



Legislative Assembly of Alberta

The 28th Legislature
Third Session

Standing Committee
on
Resource Stewardship

Wednesday, November 26, 2014
6:19 p.m.

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Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship

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6:19 p.m. Wednesday, November 26, 2014

[Mr. Goudreau in the chair]

The Chair: Well, good evening, everyone. I'd like to call the meeting to order and welcome all members and staff in attendance at today's meeting of the Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship.

For those of you who don't know, probably very few of you, my name is Hector Goudreau, and I'm the MLA for Dunvegan-Central Peace-Notley. I was appointed as new chair for this committee, so I'm looking forward to chairing this committee and to the good work that no doubt will come from this committee.

As usual, we'll start on my right, and I would ask all those members here to introduce themselves and indicate their constituency.

Mr. Hale: Jason Hale, Strathmore-Brooks.

Mr. Young: Steve Young, Edmonton-Riverview.

Mr. Xiao: David Xiao, Edmonton-McClung.

Mr. Allen: Mike Allen, Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo.

Ms L. Johnson: Linda Johnson, Calgary-Glenmore.

Mr. Cao: Wayne Cao, Calgary-Fort.

Dr. Brown: Neil Brown, from the delightful constituency of Calgary-Mackay-Nose Hill.

Mr. Fraser: Rick Fraser, Calgary-South East.

Ms Blakeman: Laurie Blakeman, and I'd like to welcome each and every one of you to my fabulous constituency of Edmonton-Centre.

Mr. Anglin: Joe Anglin, Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre.

Mr. Mason: Brian Mason, Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood.

Mr. Casey: Ron Casey, Banff-Cochrane.

Dr. Amato: Sarah Amato, research services.

Ms Sorensen: Rhonda Sorensen, manager of corporate communications and broadcast services.

Ms Robert: Nancy Robert, research officer.

Ms Dean: Shannon Dean, Senior Parliamentary Counsel and director of House services.

Dr. Massolin: Good evening. Philip Massolin, manager of research services.

Mr. Tyrell: And I'm Chris Tyrell, committee clerk.

The Chair: Well, thank you very much.

Again, welcome, and thank you for being here this evening. Just a few housekeeping details. Just to remind you that the microphones are controlled by the *Hansard* staff, so you don't need to touch anything there. As well, keep your cellphones away from the mikes. Your iPhones or BlackBerrys certainly at times can interfere with the audiofeed, and it makes it really tough for our *Hansard* staff. As a reminder, the audio of committee

proceedings is streamed live on the Internet and recorded by *Hansard*.

The agenda was posted online yesterday afternoon, and I trust that you've all had a chance to have a look at it. I would entertain a motion to approve the agenda or to make some additions.

Mr. Allen: So moved, Chair.

The Chair: Thank you.

All in favour? Anyone opposed? Approved. Thank you.

The minutes as well from the July 22 meeting were also posted on the internal committee website yesterday. I, again, trust that you've had a look at them. I would entertain a motion to approve them.

Ms L. Johnson: Mr. Chair, so moved.

The Chair: Linda Johnson. All in favour? Opposed? Thank you.

Just in terms of a little bit of business, there are a few new faces on the committee, and I'd like to start by talking about our committee's working group. We do have a working group that had been established some time ago. The working group itself takes its direction from the committee and has an important role in planning and co-ordinating the work of the committee.

Dr. Massolin is here. Maybe you could speak to us and explain how that might work out.

Dr. Massolin: Certainly, Mr. Chair. I'd be happy to, and I can speak, in particular, to how research services works with the working group to get its work done. We take direction from the working group, of course, to help it in preparing stakeholders' lists, for instance, or planning out the schedule of review that the committee has. Also, we take direction from the committee in terms of preparing its draft reports. So we help out and assist the working group, which, of course, is comprised of the chair, deputy chair, and representatives from the other caucuses, as I'm sure you'll explain.

Mr. Chair, if you'll indulge me, I'd just like to introduce to the committee a new member of the research services team, and that's Sarah Amato, who has been with us a couple of weeks. She comes to us from Toronto although she is originally an Edmontonian. She's got a doctorate in history. You know, not a bad doctorate to have, I hear.

The Chair: Thank you.

Welcome, Sarah, to the group. I'm sure you'll find it interesting and rewarding. Welcome back to Edmonton.

