



Legislative Assembly of Alberta

The 28th Legislature
First Session

Standing Committee
on
Families and Communities

Wednesday, September 19, 2012
10:31 a.m.

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First Session**

Standing Committee on Families and Communities

Pastoor, Bridget Brennan, Lethbridge-East (PC), Chair
Forsyth, Heather, Calgary-Fish Creek (W), Deputy Chair

Allen, Mike, Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo (PC)
DeLong, Alana, Calgary-Bow (PC)
Fox, Rodney M., Lacombe-Ponoka (W)
Fraser, Rick, Calgary-South East (PC)
Fritz, Yvonne, Calgary-Cross (PC)
Jablonski, Mary Anne, Red Deer-North (PC)
Jansen, Sandra, Calgary-North West (PC)
Jeneroux, Matt, Edmonton-South West (PC)
Johnson, Linda, Calgary-Glenmore (PC)
Kang, Darshan S., Calgary-McCall (AL)
Kubinec, Maureen, Barrhead-Morinville-Westlock (PC)
Lemke, Ken, Stony Plain (PC)
Leskiw, Genia, Bonnyville-Cold Lake (PC)
Luan, Jason, Calgary-Hawkwood (PC)
McAllister, Bruce, Chestermere-Rocky View (W)
McDonald, Everett, Grande Prairie-Smoky (PC)*
Notley, Rachel, Edmonton-Strathcona (ND)
Pedersen, Blake, Medicine Hat (W)
Sarich, Janice, Edmonton-Decore (PC)
Saskiw, Shayne, Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills (W)
Swann, Dr. David, Calgary-Mountain View (AL)
Towle, Kerry, Innisfail-Sylvan Lake (W)**
Wilson, Jeff, Calgary-Shaw (W)
Young, Steve, Edmonton-Riverview (PC)
Vacant

* substitution for Alana DeLong

** substitution for Heather Forsyth

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10:31 a.m.

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[Ms Pastoor in the chair]

The Chair: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. I'd like to call this meeting of the Legislative Policy Committee on Families and Communities to order. I note that the quorum of one-third, or nine members, has been achieved.

What I'm going to tell you right now is to take your BlackBerrys – because that little bit of static on the *Hansard* microphones was my BlackBerry.

I'd also like to say that some of our colleagues are joining us by teleconference, and I'm going to ask them to introduce themselves later. I'm thinking that it's Yvonne Fritz, Shayne Saskiw, Ken Lemke, and Blake Pedersen, and I'll get them to do that as we go around the room.

I'd also like to note that Kerry Towle is attending the meeting as a temporary substitute for the deputy chair, Heather Forsyth, and as such she has all the rights of the deputy chair. Everett McDonald is attending for Alana DeLong.

Welcome, Kerry.

Mrs. Towle: Thank you.

The Chair: I'm not sure if this is one of your first meetings or not.

Mrs. Towle: It is.

The Chair: Welcome.

As I've said, the microphone consoles are operated by *Hansard*. Please keep your BlackBerrys off the table because they do create static. The audio of committee proceedings is streamed live on the Internet, recorded by *Hansard*, and audio access and meeting transcripts are available and can be obtained from the Legislative Assembly website. So this is certainly considered a very public meeting for those very reasons.

The meeting materials were posted on the committee's internal website last week and are accessible via our LAO laptops, et cetera. If anybody requires a paper copy, let the committee clerk know, and she can supply that at this point in time. That is why we have wonderful Corinne as our committee clerk. She probably has the biggest job. She's the one that will keep me in line, so we're all going to be very thankful to Corinne.

At this point in time I will go around the room and have you introduce yourselves. Then I will ask the people on the telephones if they would introduce themselves. Kerry, can I start with you?

Mrs. Towle: Kerry Towle, MLA for Innisfail-Sylvan Lake.

Mr. Reynolds: Thank you. I'm not a member. I'm Rob Reynolds. I'm the Law Clerk and director of interparliamentary relations.

Dr. Swann: Good morning, everyone. David Swann, Calgary-Mountain View.

Mrs. Leskiw: Genia Leskiw, Bonnyville-Cold Lake.

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

Mr. Jeneroux: Matt Jeneroux, Edmonton-South West.

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

Mr. Kang: Darshan Kang, Calgary-McCall. Good morning, everyone.

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

Mr. Luan: Jason Luan, Calgary-Hawkwood. Good morning, everyone.

Mrs. Sarich: Good morning. Janice Sarich, MLA for Edmonton-Decore.

Mr. Fox: Good morning. Rod Fox, Lacombe-Ponoka.

Mr. Wilson: Jeff Wilson, Calgary-Shaw.

Mr. McAllister: Good morning. Bruce McAllister, Chestermere-Rocky View.

Mr. McDonald: Everett McDonald, Grande Prairie-Smoky.

Ms Kubinec: Maureen Kubinec, Barrhead-Morinville-Westlock.

Ms Sorensen: Good morning. I'm Rhonda Sorensen, manager of corporate communications and broadcast services with the LAO.

Ms LeBlanc: Stephanie LeBlanc, Parliamentary Counsel and legal research officer with the LAO.

Mrs. Dacyshyn: Corinne Dacyshyn, committee clerk.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Could we have those who have phoned in? I'm not sure how you're going to talk over each other, but let's give it a go. Shayne, let's start with you.

Mr. Saskiw: Shayne Saskiw, Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Lemke: Ken Lemke, Stony Plain.

Mr. Pedersen: Hi. Blake Pedersen from way down south in Medicine Hat.

The Chair: Thanks very much. That's home territory for me.

Is there anyone else on the phone that we may have missed? Okay. We should be good to go. Thank you.

Section 6 of the Legislative Assembly Act permits participation in a committee "by means of telephone or other communication facilities that permit all members participating in the meeting to hear each other if all the members of the committee consent." The committee rooms are equipped to facilitate meeting participation by telephone, and committees have a choice of passing a motion, which needs to be passed unanimously, to approve meeting attendance by telephone for the duration of a Legislature, for the duration of a session, or for a specific meeting.

A motion to approve teleconference attendance for the duration of a Legislature does not preclude the committee from determining that personal attendance at specific meetings is required. In those cases, a motion will be moved at the end of a particular meeting requesting the personal attendance of all members at a subsequent meeting.

I've asked the committee clerk to circulate a suggested motion to members so that we have the correct wording and information necessary for this motion. Could I have a member move that? Thank you, Maureen.

Ms Kubinec: I will move the wording as provided for the participation in committee meetings by teleconference.

The Chair: Thank you. Could you read it for the record, please?

