I wonder if the committee might consider scheduling the hearing with the petitioner and holding its deliberations on Bill Pr. 2 on Monday, April 19, at 9 a.m. Any questions, comments, or concerns? That would be a Monday, a Monday morning, and yes, we're in session, not constituency break.

All right. Thank you very much.

Would somebody like to make a motion? Mr. Schow. Mr. Schow would like to move that

the Standing Committee on Private Bills and Private Members' Public Bills meet to hear from the petitioner on Bill Pr. 2 and hold deliberations on Monday, April 19, 2021, at 9 a.m.

All those in favour, say aye. On the videoconference? Any opposed? Hearing and seeing none,

that motion has been carried.

Thank you very much.

Other business. Are there any other issues for discussion before we wrap up today's meeting?

Hearing and seeing none, at this time the date of the next meeting will be Monday, April 19, 2021.

Adjournment. Can I get somebody to move to adjourn?

Mr. Nielsen: So moved.

The Chair: All right. Thank you. Mr. Nielsen moved that the meeting be adjourned. All those in favour, say aye. Thank you. On videoconference? Any opposed? Hearing nobody opposed, the motion is carried.

Have yourself a great day, everybody. Thank you very much for your time.

[The committee adjourned at 10:14 a.m.]