The previous representatives on the working group were Mr. Hale, as our deputy chair, Ms Blakeman, Mr. Bilous, and Mr. Young.

Questions?

Ms Blakeman: No question. I thought I'd resigned from that committee, so I'm surprised to hear my name included.

Mr. Anglin: You did.

Ms Blakeman: Thank you.

I did resign. So, no, I participated in the first one or two meetings but not since then. Thank you.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you.

Typically we have representatives from every party represented on the working group. Presently we've got Mr. Mason on our committee, and we're assuming that you'll be taking the place of Mr. Bilous.

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much for that, Mr. Chairman. I'm not sure that I'm going to have the time, but I'm willing to give it a try for a meeting or two. If I can't sustain the effort needed, then I'll have to step back, but I'm prepared to give it a try.

6:25

The Chair: Ms Blakeman, I'm just wondering about your thoughts, you know, about coming back to the group to represent your area.

Ms Blakeman: Oh, I don't think you need me on the committee. I'm sure you'll do just dandy in whatever you're doing.

Mr. Young: If I may suggest, in Ms Blakeman's absence maybe Mr. Anglin can fill that spot that's vacant.

The Chair: Well, the offer is there although, like I said, we tend to ask individuals from various caucuses.

Mr. Anglin: It's the independent caucus.

The Chair: You're representing the independent caucus. Okay.

Mr. Anglin: Still looking for members?

The Chair: We are. That's fine by me if it's okay with the rest of the committee.

Mr. Young: If Mr. Anglin would like to accept.

Mr. Anglin: Happy to.

The Chair: Thank you.

As well, Mr. Young, you had been appointed. Are you willing to keep on as the representative of the PC on the working group?

Mr. Young: I'm very pleased to do so.

The Chair: Thank you.

I guess maybe in terms of this working group membership I would entertain a motion, then, that

the working group membership include the chair, the deputy chair, Mr. Mason, Mr. Anglin, and Mr. Young.

Mr. Young: I so move.

The Chair: Moved by Mr. Young that the members identified be part of the working group. All in favour? Opposed? That's carried.

Now we get into the reason we called this organizational meeting tonight. Our committee has got a few items to deal with over the next couple of months, and I feel that we should all be aware of these items and begin to develop a plan on how to address them.

There is, firstly, the outstanding matter of Bill 205, Fisheries (Alberta) Amendment Act, 2012. That was introduced by Ms Calahasen back in November 2012. The bill was referred to this committee in April 2013. The committee recommended to the House that the bill not proceed but also recommended that representatives from Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development be invited before the committee once a year to give an update concerning the quota system for commercial fisheries. Due to the prorogation this fall we were not able to hold that meeting, but it's something we should remain aware of for the new year.

As we're all aware, the 2012 and 2013 reports of Property Rights Advocate office have been referred to this committee. Standing Order 52.04 states:

An order of the Assembly that a Bill, regulation or some other subject matter stands referred to a Legislative Policy Committee shall take priority . . .

and I repeat that. It shall take priority

. . . over any other hearing or inquiry.

For that reason, tonight's meeting will be focused on what our next steps should be as a committee in terms of how to proceed with a review of the two Property Rights Advocate office reports.

As well, I would like to read Government Motion 9, which was passed yesterday afternoon, for the benefit of the committee. That motion read:

Be it resolved that:

1. The 2013 annual report of the Alberta Property Rights Advocate office be referred to the Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship for the purpose of conducting a review of the recommendations outlined in the report;
2. The committee also review the 2012 annual report of the Alberta Property Rights Advocate office;
3. The committee may, without leave of the Assembly, sit during a period when the Assembly is adjourned or prorogued;
4. In accordance with section 5(5) of the Property Rights Advocate Act the committee shall report back the Legislative Assembly within 60 days . . .

That's the time frame that was identified by the Legislature just yesterday afternoon.

. . . of the report being referred to it if the Assembly is then sitting or, if it is not then sitting, within 15 days after the commencement of the next sitting.

I feel that's a first step, then. Given that we're reviewing the 2012-13 annual reports of the Property Rights Advocate office, I would suggest to the committee that we may want to invite the Property Rights Advocate to our next committee meeting to make a presentation. That would allow us to directly ask him and his staff questions on their reports. Beyond that, the committee needs to discuss what steps it would like to take in its review, which is why we're here today.