Ms Kubinec: That

for the life of the 28th Legislature the Standing Committee on Families and Communities permit committee members to participate by teleconference subject to the proviso that the committee may require members' attendance at a particular meeting upon passage of a motion at a previous meeting to that effect.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

I would make a note that seconders are not required for motions in committee.

Is there any discussion?

I will call the question. All in favour? Okay. Any negative? No. Thank you. That motion is passed unanimously.

For information purposes Standing Order 56(2.1) outlines the process for the substitution of committee members.

A temporary substitution in the membership of a standing or special committee may be made upon written notification signed by the original Member and filed with the Clerk and Committee Chair, provided such notice is given not less than 24 hours prior to the meeting.

The committee clerk has a template available upon request.

When substitutions occur, it's the responsibility of the original committee member to ensure that the substitute has been provided with all the necessary meeting materials.

You're also reminded that Members of the Legislative Assembly who are not committee members or official substitutions may attend and participate in the meetings, but they may not move motions or vote.

We need a motion to approve the agenda. May I have a motion for that? Dr. David Swann. Thank you. He's moved that the agenda for the September 19, 2012, meeting of the Standing Committee on Families and Communities be adopted as circulated. All in favour? Thank you. That motion is passed unanimously.

I would like to welcome Rachel Notley and – actually, you can introduce yourselves.

Ms Notley: Rachel Notley, MLA, Edmonton-Strathcona.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mrs. Jablonski: Good morning. Mary Anne Jablonski, MLA, Red Deer-North.

The Chair: Thank you, ladies, for joining us.

Mr. Young: Steve Young, Edmonton-Riverview.

10:40

The Chair: Thank you very much.

For our first meeting Rob Reynolds, QC, Law Clerk and director of interparliamentary relations, as he's already stated, is assigned to assist our committee and will provide an overview of the committee's mandate and processes.

Rob, I believe that I can turn it over to you.

Mr. Reynolds: Thank you very much, Chair.

The Chair: Am I in the way of the screen? No? Okay.

Mr. Reynolds: Never.

Good morning. For some of you this may be a repeat, although I'll try to make it entertaining nonetheless, of what you've heard before over the years. For some of you it may be the first time you've heard this, so I hope you don't finish listening before I finish talking, and we'll see how we progress.

First of all, I'd like to just demonstrate for you that we have a PowerPoint, a very nice PowerPoint, that was prepared by Duncan, amongst others.

Obviously, this is a committee of the Legislative Assembly. I will be touching on how that gives you certain powers, rights, and immunities that committees don't enjoy if they're outside the Assembly.

I also want to point out some of the relevant standing orders that touch on the functions of legislative policy committees. I will talk about the review process, the sense of what the committee is mandated to do under the standing orders, and just briefly touch on the support that's available to you.

I should just point out that sometimes people may refer to these committees as policy field committees, which is what they used to be called prior to the amendments to the standing orders, I believe in the spring. Therefore, you'll forgive me if I refer to a policy field committee; I mean legislative policy committee. So just a note on terminology.

First of all, under Standing Order 52.01(1), the mandate of the committee is to look in the areas of Health, Human Services, Justice and Solicitor General, Culture, Education, and Service Alberta, which are, of course, departments. Really, I would interpret that to mean that the areas that you can examine relate to the areas that those ministries . . .

[Mrs. Fritz joined the meeting via teleconference]

The Chair: Thank you, Yvonne.

Mrs. Fritz: Hello. Sorry for interrupting your meeting.

The Chair: You interrupted Rob, not the meeting.

Mr. Reynolds: It's okay.

You could look at anything that's within the mandate or the jurisdiction of these departments or ministries.

Now, as I mentioned, as members you enjoy certain rights and immunities. The collection of these rights and immunities are often referred to as parliamentary privilege. These are rights and immunities that are not available to people who, let's say, sit on municipal council. They flow to individuals who are elected to be members of Westminster-style parliaments in our system of democracy, and that would be you folks. As such you enjoy certain immunities both under the Constitution and under the Legislative Assembly Act. For instance, you cannot be sued for defamation for anything that you say in the Assembly or in a committee of the Assembly. Okay? That dates back at least to the English Bill of Rights of 1689, which actually is a current date for us. I brought a prop here, a book called *1688*, just to show you that it is important, but we won't dwell on the 17th century. We'll move right along here. In any event, you enjoy these protections, and what you say cannot be challenged in a court or any other place out of parliament, as they say.

That protection also extends to witnesses, so any witness coming before your committee also enjoys the protection from being sued for what he or she says.

You also enjoy the power to summon witnesses, which sounds quite amazing, really. You can summon people to attend, and they have to. You know, in my time at the Assembly – and I just had my 19th anniversary earlier this month – we've never really had to summon anyone. I mean, people generally show up when they're invited because they're aware of the great authority of committees of the Assembly. They generally come anyway, but you do have that power.

Then there is the protection for witnesses that I talked about. They enjoy the same protections you do, really, when they're testifying before a committee.

Now, we're just going to make these sections of the Standing Orders come alive. You've been members for a while, so you've been enjoying the standing orders. You've had some experience with them, so here we go. Most of the powers of the legislative policy committees are found in Standing Order 52 and thereon. For instance, under 52.02 you can review any bill referred to the committee by the Assembly. Okay? We'll get into the difference between first and second reading bills, if you will.

You can consider regulations. Now, no committee has actually considered regulations yet, but you certainly can on your own initiative or at the request of a minister.

Annual reports of government departments, provincial agencies, boards, and commissions are automatically referred to the committee under 52.05. Actually, you can not only examine these reports if you want; you can report to the Assembly if you find them to be unsatisfactory, you can investigate and report to the Assembly on any lateness in tabling, and you can also report to the Assembly on whether you think there are bodies that should table annual reports that don't.

Under 52.07 you can consider matters on your own initiative. Of course, what I'd like to say, which we'll touch on later – there's a further slide – is that when the Assembly refers something to your committee or any legislative policy committee, it takes precedence over something the committee decides to investigate. When you think about it, it's because the Assembly is the superior body. You are, as they say in legal terms, the delegate. So the Assembly can tell you what to do, and that would be the case with an investigation or examining a bill. Anything the Assembly requests that you do, that takes priority over something you decide to do.

You can also recommend to the Assembly something that needs legislation, the need for legislation within any area.

Now, inquiries that you conduct must be concluded and reported on to the Assembly no later than six months after you start those inquiries. You know, we've got a little stopwatch, so we just wait until six months is up to tell you. No. We'll be advising you of the time when you start something. You'll have a timeline usually at the beginning to say, well, if you have to report by May 22, that means that you've got to lay out this timetable to get it done by then, holding hearings, et cetera. The government has 150 days after the committee reports to respond.