The committee may choose to call property rights experts, select stakeholders, open the review to broad public consultation, or any combination thereof. The committee may also decide whether it would like to receive oral, written, or both oral and written submissions. I guess that's part of the process that we've been mandated to deal with.

Maybe I'd like to ask Dr. Massolin to speak about the role that LAO research could play in this committee's review.

Dr. Massolin: Certainly. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Not a lot to add, but we do support the committee in terms of assisting in any research needs like a stakeholder list or, as I said, preparing that schedule, doing any additional research reports or briefings, and also helping the committee with its final report to the Assembly.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms Blakeman.

Ms Blakeman: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Could you clarify if the 60 days is including statutory holidays? Based on that, we're looking at – is it January 24? When was this first moved?

The Chair: It was moved yesterday.

Ms Blakeman: Okay. So the 25th of November. Sixty days gives us somewhere in January.

The Chair: I'll ask Ms Dean to comment. Thank you.

Ms Dean: If we're not sitting at that time, then it would be within 15 days of the next sitting. So if we start sitting sometime in mid-February, then within 15 days of the commencement of that sitting.

Ms Blakeman: Okay. Thank you.

The Chair: If I follow that, then, they would expect, most likely, for us to report by the end of February, which does not give us a lot of time, considering Christmas and December and where we're at with the calendar. So, you know, there's going to be an onus on us to move rather quickly and to certainly try to attend as many meetings as possible and participate actively here.

As well, you know, we've got some help from the communications staff. Maybe Ms Sorensen could outline what types of communication we could use to move this process forward.

Ms Sorensen: Certainly, Mr. Chair. Thank you. As many of you know, we do support the committees with communications and can do so depending on the scope of the review that the committee chooses to take. Judging by the conversation that happens around this table, we would then go away and recommend a communications plan that could include anything from province-wide advertising, daily advertising, websites, news releases, social media. It really depends on the scope that the committee chooses to take with this review.

The Chair: Thank you.

Are there comments or questions? I see a few.

Mr. Anglin: I just wanted to make one suggestion to the chair. I think it's actually imperative that we have the Property Rights Advocate come here and answer some questions and provide us with information.

There are two landowner groups that are highly involved. If you read the report of the Property Rights Advocate, I believe the Property Rights Advocate is quite familiar with these landowner groups that represent, I think, thousands of landowners. One is the Grassroots Alberta Landowners Association, and the other is the Pine Lake landowners association. I would make a recommendation that you invite them to send a representative to appear before us because what you'll get, I believe, are the concerns that they raise and that they also speak about to all their members. I think that would be a real help to us to understand what those concerns are when we're dealing with the Property Rights Advocate's report.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Anglin. I appreciate that.

Other comments? Dr. Brown.

6:35

Dr. Brown: Yeah. Well, my suggestion on the communications front – I've been involved in several of these sorts of committees and inquiries in the past. Given the very short time frame that we're looking at, my suggestion would be that we do something along the lines of what Mr. Anglin has said, and that is to send out communications directed to specific stakeholder groups that we can identify and not proceed with a full-blown communications plan of going into weekly newspapers, daily newspapers, et cetera, et cetera. You might, you know, put it up on the web and that kind of stuff. Quite frankly, I think it's extremely expensive. It's highly ineffective. It has been shown to be so in the past. I'd say that the vast preponderance of the evidence that we've had before committees on reviews of statutes and such have always come from the stakeholders that we've identified from the outset.

The Chair: Other comments? Mr. Allen.

Mr. Allen: Yeah. I would agree as well with Dr. Brown that we target specific stakeholders. Also, as we read the reports from the Property Rights Advocate, there are specific recommendations that he makes. Perhaps it wouldn't hurt for us to call representatives from, you know, the RCMP, someone representing the Emergency Management Act as to what happened down in High River, and someone from Service Alberta regarding land titles and the specific recommendations in the report to be addressed.

Dr. Brown: Yeah. I think that those would be some of the stakeholders that the committee would identify as people that we need to talk to.

The Chair: Yes. There are a number of options that we can look at. When we talk about property rights, virtually just about anybody and everybody in this province is affected, whether rural or urban. I am a little concerned that we give the opportunity for as many individuals to participate. Now, they can do that through written submissions. There's no doubt that we can open it up that way to make sure that we don't miss any. I say that because of my knowledge of a lot of surface rights associations scattered right across the province of Alberta. I'm not sure if they have a provincial organization. Mr. Anglin might know that.

Mr. Anglin: Yes, they do.

The Chair: At least, you know, there are certain groups that should be targeted. I don't deny that, but there's also a whole pile of other individuals out there.

Now, I guess the options that I'm hearing here are quite varied. One is, you know, that I'm suggesting written submissions. As well, I'm hearing presentations from the public or particular stakeholders or combinations of all of that.

Mr. Mason: I'm just curious, Mr. Chairman, being new to the committee. What is it exactly that we're studying?

The Chair: You know, I guess it's the recommendation that was passed yesterday, Motion 9, which recommends a review of the annual reports and the recommendations from that and whether we approve the recommendations, whether we support them, how we might allow that to move forward.

Mr. Mason: Is the main focus of the committee's work, then, going to be around property rights? When I signed on, I thought we were going to be looking at resource stewardship. That's the committee.

The Chair: Well, for the purpose of the resolution, certainly it can go much beyond what we're doing here, but the direction from the Legislature yesterday sort of directed us to look at the Property Rights Advocate's recommendations based on the last two reports.

Mr. Mason: Okay.

The Chair: So that has to take priority, and that's our next mode of action, our emphasis, notwithstanding what we might look at in the future.

Mr. Mason: So is the feeling of the committee that we need to go through quite an extensive process of public consultation on this? It was sort of my thought that we'd just read the report and vote on the recommendations and bring the Property Rights Advocate up.

I should just maybe mention, Mr. Chairman, that I've been to the Property Rights Advocate's office a couple of times in Lethbridge to meet with him and familiarize myself with his work and so on. I think it's a good idea to get him here, but I would suggest deferring any sort of public outreach process until we've had a chance to talk to him and see if the committee feels that it's actually needed.

The Chair: Okay. Thoughts?

Mr. Anglin: I just want to clarify something. When these groups view property rights, the groups that I mentioned that I think should be here, it's directly related to, generally, right of entry for resource extraction. At least, many of the concerns that I'm familiar with are all around the oil and gas sector and the balance of rights for the province to extract its resources and the right of the landowner to be treated fairly and justly. When we look at the issues that were raised even in debate today, they all relate to that. Although it was all politicians in the House talking about the various bills, all the thousands of Albertans who are concerned were those rural Albertans that know those bills, and it all directly related to resource extraction for many of them. It does go beyond, but it is the bulk of the work, and I think the Property Rights Advocate also, once he is here, would relate to that, too, having dealt with some of the public. So I just wanted to make that clear. It is directly related.

The Chair: Thank you. Thank you for those comments.

Mr. Cao: Well, Mr. Chairman, there are two points. I already heard from my colleagues, and I agree with them. I have two points. One, if we consult with stakeholders, I would also add experts like legal experts who know the subject of property rights because from different people you have a different understanding. So I think that to regroup our knowledge, probably, I would suggest approaching those legal experts on property rights to give us a presentation.

Two, when I look at the scenario right now, we are just talking about Bill 1 in the House, and then we have this report. Of course, the subject of property rights has been around our province a lot in recent years. With all of that picture in mind, I think it's good to have a consultation with stakeholders to give us some input because the scenario has changed because of Bill 1. How do things play out there, and now what are the concerns? I guess we are responsible to collect public input for the Assembly.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you for those comments.

Mr. Young, followed by Mr. Casey.

Mr. Young: Thank you, Chair. I think that as a general principle we should have the advocate come here, and we should have a general review of the annual report and ask some appropriate questions. Then I think we need to do our due diligence around some of those questions if we're reviewing those recommendations and have the appropriate people here. So I don't think we can make any consideration on the recommendations without talking to some of the people on either side of the issue, including the advocate himself.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Casey.

Mr. Casey: Thank you. Really, I agree with what Mr. Young just said. I don't think it's our job here to redefine property rights in Alberta or even start down that road. My understanding is that we

were asked to review the reports, and the recommendations in the report are essentially the report. So I think that if there are people that we need to call that would have information available to enlighten some of these recommendations or to clarify those recommendations – at the end of the day, it's our job to either agree with the recommendations or agree and make a recommendation of our own.