That doesn't apply with respect to a bill, which is what we're just going to touch on now. Bills, as I said, can be referred to the committee after first reading or second reading, and there is a difference in terms of what the committee looks at. The reason is that after first reading, it's just introduction of the bill, right? So the bill is just introduced, and it could be referred to a committee. That means your scope of review is broader. You can look at the rationale for the bill. You can look at the goals and objectives and report back.

10:50

After second reading – that means the Assembly has given the bill second reading – your ability to look at it is restricted in the sense that the Assembly has already approved the bill in principle. You cannot go back and say, "We don't agree with the principle of it" because the Assembly has already approved the principle. When a bill is referred just after first reading, before it gets second reading, you can investigate that. That's why it says that you can conduct public hearings and report your observations, opinions, and recommendations. After second reading the committee may

conduct public hearings and may report that a bill proceed, not proceed, or proceed with amendments. So you are more limited in what you can recommend.

After you report on a bill that's referred to you after first reading, before it has second reading, the Assembly would vote on the report. If they vote yea, it proceeds; if no, it does not.

Now second reading, just a little note here. To use a double negative, no vote unless the report recommends that the bill not proceed. Let's just let that sink in for a second. If the committee recommends that the bill proceed or proceed with amendments, it just goes ahead in the sense that you table the report and the bill proceeds because the committee consideration of a bill even after it receives second reading is not a substitute for Committee of the Whole consideration. Once again, that may be a little confusing. You have a committee considering it, but it's not the same as Committee of the Whole. So a bill that you report back on after second reading would still go to Committee of the Whole where the amendments would be considered. Does that make sense? Okay.

Other types of reviews. I think I touched on this. There can be a referral of a subject matter from a minister that could be reviewed. Some years ago, when we had policy field committees, I know there was a request from a minister to review, for instance, the beverage container refund. Now, that was actually quite heated, way more heated than I thought it would be. It was quite an interesting study. From that committee, though, that's how you got milk containers now being refundable because that's what the committee recommended. You might say a small step, but Alberta became the first jurisdiction in Canada, I believe, to have refundable milk cartons, which, when you think about it, pretty much affects most people's lives in some way or another.

Another thing is that the committee can undertake an inquiry on its own initiative, so you can decide what you want to look at.

Just to go back: requests to appear. Sometimes, as you'll touch on later in this meeting, there will be a request to appear before the committee. The committee can hear people. It's just that at the end of the day, depending on what these people are looking for, the committee may not be able to, if you will, grant people what they're looking for because it's a committee of the Assembly. You're not government in the sense that you can't say: "Well, we'll make a regulation. We'll do this." All you can do, really, with respect to a lot of these things is make a recommendation.

The committee support. The chair has pointed out the committee clerk, who is Corinne. We have committee research, and I believe you'll hear from Stephanie LeBlanc, who will tell you a little bit about the research support services that exist. Communications is here, Rhonda Sorensen, who, if you wish, will talk to you about advertising, et cetera, the communications plan that you may have when you decide to look at an issue. Of course, there's legal and procedural advice. For that, you're largely stuck with me.

In any event, are there any questions?

Dr. Swann: Thanks very much, Rob. Two questions. One is: who decides what gets on the agenda, especially if there are requests from outside that we don't necessarily all hear about? Secondly: how are decisions made by the committee, and what is the nature of the proportion needed to pass a particular vote?

Mr. Reynolds: Chair, may I answer?

The Chair: Yes, please.

Mr. Reynolds: Well, decisions with respect to what's considered are decisions of the committee. The committee decides its agenda.

The chair and deputy chair likely will advise with respect to what's come up. For instance, at this meeting I understand that the chair is going to bring forward some correspondence she's had from various groups who want to appear. Like all committees, the committee controls its own agenda.

With respect to your second question on how decisions are made: just like everything else in the House, by a simple majority. I mean, we don't have anything that requires a, quote, special majority. Everything is just decided by 50 per cent plus one. Now, there are no divisions in a committee, so there is no ringing of bells, but you can ask for a recorded vote, which just records who's for and who's against a motion.

Did that answer your questions, Dr. Swann?

Dr. Swann: Just about. You're almost there. You're telling us, then, that the chair and deputy chair do not arbitrarily make decisions about what comes before the committee. Everything that is applied to be heard or discussed would come for discussion and potentially a vote here at the committee?

The Chair: Yes, Dr. Swann. A little further in the meeting we are going to have a motion that will come forward asking that what is presented to the committee goes through the chair, the deputy chair, and a member representative from the other two parties, and then that is presented to the committee. So everything will be pretty much gone through, again, depending on what we have. If we have a specific issue on the table, then clearly the people that we would want to speak to would be those stakeholders involved with that issue.

Does that help?

Dr. Swann: Yes. Maybe you've stimulated a further one. Obviously, we have to decide priorities of this committee, what we'll hear first. If it's not referred from the Legislature, we have to decide on what the priority issues are. How do we decide what the priorities are? If a number of issues – we have three today.

The Chair: Right.

Dr. Swann: Because of length of time, there may be a decision about priorities. Is it first-come, first-served, or is there an attempt to try and decide urgency, importance, priority?

The Chair: Well, as the chair – and, certainly, I can't speak for the deputy chair and the other two because we haven't had that meeting – I would assume that, again, if it's a specific issue, those that are stakeholders to that issue probably would get first crack at being involved in that. If it's just something that may be a one-off group that would like to appear before us, which I think is where you're going, just a one-off group that may not be involved in anything but would like to speak to us and give us information, then that would go through the four people and then come to committee.

Dr. Swann: I'm envisioning, for example, two issues, both of which might require a public hearing, one of which might be more important than the other in terms of the legislative agenda or in terms of its impact on society. Who is going to make the determination, if they have come forward together, of what the priority is?

The Chair: I think it would still be the chair and the deputy chair and the two people, depending on how it's been referred. If it's something that's been referred from the Legislature . . .

Dr. Swann: Well, we know that that's the priority. I'm talking about other issues that are not referred by the Legislature.

The Chair: Perhaps you're talking about the three letters that we have before us, people that want to appear before this committee with information or some request. Is that what you're . . .

Dr. Swann: I'm just asking – I would hope that the committee would decide on priorities, not the chair, that we would have a vote on what the most urgent or important issue is to deal with first if there was more than one. That's all I'm suggesting. I'm hoping that that would be also a role of the committee, to decide.

The Chair: Right. It is. It will first go through the four people that I've mentioned, and then it would definitely be presented to the committee. At that point, if we have four or five, the committee could then determine what the priority would be.

Dr. Swann: Thank you.

The Chair: Depending on how it's been referred to us I believe will instigate who has to appear before us.