I didn't perceive us as going down the road of starting to try to define property rights in Alberta. My understanding is that we're dealing with these reports. If we're going to start down the road of defining property rights in Alberta, well, we need to sign up for about another seven or eight months of meetings. I just hope we can stay focused on the fact that we're dealing with recommendations here and the report, but we're not throwing this open to some general discussion of property rights.

6:45

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms Blakeman: I don't have exact recall of the *Hansard* to remind myself of the additional comments that were made at the time that this motion was passed. I guess what I'm doing is skipping to the end point and asking if there was some indication of what government was going to do with the product of this. If we're all going to meet and talk about this, what are they going to do with it when they get it back? Do you have any indication of that?

The Chair: I'm not aware that any decision has been made to that effect, Ms Blakeman.

Ms Blakeman: Did they give us any indication of why they wanted us to do this so that we perhaps have some idea of why we're doing this?

Ms Dean: If I may, Mr. Chair. There's a statutory requirement for the report of the advocate to go to a committee of the Assembly, and there's a requirement in the act for the government to bring forward a motion within 10 days of that report being tabled.

Ms Blakeman: Thank you so much. We're just the lucky committee that it got directed to. Okay. Thank you.

The Chair: Mr. Hale.

Mr. Hale: Yeah. If I may, I think that where we're maybe getting a little hung up is on the definition of what we're supposed be doing here. If it's in the "be it resolved that," where it mentions everything, "a review of the recommendations outlined in the report," I think it's up to us. If we don't understand those recommendations, if we need clarity on the recommendations, if the Property Rights Advocate can't give us that clarity of what he means, then it's up to us to listen to the experts, some of the groups that have been mentioned so we can understand what that recommendation means.

I think that probably the first thing we need to do is that everybody needs to read that report and the recommendations and see how much you understand them and make suggestions to the working group on who you think should come in. Then we can make those decisions with Dr. Massolin and his team maybe.

The Chair: Thank you for those comments.

Mr. Anglin: Well, I absolutely agree. I don't think we need to be redefining anything here. I think that's absolutely correct.

The groups I mentioned were directly related to the report and the two reports that we have, that have been issued. If you look in

those reports, there are recommendations. The Property Rights Advocate does bring up ALSA, the Alberta Land Stewardship Act. The people that he has talked to – and, presumably, some of you who have been here have actually met with Lee Cutforth, the Property Rights Advocate. I think he'll definitely provide us with a lot of input. But the groups that I mentioned are the ones that he has gone to speak to, the ones that he has heard from, and it's how he constructed his recommendations, so if there's any clarity that can be gleaned from his report, it's to go right to the source of where he got his information.

That's why I suggested – there are a few groups in Alberta that are quite large, and what they do is deal with this issue of property rights, surface rights, the Surface Rights Act, which is mentioned and suggested in the report. I think that would provide value.

But I absolutely agree. We're not rewriting anything; we're looking at the recommendations. What I'm hoping would be the result is that the recommendations we would make to the Legislature would fix certain things that are of significant concern to the Property Rights Advocate and the public that has provided him information.

The Chair: Thank you.

You identified earlier a group in the energy industry that is causing some concerns out there in terms of access and the work that they're doing, and it brings to mind a couple of other groups that are there. One is power lines and power line extensions. I think the Property Rights Advocate has talked about that, and it's caused some issues in certain constituencies.

Two other groups that come to mind are Alberta Environment and SRD, who actually do expropriate a fair amount of land, and Transportation, for instance, as they expand their highway networks and double up on highways. They are also very, very much involved.

I'm just throwing those names out as individuals and potential stakeholders that are out there, that actually cause some reasons for property owners to be concerned, and I'm just wondering about your thoughts about having some of those groups in as well.

Mr. Hale.

Mr. Hale: Yeah. I think those are some good suggestions. Another suggestion I'd like to throw out is the Alberta property rights initiative. I know they've been looking at the legislation and the Property Rights Advocate Act and his reports, and I think they would be a good group to get in. That's what they're there for. That's what they're doing.

Mr. Anglin: I'm not sure. I think that where we can save time is – I believe they're part of Grassroots Alberta. We can double-check that. Grassroots Alberta is a conglomeration of the I think nine or six different groups that have joined that, so they have one common voice.