Rob, you have your hand up.

11:00

Mr. Reynolds: Well, Madam Chair, I'm sure this is what you're saying, too, but before any inquiry is undertaken either by the committee's own initiative or even at the request of the minister, it would require a motion by the committee.

The Chair: Right.

Mr. Reynolds: Yes.

The Chair: Is that okay, Dr. Swann? Thank you.

I would like to now, as Rob has mentioned – oh, I'm sorry. Darshan.

Mr. Kang: Will the chair or the deputy chair or those two other persons filter what should appear before the committee, or will all the requests be presented to the committee?

The Chair: I would expect that we would maybe filter some but not all. When I say that, what I'm envisioning is that if we have a meeting on a specific issue, the people that we as a committee have actually asked to appear would get precedence over, perhaps, something else that would be brought in from another party or from anyone that would like to appear.

Does that make sense?

Mr. Kang: What I'm getting at is that the committee should decide who appears. I mean, you can filter it, but everything should come to the committee, and the committee should decide this. It shouldn't be the chair or the deputy chair or the two other people who should be deciding. That's what I'm getting it.

The Chair: Yeah. Right. I think I clarified that point with Dr. Swann, that we'll go through the four, and then it will come to the committee, and before anything happens, it will be a motion of the committee.

Is that correct, Rob?

Mr. Reynolds: Yes, before an inquiry is undertaken. I mean, it's difficult to speak about hypothetical situations – in fact, most lawyers won't – but let me go there boldly. I imagine that it's possible that there may be what we could term frivolous requests

that may come to the committee that may not merit consideration in the sense that they're just silly or something like that.

Mr. Fraser: Or outside the scope.

Mr. Reynolds: Yes, or far outside the scope.

I imagine that the four people representing each caucus could simply consider and say: "Well, that's silly. We're not taking that to the committee." I don't imagine that would happen often, but I guess it's conceivable.

The Chair: Thank you.

Jeff Wilson.

Mr. Wilson: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm looking for perhaps clarification on just the process for which the committee would meet on its own initiative. Could you perhaps expand upon how that would work?

The Chair: Well, my understanding is that it would go through the same process, that if somebody had requested the committee to meet outside of a regular – is that what you're talking about, outside of perhaps a regular scheduled meeting?

Mr. Wilson: Just say I have an issue that I would like the committee to discuss. How do I get that on the table?

The Chair: You would bring it to the chair, and the four people would discuss it, and then we'd take it back to the committee.

Mr. Wilson: Very good. Thank you.

The Chair: Okay.

Ms Notley: I'm sorry. Now this conversation is starting to twig a couple of flags for me. My first question is just to make sure that we're having this conversation in the right place. Did I understand you to say that you're going to be bringing a motion forward where you're talking particularly about this notion of this four-person steering committee concept?

The Chair: Uh-huh.

Ms Notley: Okay. Well, then maybe I'll leave my questions for when that motion comes forward. There are a couple more from what you've just said, but that's probably the better place to discuss it.

The Chair: Thank you. I believe that it's being passed around at the moment.

In the meantime I would like to ask the committee support people to introduce themselves. I think Rob has sort of touched on it a bit, but I'll let them describe each of their own particular responsibilities. I'll start off with Corinne. I think I've probably explained that her job is to keep me in line. As I say, that's probably the biggest job in this whole committee. So perhaps we'll move on to Stephanie LeBlanc, please.

Ms LeBlanc: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm here today on behalf of Dr. Philip Massolin. He's the manager of research services, but he's away today. Dr. Massolin leads the committee research group, which also consists of me and two new additions to our team. Nancy Zhang just recently joined the LAO as a legislative research officer, and she's here today. You may recognize Nancy Robert, who has been with the Legislative Assembly Office for about 12 years but just recently joined the research group as a research officer.

Research services provides nonpartisan support to the committee. That means that we'll provide impartial research to the committee as a whole as opposed to individual members of the committee. Typically we're provided with direction by way of a motion that's passed in the committee that asks us to undertake research or perform other tasks.

In terms of the support we provide, in the past we've provided discussion or information papers, research briefings, and cross-jurisdictional comparisons of legislation. We've also prepared stakeholder lists, summaries of written and oral submissions. We also assist the committee with preparing its draft and final reports.

We look forward to working with this new committee. I'd be happy to answer any questions you might have about the support we provide.

Thank you.

The Chair: Seeing no questions, I think that Rob has probably introduced himself and pretty much described his responsibilities, so Rhonda Sorensen, please.

Ms Sorensen: Thank you, Madam Chair. Good morning again, everyone. As previously mentioned, I'm the manager of corporate communications and broadcast services. In terms of how we would support the committee, if there's an inquiry before the committee and it requires public or media relations or any sort of communications support with advertising or public outreach, we would come to the table with some sort of a plan that outlines recommendations that the committee could then discuss within a particular budget. Depending on the direction of that committee, we would either proceed with what we had outlined or go back and refine it based on the discussion around the table and then proceed from there.

That's pretty much it. Unless there's a scope that would require something more in depth, then we're just here to serve at the pleasure of the committee.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Dr. Swann: It just raises an interesting question about how much freedom individual members of the committee have to speak in public about what's gone on in the committee, during committee activities.

The Chair: Well, this is all on the public record. So I can't see why you wouldn't speak to the public if the public had a question about something in a public meeting.

Dr. Swann: Very good. So there's no restriction.

The Chair: I'll ask Rob, but I can't imagine why. It's a public meeting.

Mr. Reynolds: Well, of course, I support that in general. I mean, the only qualification it would have would be if there was an in camera proceeding, which doesn't really happen with these committees. If there's an in camera, which means off the record, in the sense that you go in camera, turn off *Hansard*, then there's a restriction on members releasing what's discussed there. As I said, that doesn't usually come up with this.

The only other restriction would be if a member purported to speak, perhaps, on behalf of the whole committee when, in fact, he or she was representing his or her own views. I think that would be something to be discouraged.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you.

As members are aware, there are no bill reviews or other issues at this particular time currently referred to this committee for its consideration. With that in mind, I'd like to propose a process whereby the chair in consultation with the deputy chair and representatives from other caucuses is tasked with identifying possible matters of interest for the committee's consideration as well as processes that the committee may wish to utilize for public input on matters brought forward on its own initiative. I suggest that members connect with their caucuses to identify issues that the committee could consider and e-mail these ideas to the chair with a copy to Corinne Dacyshyn, our clerk, and then we could consult and present refined ideas to the whole committee at our next meeting.

I believe that you have the motion passed to you. At this point I would open the floor to discussion and would assume that Rachel Notley will have the first questions.