To your suggestion of SRD or something along that line, I would be more inclined to deal with the tribunals that actually are faced with this, representing those ministries, which would be . . .

The Chair: The Surface Rights Board.

Mr. Anglin: The Surface Rights Board and the Alberta Utilities Commission's board are the two that actually make decisions on behalf of the legislation and are directly dealing with the public in the hearing processes.

Mr. Casey: Again, I think I'd like to just pull us back to the recommendations here. If we're going to bring in stakeholders to talk to us broadly about property rights and then try to take that

knowledge and apply it to these recommendations, we need a much longer time frame. I mean, we're talking about educating ourselves for the next six months and then talking to a series of recommendations. My suggestion is – we have four or five recommendations in the one report and one recommendation in the other report, as I can see it – that we break down those recommendations and we put a list of stakeholders we want to see.

For example, one recommendation is for the direct and prompt commencement of a full public review of the Surface Rights Act and the Expropriation Act. Well, if we bring in every stakeholder to talk to those, to only make the recommendation as to whether we want to review those two acts – I mean, to me, the answer to that recommendation is yes. I'm not sure how many stakeholders. I think it's nice to hear the Property Rights Advocate talk to it.

So I think we need to look at these, work through these, maybe spend a meeting and work through the recommendations, figure out which ones are ones that require more background information and which ones we can agree to move forward on without, really, any more than the Property Rights Advocate addressing it when he comes.

I think our time would be well spent pulling those recommendations out of the reports and then working through those and breaking them down into ones that need further investigations, ones that we're comfortable with, and so on. Anyway, that's just my suggestion.

The Chair: Ms Johnson, then Mr. Mason, then Dr. Brown.

Ms L. Johnson: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Thank you, my colleague for Banff-Cochrane, because that was my point I was going to make. If you go back to the motion in *Hansard*, it was to review the report and the recommendations within the report, and within 60 days, I hope, we should be able to do that.

Mr. Mason: Mr. Chairman, well, I also want to categorically agree with Mr. Casey. I think we should be looking at each recommendation in turn and deciding, first of all, whether or not any external consultation is indicated and then, secondly, what groups we may wish to speak to.

For example, of the five recommendations one involves removing some powers from municipalities with respect to expropriation, so it seems to me that in that particular case we would have an obligation to consult with AAMD and C and AUMA in particular and maybe some specific municipalities. That would be a consultation that I think we ought to undertake prior to making a decision on this recommendation.

But I think we need to be focused on the recommendations, and we ought not to be inviting a broad, general, public hearing process on property rights in general because we will not end up anywhere if we do that. Our job is to deal with these recommendations, and we may not actually need to consult on some of the recommendations, as Mr. Casey has indicated. One of them is whether or not there should be a review by government of the Expropriation Act. I don't see doing a review of the Expropriation Act in order to determine whether or not a review of the Expropriation Act is indicated, if you follow me.

6:55

The Chair: Yeah.

Dr. Brown: I agree with Mr. Casey and Mr. Mason. There are some things in here that don't need any consultation, in my view. The thing about, you know, the government retaining direct and full ownership and operation of the land registries system: I don't think we need any experts to come in and tell us whether or not

we need to retain full ownership. I think that's something that the committee can very adequately deal with by debate around this table.

I think we should focus in like a laser beam on the recommendations. If we need to get in a few stakeholders to talk to us about it, let's do it, but otherwise let's just deal with these black-letter recommendations.

Mr. Anglin: Well, I think we've got almost unanimous consent with Mr. Casey or close to it anyway. But might I suggest, then, that if we're going to go that method – and I agree with it – maybe the one and only person we need to start out with is the Property Rights Advocate, and then we can discuss all recommendations with him. Then if we decide at that point on one particular recommendation, we can ask his opinion on that and then invite anyone from that point.

The Chair: Super. I'm satisfied with that at this particular level.

Mr. Young: I think that was a motion there.

The Chair: That's right. I would entertain a motion, then, to that effect, that the Property Rights Advocate be invited to make a presentation at our next meeting of the Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship.

Mr. Casey.

Mr. Casey: Yeah. I'm happy to make that motion, that we invite the Property Rights Advocate to the next meeting of the committee to review the recommendations.

The Chair: All in favour? Opposed? That's carried.

I guess that probably the next motion that I would entertain is, you know, maybe allowing the working group in conjunction with our staff to maybe start the process of identifying – and there's been quite a number of names here – potential stakeholders that we might invite, not necessarily that we will invite them but to put a list together of potential stakeholders and, again, maybe including on that particular list what Mr. Anglin suggested, some of the groups that work under ESRD, for instance, that make decisions on behalf of our government.

Mr. Casey: Well, just being cognizant of everybody's time and making the best use of it, I think that until we actually have that meeting with the Property Rights Advocate, it's going to be very difficult to identify stakeholders, because we don't really know who those groups might be or what recommendations we as a committee think that we need to investigate further. So I think it's going to be very difficult to put together a broad list of people with knowledge on property rights as they would apply to these recommendations.

My suggestion would be that we deal with the recommendations through the Property Rights Advocate and at that point we try to identify stakeholders to work through them. But I think that establishing this broad database of stakeholders is – you know, I'm not sure of the value of it for the working group. I just think it's a lot of time and effort for little reward.

The Chair: Sure. I was just trying to be proactive in the process to maybe start identifying a list that we could bring forward if the need is there for that.

Other comments?

If we could get the Property Rights Advocate to come as early as next week, would we be willing to spend some time with him then? Would we be ready as individual members? I'm giving you time to read.

Ms Blakeman: There are committee meetings for the Legislative Offices Committee that are scheduled three times next week, so there might be a conflict there.

The Chair: Yeah. We can certainly schedule around those if that's a concern.

Somebody else had their hand up. Mr. Allen.

Mr. Allen: Mr. Chair, I was just going to suggest that as the House is in session, it's difficult, I think, to go through everything that we need to go through with the Property Rights Advocate if we are doing it in the evening like this. If there was a spot in a morning that is available – I don't know what the schedule is like, though.

The Chair: It is very, very difficult at this time. I guess the question is . . .

Mr. Anglin: I don't have a caucus meeting.

The Chair: You're okay, huh?

Mr. Young: You are the meeting.

The Chair: That's right.

I guess my concern is that if we were to bring him in once session is adjourned, it being close to Christmas, would you be willing to come back to Edmonton – some of you are close by – to attend and hear him? I guess I'm trying to minimize a lot of travel for a lot of our members during the winter and just before Christmas.

Mr. Young: Can I suggest that we leave it to the discretion of the clerk to find some potential dates to look at and then go from there, because we're not going to be able to find anything in our schedule. I think it's about what's available, and then we can consider that as a committee, or I leave it to the chair and the deputy chair to make the right call.

Mr. Hale: Yeah. That's kind of what I was going to say. I know we have met before during session. I believe it has always been kind of on the Wednesday nights when we were looking at those different acts. If we're not going to do anything and wait until after session is done, that cuts down on a lot of time. We should do what we can when we're in session, when everybody is here, instead of driving back and forth or calling in. It's a lot better talking face to face and talking about these issues. My suggestion would be that Dr. Massolin kind of check it out with the Property Rights Advocate and see if he can come up. If we have to have a two-hour meeting on an evening, we have a two-hour meeting on an evening. It's better than driving back and forth after session.

The Chair: Other comments?

Dr. Brown: Maybe during lunch hour as well we could squeeze some meetings in.

The Chair: Mr. Tyrell has just reminded me that two hours in the evening can be difficult if the House is sitting. It's easy if the House is not sitting, as long as we keep that in mind. We don't really know that. We'll try to work around it as much as we can.

Now, I started the meeting by talking about whether or not we wanted some written submissions. Are we open to that at all, or do we want some of that? If we do, then we need a communications plan to go out to individuals. I know, Dr. Brown, you had sort of objected to that.

Dr. Brown: I don't object to it, but I'm just saying that it should be focused in on the people that we identify as stakeholder groups. I just don't think we need to go – I mean, given the timelines that we're dealing with, I think it's completely impractical to be doing advertising and inviting written submissions from the public at large. I just think you identify those people, and if they've got something to say about a particular recommendation, let's hear it.

Mr. Anglin: I'm going to agree with Dr. Brown on that. I don't think we need to spend any money doing the whole advertising. We know who the stakeholders are. I would make the recommendation that even before we do that, we talk to the Property Rights Advocate. That will give us what groups we want to focus in on after we have a chance to hear from him and possibly ask him questions.