11:10

Ms Notley: Right. Thank you, Madam Chair. I've had a chance to look over the language of this motion, and on the face of it I see no difficulty with it, but the discussion that preceded it just a few moments ago does raise a couple of questions for me. The reason for that is this. I think it's totally reasonable for us to establish a working committee that is designed to streamline our work process and to develop some consensus between the various caucuses where possible to sort of move the work of the committee along. That's absolutely fine. However, I wouldn't want to see that process inadvertently interpreted as having the authority to usurp the role or the opportunities of individual committee members.

There were two comments that were made that concerned me: one, when there was the discussion about the potential of filtering information or requests that might come to the committee and this committee somehow having the authority to make a decision about what is or is not within our mandate or what is or is not frivolous. They may well make a recommendation. That's fine, but I think that we should make it very clear that all communication with the committee chair is given to all members of the committee as an FYI. There may be an associated recommendation that we've decided that this is frivolous or that it's outside of our mandate. More likely than not, we would all agree to it. But I think that you usurp the role of the committee if you suggest that that little subgroup is aware of stuff that others aren't aware of.

The same is the case for the answer to Mr. Wilson's question around how you get things on the agenda. Absolutely, the appropriate way to make it to be streamlined and to try and be able to predict things is to run them through that committee. That makes perfect sense. But there's lots of scenarios within which I could see it arising that that group will have met and another situation will arise subsequently. To potentially put that committee as sort of the screening mechanism or a first step you have to go through is problematic because as a member of the committee I hope to always be able to come to that committee and, the minute we talk about our agenda, say: oh, there's an issue I'd like to add to the agenda.

Now, if I'm doing my job, I will have given the chair notice. If I'm really doing my job and I've thought about it, I will have run it through that subcommittee first. But if the issue arose that morning or if for some other reason I wasn't able to do that, I'm not keen on having a subcommittee undermine my ability to raise it the day that there's a committee meeting.

I need to have those restrictions clarified, that it is simply a facilitative process and that in no way does it usurp the ability of

committee members to know what comes to the committee and to have full engagement in what's on the agenda at the meeting.

The Chair: No, I don't believe that it does usurp it. If there's an agenda and we have issues and we've called people forward – I mean, as you've said, it would have to come to the chair and the four people, and then it would go on the agenda. Are you suggesting that we would have an agenda and at the last minute you would come forward?

Ms Notley: Absolutely.

The Chair: It would have to have some kind of a process.

Ms Notley: No. Actually, Madam Chairman . . .

The Chair: Would you not want to speak to the issues?

Ms Notley: I'm absolutely suggesting that if something came up at the last minute, any member of this committee has the opportunity to propose an amendment to the agenda. That's why it's on the agenda at the very first thing. It's a completely reasonable process. You would propose an amendment to the agenda to have the committee deal with a new item. As I said, if you were doing your job, you would try to run it by the chair and run it by the committee, but it won't always be the case that that's happened.

This would represent a significant change in the role of the committee and the authority of the committee members if that were the interpretation. That's why I'm trying to clarify that.

The Chair: Yeah. Well, everyone is always welcome to bring an amendment to the agenda, but I would suspect that it would be at the discretion of the chair if that then elongates the meeting. That would have to go to the committee.

Ms Notley: Of course.

The Chair: If it was something fresh and new . . .

Ms Notley: It wouldn't be at the discretion of the chair. It would go to the committee, and the committee would vote on it.

The Chair: Right. If you want to elongate the meeting to address any issue that could come out of the blue.

Ms Notley: Or maybe change the priority on the agenda, maybe change the order of the agenda. You could make a motion on that.

The Chair: That would be an amendment that would go to the committee as well.

Ms Notley: Exactly. That's my point. I just want to make sure that that authority is retained by the committee, not by this little subcommittee. That's my point.

The Chair: No. I think what you said in the first place is that this is for facilitation. This is a large committee, and I guess I'm trying to streamline the facilitation of getting stuff moving forward because I think we all want to get down to work.

Ms Notley: Again, as I say, I suspect that would work 90 per cent of the time. I just don't ever want to be told that my raising an issue is out of order because I didn't run it through the committee first or that the committee considered it and rejected it, and it's not going to be on the agenda.

The Chair: Well, I don't think that that would happen if you brought it forward as an amendment that would be voted on by committee.

Ms Notley: That's my point.

The Chair: Thank you.

I've forgotten something very important. Ms Notley, could I ask you to read out the motion so that we can have it on the *Hansard* record?

Ms Notley: Sure. It is moved by someone . . .

The Chair: I'm asking you to move it.

Ms Notley: I can certainly move it for the purpose of discussion. I move that the chair of the Standing Committee on Families and Communities in consultation with the deputy chair and representatives from other opposition caucuses identify matters for consideration within the committee mandate and suggested processes for public input and report back to the committee by . . .

The Chair: Well, I was going to recommend the next meeting, which I'm going to suggest at the end of this meeting would be Friday, October 12. We can just put that in for the moment if you don't mind. Thank you.

Janice Sarich.

Mrs. Sarich: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I support the direction of the motion, but I'd like to provide another perspective given that this is the first meeting of the Standing Committee on Families and Communities. What I have to say will just maybe pick up on some of the salient points brought up by a number of members of the committee and try to put this in another perspective or from another angle.

For example, we discuss committee priorities. Certainly, when I look at the agenda, item 5 is requests to appear, and I'm assuming this is correspondence received by the chair. I've heard from today's little bit of discussion here that there are some ideas that individual members of the committee would like to present forward through the process in discussion through the chair, the appropriate caucuses, and whatnot, so that information will come back.

Where it becomes a little bit awkward for the purpose of today is if a committee member has an idea to present through the process, that has yet to go through process, but already on item 5 we have three items under requests to appear. I'm looking at the discussion about priority because somebody had raised the issue: how does the committee decide on what is the priority for discussion? Not knowing what other ideas or issues that would like to be discussed, we already appear to have three pieces that have come forward in advance of today's meeting. It's not balanced off with a discussion about other ideas that might be filtering forward through the process that we're discussing today. I hope that's clear.

How do we decide, then, on a request to appear? The committee member or membership might have something further to be considered today but didn't have the ability because we're talking about process. It's almost that we're a couple of steps ahead before balancing it out and having a look at it through the processes that you eloquently have charted out for us today. I would just reserve judgment on prioritization and give full consideration because there could be some other ideas that would come from a committee individual or a caucus that need serious consideration in that priority discussion and which perhaps may want to be

reserved for the next meeting of the committee so that we can equally take a look at things.

I say this with an abundance of respect for the three stakeholder groups that have put some information via letters and correspondence that we have adequately received and had opportunity to review, but perhaps, you know, hold off judgment on the prioritization of these requests over a comprehensive look at what might be coming through the new process that is being discussed today.