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Young: I agree with what they are saying. I think that if we were to open it up early, we'd set unrealistic expectations that we're looking at property rights in general when we're really honing down on the office and the specific recommendations. Perhaps an issue might come up where we want to engage a stakeholder or do that, but I don't think we know at this point. I doubt we will, but I think we should leave that open as we go down that road.

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms Sorensen: Mr. Chair, if I may, obviously, what I'm hearing around the table is that there's no need for advertising.

The Chair: That's right.

Ms Sorensen: I'm in wholehearted agreement with that. You're not going to get an argument out of me. However, if the committee wishes, I can still issue media advisories, letting the media know that the meetings are taking place so that they, hopefully, can make the issues public.

The Chair: Sure.

Ms Sorensen: Okay.

The Chair: I said sure assuming that the committee is supporting me here in this way. All in favour, then, to allow Ms Sorensen to do that?

Dr. Brown: Would they be directed, though, to the recommendations so that they can specifically know what recommendations we're looking at?

Ms Sorensen: Yes. The advisories would simply be notifying the media that these meetings are taking place and inviting them to attend or listen in if they wish. The social media messages would then, again, just reinforce that the meetings are taking place and where they can find the agenda.

7:05

The Chair: Sure.

Mr. Young: But it's in consideration of the annual reports.

Ms Sorensen: Yes. Absolutely.

Mr. Mason: Mr. Chair, just to follow up on that, will this sort of communications piece be directed just to our work in reviewing

the Property Rights Advocate report or the work of the committee as a whole?

Ms Sorensen: Typically with other committees what they have chosen to do – for example, Public Accounts comes to mind – is simply an advisory letting the media know that the committee is meeting with whomever they're meeting with that day so that it is a public, open meeting if they wish to attend or listen in.

Mr. Mason: Yeah. So if we decided to talk about grizzly bears or caribou or oil sands or whatever it is, then that would be communicated as well.

Ms Sorensen: Yes. That's what they're going to hear that day.

Mr. Mason: Okay.

Mr. Cao: Regarding communication, which is my curiosity, this is a public document now, right?

Ms Sorensen: I believe so.

Mr. Cao: When you communicate with the media and so on referring to this and if they come and say, "I want a report," it's available, I guess.

The Chair: You're referring to the report from the Property Rights Advocate, I understand?

Mr. Cao: Right.

The Chair: Yes. They are public.

Mr. Cao: Okay.

The Chair: Other comments?

Well, certainly, as chair I'm getting some good direction, and I appreciate the feedback.

Our next step, if I understood you right, is to get the Property Rights Advocate's office here after we've co-ordinated some times with him and tried to accommodate as many members of this particular committee as possible. Following that, we would determine if there is need for additional stakeholder presentations and deal with that once we have met with the Property Rights Advocate. Am I correct to say that? Okay. Good.

Well, that sort of ends our committee meeting for tonight.

Mr. Mason: I just have a question, Mr. Chairman. I'm sorry if my attention slipped a little bit earlier on, but can somebody tell me what Bill 205 is?

Mr. Allen: That was Pearl's bill.

Mr. Young: Commercial fishing.

Mr. Allen: That's what we were discussing at the beginning.

Mr. Mason: Oh. No, I didn't miss that. Okay.

Mr. Allen: It's Pearl's from last session.

Mr. Mason: But they shut down the commercial fishery on Lesser Slave Lake, didn't they? Are there others?

Mr. Allen: All commercial fishing.

The Chair: Is there any other business that members wish to raise at this time?

Dr. Brown: Mr. Chair, if I could, just regarding the setting of the dates, is my understanding correct that you're going to, you know, poll the committee members to see what their availability is or give some alternate dates? Is that the idea?

The Chair: My understanding is that I'll sit with our co-chair and we'll come up with a number of dates once we've heard from the Property Rights Advocate as to his available dates as well. We're going to try to submit a few of those dates to you and see what we can do. I'm sort of anticipating and targeting within the next week

or so here that we would try to meet with the Property Rights Advocate just to move this process along. For sure, we'll send out notices to identify those dates.

A motion to adjourn?

Mr. Anglin: Right here. Motion moved.

The Chair: Mr. Anglin. Everybody in favour of adjourning? Thank you, and thank you for participating.

[The committee adjourned at 7:09 p.m.]