Thank you.

11:20

The Chair: Thank you for that. Yes, they're good comments.

Part of the reason that we have three ahead of us on the table right now is because they had been sent to the committee a long time ago, and rather than have us come up here for an hour meeting just perhaps for an orientation, I thought: let's get the thing rolling. That was my decision, to at least present something to the committee that we can perhaps put our teeth into, if that helps at all.

Darshan Kang.

Mr. Kang: Thanks, Madam Chair. Will we consider amending this motion to include that members may raise matters for consideration from the floor? That will satisfy, maybe, all the members.

The Chair: Is there further discussion on that? Is that a necessary amendment? You're bringing that forward as an amendment to this motion?

Mr. Kang: Well, I'm suggesting, you know, just to clarify things, we amend this motion to include that members may raise matters for consideration from the floor.

The Chair: My clerk has just informed me that it is standard procedure that a member can amend it at any time, so I'm not sure that it can be asked to amend an agenda item. I believe we've had the discussion with Ms Notley. So I'm not sure that that is really necessary.

Mr. Kang: Just a point of clarification.

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Kang: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

Jeff Wilson.

Mr. Wilson: Thank you, Madam Chair. I apologize if this comes across as a bit of a frivolous clarification, but on a committee of four, being the steering committee of yourself, deputy chair, and two other caucus members, if you're voting and looking for a majority, what happens in the event of a tie? Do you, then, as chair have veto power on that committee?

The Chair: I would have to ask Rob, but you know what? I would really like to think and believe that if four people can't sit down and do some good work and bring it to a committee of 25, we may be in trouble.

Mr. Reynolds: It's specifically not styled as a subcommittee in the motion. It just refers to a group of people getting together, so I imagine that matters would proceed by consensus. Really, when you think about what they'd be looking at, it would be trying to sort out what the committee might look into. So if there's no

consensus on the priorities to be given things, I imagine they won't be assigning priorities to them is how I would see that playing out.

Mr. Wilson: Okay.

The Chair: Steve Young.

Mr. Young: Thank you. To that point, we have the same motion for the other committees, which I have the benefit of being on as well. Those consensus discussions are about each of the caucuses putting forward a list of things they would like to discuss, and then those are sort of prioritized through consensus and brought forward to the committee. Then the committee as a whole can vote.

With respect to the request to appear, as much as I think each of those groups is very valid, my impression of this committee is that it's not a passive one, where we're just having presentations from various groups just because they request. We have a process that identifies issues, and then we proactively go out and find those groups and drill down in terms of the issues. There are a billion groups just like this that would like to present in terms of information or presenting their issues, but we start with the issue, and then we work backwards and try and investigate and have those discussions around that. That's what I put forward.

The Chair: Yes.

Is there any discussion on that?

Mrs. Leskiw: I don't know whether we can finish this in the five minutes that we have. In future times, if we look at the agenda, I think an hour was not a realistic number for our first orientation meeting because people have questions they want to ask, questions they want to discuss, clarification. To jam it in 60 minutes I don't think is a fair assessment.

Also, back to what you said and to what Rachel said about bringing in, do we all have to clear our individual items with the caucus that we belong to before it's brought here? Does Rachel speak as an individual, or does Rachel speak on behalf of the NDP caucus? Does she bring a point as an individual person, as an MLA, or does she bring it as something that her caucus wants her to bring up at this meeting or myself or anybody else around this table?

The Chair: Could I punt that over to you, Rob? I'm sorry.

Mr. Reynolds: Well, with respect, I don't know if anyone would look behind the request. I mean, I don't know whether it's up to the committee to determine whether someone is speaking on behalf of themselves or their caucus. That would be up to you. If you send in an idea to the committee saying, "I think we should investigate X," I can't imagine anyone coming up to you and saying: well, is that your idea or your caucus's? They'd have to take it at face value because you're a private member, and you have the same rights as anyone else. I mean, certainly in the Assembly we would never look behind a member's request to do something and say: does that represent your caucus? That's entirely up to the member.

Mrs. Leskiw: So it would be dealt with almost like a private member's motion or bill? I mean, I'm just bringing it up for discussion because I'm sure it's on a lot of people's minds.

Mr. Reynolds: I don't know. All I can say, Chair, is that I would imagine you would just take a request at face value if someone sent it in, nothing more, nothing less.

Mrs. Towle: I just have one question. The question that I have is that at some point in time the deputy chair could be changed. So should the motion actually read the chair, the deputy chair, and a member of all opposition caucuses because there are actually three opposition caucuses. If at some point in time you have the chair and the deputy chair being from the same caucus, which I believe could happen . . .

The Chair: No, it never will.

Mrs. Towle: It can never happen?

The Chair: No.

Mrs. Towle: Okay. I'm told it could happen. I know it's rare. But if it could never happen, then fine.

Mr. Reynolds: No. The standing orders say that the deputy chair has to be from the Official Opposition.

Mrs. Towle: Thank you. I didn't know that.

The Chair: Could I ask Corinne to reread that motion again, please.

Mrs. Dacyshyn: Moved by Ms Notley that the chair of the Standing Committee on Families and Communities in consultation with the deputy chair and representatives from other opposition caucuses identify matters for consideration within the committee's mandate and suggested processes for public input and report back to the committee by October 12, 2012.

Mr. Luan: I just wanted to provide a bit of my perspective about this debate as I sort of observe. My sense is that this is the first time we're getting together, and folks are voicing how we work together around: is a subcommittee to have superior power, can screen and eliminate some items, and if individual members can bring their own issues rather than through caucus or put those particular issues out.

Here's my take. I'm a new member and fully engaged and looking forward to a committee where, you know, we share some passions around those issues of the mandate of the committee. I'm looking forward to a lively discussion that we each can have, putting the best of our views, experiences, and talents onto the table to have a fulsome discussion so that we have a greater understanding of the different parts, different dynamics of the issues in front of us. Instead of being hung up on lots of those specifics, part of my thinking is that perhaps we need to collectively agree on some high-level principles.

If that's the principle we're going to work with, then we use that to look at the process if this facilitative process will serve that purpose. If not, if consensus couldn't be reached, to me the committee always has the chance at the point of approval of the agenda to amend the agenda and change that.

11:30

I think the sense I'm observing is that there is increasing anxiety about: "Are we working together? Are we going to fight? Are we going to have somebody over others' authority and so on and so forth?" I think that probably, to me, is more essential, that we clarify that. For me, I am looking forward to a lively discussion that would bring the best that we know of. We speak on behalf of our constituency, who voted us here to do the best for the particular issue on the table.

Of course, we have all the freedom of our own in terms of preparing what we do, consulting with our caucus members, and

so on and so forth, but you do that before you come here, and when you speak here, you speak as who you are.

The Chair: Well, from my personal experience, many of the committees that I have sat on have been more than lively. I think that you will get your wish as this committee moves along and with any other committees that you're going to sit on in this particular format. Yes, people are very vocal.

Mrs. Fritz: Madam Chair, I'm hoping you can put me on your list of speakers.

The Chair: Thank you.

One more, Linda, and then you, Yvonne.

Ms L. Johnson: Thank you, Madam Chair. In regard to the motion itself the final phrase was "October 12," which is a Friday. I was more comfortable with "the next meeting" as part of the motion. We haven't agreed to October 12 yet as our meeting time.

The Chair: No, no. I'm sorry; I misspoke on that. Actually, the intent was that the information be given to the chair by that date. So we haven't set a date for the meeting. I'm sorry.

Ms L. Johnson: Good. Okay. So the final phrase of the motion is: "suggested processes for public input and report back to the committee by . . ."

The Chair: October 12.

Ms L. Johnson: It should be: next meeting. Then it guides our discussions for the whole session. That is my understanding.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

I'll ask the clerk to reread that with the friendly amendment included. Thank you for that catch.

Mrs. Dacyshyn: Moved by Ms Notley that the chair of the Standing Committee on Families and Communities in consultation with the deputy chair and representatives from other opposition caucuses identify matters for consideration within the committee's mandate and suggested processes for public input and report back to the committee at the next meeting.

The Chair: Yvonne.

Mrs. Fritz: Thank you, Madam Chair. I just wanted to thank you for having given members the ability to phone in as a conference phone-in call. I will be taking advantage of that at the next meeting as well.

Also, Rob, I wanted to thank you, too, for the excellent presentation. I thought your overview was concise and explicit, and it's really helped guide the committee about where we should proceed in the future. I'd certainly support Ms Notley's motion.

Thank you for that.

The Chair: Thank you, Yvonne.

Now I'll call the question. All in favour? Any negatives? Thank you. That's been passed unanimously.

Okay. The committee has received requests from three different groups that wish to present their points of view regarding health-related issues, and these requests were posted to the committee's internal website: (a) the group Campaign for a Smoke-Free Alberta, (b) the Alberta Policy Coalition for Chronic Disease Prevention, and (c) the Alberta Committee of Citizens with Disabilities.

I'll open the floor to the discussion on this with a note that for (a) my understanding is that there is some work being done presently with Smoke-Free Alberta, and they may or may not still want to appear at this committee if they're working with another different group. I will work on that.

Is there any discussion?

Mr. Young: I think I'm in the right order now in terms of the discussion.

Again, I think that we need to be proactive in terms of the issues that come from the previous motion and seek out those organizations. There are hundreds and hundreds of organizations out there that all do great work, but I think it has to be related to the issue. Just because they posted something on our site or called the chair, I don't think we need to be reactive in terms of their advocacy. We need to be proactive.

The Chair: Janice Sarich.

Mrs. Sarich: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm going to go back to what I mentioned before because we have now passed the motion regarding the process. As a committee member I'd like to have an opportunity to weigh these requests with other requests that may come from the processes that have been outlined in the motion that we just have had a discussion about, where the various caucuses, through the chair and the deputy chair, will be able to examine things and then chart a course for prioritization.

I say this with an abundance of respect, again, that these stakeholder groups, through their requests to appear, have written correspondence, of which we have received copies. You know, some committee members may be familiar with their work and may in fact have had meetings already with these groups and have a perspective to share.

But, in all honesty, the Standing Committee on Families and Communities, in my humble opinion, has just started to map out and chart a course for the process. I don't see any harm in waiting until another meeting to have a look at what we have presented through the process that we just have debated and to allow for that opportunity and also for caucuses to have that experience through the process because there might be something else that would come to our attention through the chair and the deputy chair regarding the process itself. So we can weigh and measure and balance that in our next discussion and take a second look at what the priorities may be and request at that time as well a lively discussion about the direction of stakeholders that we would like as a committee to seek out and request for appearance before the committee. That's all.

Thank you very much.

The Chair: Thank you.

Dr. Swann: I just wanted to clarify, again, our role. I'm wondering: if, for example, the chronic disease prevention group were looking for a decision from this committee, could we potentially write a letter of recommendation to the Minister of Health, for example, with the budgetary implications that that was making or maybe write a letter to other bodies that we think would have an appropriate role in a particular issue?

The Chair: That process that you're speaking of probably would fall under the motion that we've passed, where it would come. The reason that these three are here is because they've been on the table for a long time in front of this committee. As soon as it was announced, some of these came forward. That's why I brought them forward. I want you to know that these groups have

approached us. Again, it's more for information at this point in time. As Mr. Young has pointed out, these groups all have merit and certainly want to bring their information forward. In your case, Dr. Swann, you want a recommendation from this committee, you know, to go forward in some way, either the letter to the Minister of Health or whatever.

I wanted you just to be aware of what's there. I'm not sure that I'm actually looking for a decision today. I wanted you to get a feel for what the meetings may look like or what you want these meetings to look like. I apologize for the meeting going over. I know the other two were out in very quick order, but they really just had a plain orientation meeting. I wanted a little bit more meat on it.

I would suggest that it would come to the chair, the deputy chair, and the representatives from the other two caucuses, and then I would bring it back, again, to the committee at the next meeting.

11:40

Dr. Swann: The decision to write a letter of recommendation on behalf of a particular group?

The Chair: That would be a motion that you would bring forward to the group.

Dr. Swann: Okay. Thank you.

The Chair: Rachel.

Ms Notley: Thank you. I suspect we'll probably just end up waiting. In the course of considering how we establish our agenda, one of the speakers talked about how we shouldn't be reactive. I would just like to throw out there that another way of characterizing that is responsive. What we need to do is always keep an eye on what requests are coming to us. This is a mechanism for people, on their own initiative, who have issues that we wouldn't necessarily know about when our group of four is sitting around having our discussion about our priorities. Part of the purpose of this committee is to allow for greater engagement with the citizens of the province. As we go forward, I'd like us to think about always allowing for some portion of the work that we do to be set aside for that kind of responsiveness.

Certainly, my experience in the past has been that no committee, frankly, is really ever overwhelmed with requests to appear before us, and, you know, I sat on a lot of committees in the last term. I think we'll find we do have the opportunity to respond when people ask to have some time with our committee. If we're not going to make this decision today, I hope that we do ultimately give some deference to the fact that these three groups have requested our time and have been waiting for some time and that we do consider setting aside time in our agenda to be responsive to those things while, of course, at the same time developing a consensus, an understanding on what our focus will be.

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

Mr. Allen: Thank you, Madam Chair. I guess I won't belabour the point because I must say that I'm in full agreement with comments made by both MLAs Young and Sarich. I don't know about the rest of you, but when I arrived in my office for the very first time after the election, I had a stack of mail about this high from similar types of groups that all have very important mandates of their own. I'm sure that as a committee I'd be concerned about

the effectiveness of this committee if we spent a lot of our time just meeting with groups for information purposes only and that didn't have a particular ask or something that they're specifically dealing with.

I know that two of these committees that are shown here I have appointments with in my office today, so they are very active. Those are things that as private members we can bring up under another initiative, whether it's to do a review of a bill or whatever else our mandates are as legislators and representatives of our constituents.

With all due respect, I do appreciate the work that the chair and, I assume, the deputy chair have done in putting this agenda together and appreciate that it's been posted on the website and given us an opportunity to discuss, but I think that I would support having these being vetted back through the committee of the four caucus members as to whether or not it fits in our schedule for another meeting based on what we do have on the agenda that deals within our mandate.

The Chair: Right. Thank you for that.

Mr. Young: I just want to say that, like Mr. Allen, I met with all three of these groups and was very responsive to what their message was, but we don't have an issue at this committee table yet to see the relevance. We've got to start with the issue and then find the relevance in terms of the groups and the different points. Working backwards from hearing from every group and committee, which we individually do as members, we haven't got a mandate to connect the dots with each of these groups.

The Chair: Rob, would you have a comment on that?

Mr. Reynolds: No, I don't. Corinne was asking me a question, and I was trying to lip-synch an answer. I'm sorry if I interfered with your proceeding.

The Chair: Okay. We have a bit of a quandary, I guess, in that these groups have asked us, but I would like to see it go back to the process that we passed, that it would then come through the chair and the deputy chair.

I think that what Mr. Young and someone else – I'm sorry – has brought up is also an interesting sort of a bit of a conundrum, too. The groups that want to appear before us as a committee also lobby separately all of the members of the committee, which can tend to be quite onerous for all the members on the committee, when you're sort of doubling up on what you're doing. So if we decided as a committee that these groups would appear before us, then that is, in my mind, where they should be coming: to us as a committee, not to us as necessarily individual members. It's up to the individual members to acquaint themselves with what the issues may be as they come forward. Is that agreed?

Dr. Swann: I have no idea what you just said.

The Chair: Okay. What I'm saying is that the three groups that have been presented as being interested in appearing in front of our committee: I would like that discussion based on the motion that we passed, that these three groups would then be discussed with the chair, the deputy chair, and the two other members and would come back to the committee at the next meeting.

Dr. Swann: It sounds like a very tortuous process. I mean, they've presented themselves. They want to do the right thing by their particular advocacy. They have met with many of us. This committee is set up to hear from them. We've all, I presume, done

some reading on this. Why not just take a vote right now whether people want to hear them next time?

I would like to make a motion that we hear from these groups, and we can learn the ropes as we go through these. We don't have anything else competing with it right now. We have no agenda otherwise.

The Chair: Is that all three groups?

Dr. Swann: Yes. I don't see any reason to discriminate at this point.

The Chair: Okay. It's just that I had mentioned that I believe that Smoke-Free Alberta is working with another group, but I can clarify that as we would bring it forward.

Is there discussion on that motion? Dr. Swann, would you like to repeat exactly what the motion is for *Hansard*?

Dr. Swann: I move that the committee invite these proponents to the next meeting to listen to their presentations.

The Chair: Okay.

Mrs. Fritz: I'm just going to speak to the motion, Madam Chair. Would you put me on your list?

The Chair: Thank you, Yvonne. Go ahead.

Mrs. Fritz: Thank you. Just from listening to the discussion, I respect what Dr. Swann has brought forward about the importance of meeting with groups of people that have come forward with a request. But also I respect what the chair has asked for, since an hour was spent going over the process, which is to have these groups – she's put them on the agenda for information, is my understanding, and has a bit of knowledge about one of the groups and where they're at, what their status is, and has the knowledge that members have met with members of the groups as well. The chair has asked that we begin the process that we just voted on and that these groups then may be accepted for information on the agenda and that they now go through the process.

I respect that as well, the process. I don't think that there's an urgency to bypass the process if the next meeting is around mid-October. That would be my sentiment as to why I wouldn't support the motion, Dr. Swann. I want you to know I really do respect this, about meeting with the groups. It just should go through the process.

Thank you.

Dr. Swann: Well, I understood that this is the process. We're a committee here.

Mrs. Fritz: No. What I understood: the process was based on the motion that it's going to go through the chair, the deputy chair, and

the two members of the caucuses and that this would go on their agenda items.

Dr. Swann: Well, I guess it's a chicken-and-egg thing. We're here.

Mrs. Fritz: It is. That's why I spoke this way. I respect both, but I won't be supporting the motion. I'll be respecting what the chair had put forward about having it go through the process with the agenda that was discussed in the last hour. It's been passed.

Dr. Swann: If there are other issues before us, then I can see a need to go back and add to this list so that we can vote on . . .

Mrs. Fritz: I understand that. You said that, and I understand that.

Dr. Swann: Okay. I'll just leave that motion as it is.

11:50

The Chair: Okay. Are there any other comments?

I'll ask the clerk to reread the motion, and then I'll call the question.

Mrs. Dacyshyn: Moved by Dr. Swann that the Standing Committee on Families and Communities invite the Campaign for a Smoke-Free Alberta, the Alberta Policy Coalition for Chronic Disease Prevention, and the Alberta Committee of Citizens with Disabilities to make a presentation to the committee at a future meeting.

The Chair: I'll call the question. All in favour? Those opposed? The motion has been defeated. Thank you.

Is there any other business that would come up? I think that Ms Nottley spoke about being able to bring things forward, you know, to the committee as she wished.

Okay. The date of the next meeting: I have that it's at the call of the chair, but I would like to suggest the middle of October. The clerk will be able to get a hold of all of you and see which dates work the best for the majority of us on the committee. The clerk is asking that it be done by e-mail because there are so many of us and some aren't here and that sort of thing.

Ms L. Johnson: Can we avoid Fridays, though? I'm getting into the discipline of constituency days being Fridays.

The Chair: All right. Yes. Is that a suggestion as well, avoiding Fridays? Okay. That's great. Thank you very much.

I would at this point, if there's nothing else, ask for an adjournment. Thank you, Jeff. Jeff Wilson. All in favour? Thank you.

[The committee adjourned at 11:52 a.m.]

