



Legislative Assembly of Alberta

The 30th Legislature
Second Session

Standing Committee
on
Private Bills and Private Members' Public Bills

Bill 218, Provincial Parks (Protecting Park Boundaries)
Amendment Act, 2021

Wednesday, June 2, 2021
6:15 p.m.

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Standing Committee on Private Bills and Private Members' Public Bills

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Schow, Joseph R., Cardston-Siksika (UC), Deputy Chair
Amery, Mickey K., Calgary-Cross (UC)
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Getson, Shane C., Lac Ste. Anne-Parkland (UC)
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6:15 p.m.

Wednesday, June 2, 2021

[Mr. Ellis in the chair]

The Chair: All right. Good evening, everybody. I'd like to call this meeting of the Standing Committee on Private Bills and Private Members' Public Bills to order and welcome everyone in attendance.

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

Mr. Schow: Joseph Schow, MLA, Cardston-Siksika.

Ms Glasgo: Michaela Glasgo, MLA, Brooks-Medicine Hat.

Mr. Schmidt: Marlin Schmidt, Edmonton-Gold Bar.

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

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

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

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

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

The Chair: Okay. We'll call on those joining us via videoconference. We'll start with Mr. Dang. Go ahead, sir. I see your picture, but we'll come back to you. You were having some mic problems yesterday.

Member Lori Sigurdson.

Ms Sigurdson: Yeah. Good evening. It's Lori Sigurdson from Edmonton-Riverview.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Member Getson. No? Not on yet?

We have Member R.J. Sigurdson. I see you there.

Mr. Sigurdson: Good evening, everyone. R.J. Sigurdson, MLA for Highwood.

The Chair: Okay. We have Member Mickey Amery. Go ahead, please, sir.

Mr. Amery: Good evening, committee members. Mickey Amery, MLA, Calgary-Cross.

The Chair: Thank you.

Member Rutherford. He's not on yet either. Okay.

We'll now go back to Mr. Dang.

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

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

Mr. Schow: Mr. Getson says that he's waiting for others to join. Has he been admitted?

The Chair: He might be in the waiting-room area there. Well, when the clerk gets the two members on – it looks like they're possibly

trying to get on – we'll come back to them. We'll circle back.

Right now we have no official substitutions, so we'll address a few housekeeping items before we turn to the business at hand. Pursuant to the February 22, 2021, memo from the hon. Speaker Cooper I'd remind everyone of the updated committee room protocols, which encourage members to wear masks in committee rooms and while seated except when speaking, at which time they may choose not to wear a face covering. Based on the recommendations from the chief medical officer of health regarding physical distancing, attendees at today's meeting are reminded to leave the appropriate distance between themselves and other meeting participants.

Now, please note that the microphones are operated by *Hansard* staff. Committee proceedings are live streamed on the Internet and broadcast on Alberta Assembly TV. The audio- and videostream and transcripts of meetings can be accessed via the Legislative Assembly website. Those participating by videoconference are asked to turn on their camera while speaking and to mute their microphone when not speaking.

To request to be put on the speakers list, members participating virtually are asked to e-mail or send a message in the group chat to the committee clerk, and members in the room are asked to please signal to the chair. Please set your cellphones and other devices to silent for the duration of the meeting.

I see that Member Getson is on. Member Getson, could you just introduce yourself for the record, please?

Mr. Getson: Yes. Thank you, Chair. MLA Shane Getson, Lac Ste. Anne-Parkland.

The Chair: Great. Thank you very much.

We'll next move to the approval of the agenda. Are there any changes or additions to the draft agenda?

Hearing and seeing none, could I get someone to make a motion to approve the agenda? Mr. Schow. Thank you very much. Mr. Schow has moved that the agenda for the June 2, 2021, meeting of the Standing Committee on Private Bills and Private Members' Public Bills be adopted as distributed. All in favour, say aye. On videoconference? Thank you. Any opposed? Hearing and seeing none, that motion is carried.

I see Mr. Rutherford has joined us. Sir, if you could just introduce yourself for the record, please.

Mr. Rutherford: Thank you. Brad Rutherford, MLA, Leduc-Beaumont.

The Chair: Fantastic. Thank you.

We'll next move to the approval of the minutes. Hon. members, the minutes from our meeting last night are not yet ready for consideration. They'll be prepared for approval at the committee's next meeting.

Next we'll move to the review of Bill 218, the Provincial Parks (Protecting Park Boundaries) Amendment Act, 2021, and a presentation by Member Marlin Schmidt. He's the MLA for Edmonton-Gold Bar. Welcome, sir.

Bill 218 – that's the Provincial Parks (Protecting Park Boundaries) Amendment Act, 2021 – was referred to the committee on Thursday, May 27, 2021, in accordance with Standing Order 74.11, and the committee's report to the Assembly is due by June 10. I would now like to invite the sponsor of the bill, Member Marlin Schmidt, the MLA for Edmonton-Gold Bar, to provide five minutes of a presentation, and then the committee members will have up to 20 minutes to ask questions.

Sir, thank you very much for being here. The floor is yours.

Mr. Schmidt: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I appreciate the opportunity to discuss with you today Bill 218, the Provincial Parks (Protecting Park Boundaries) Amendment Act, 2021. As a member of this Legislature I'm very proud that I'm able to bring this bill forward. This bill comes in response to the government trying to close and sell parks last year. This move created significant backlash from Albertans and created a campaign that saw lawn signs spring up around the province in opposition to the plan. Albertans have been very clear that we need to protect our parks.

They're part of our natural heritage, and they hold a deep intrinsic as well as an economic value. I know that families across the province share fond memories of vacations spent in Alberta's parks. They're also an affordable way for Albertans to enjoy the outdoors, which benefits our physical and our mental health. Of course, they're a major part of our tourism industry, that supports countless small businesses and jobs across the province. Our parks are part of our identity, and Albertans should have a say in how they're managed.

Bill 218, if passed, would require the government to consult with Albertans about potential changes to parks or recreation areas and bring the proposed changes to the Legislature if it were ever planning to reduce the size of a park or a provincial recreation area, change the class of a provincial park or provincial recreation area, or rescind a park order.

The consultation process would be as follows. The government would be required to share notice of the consultation with interested persons at least seven days prior to the start of consultations. The consultations must last for a period of at least 60 days, during which time the government must publish the proposed changes on a publicly accessible website and provide the opportunity for the public to provide written submissions. Within 14 days of the last day of the consultation period the government has to publish a document summarizing the submissions. A minimum of seven days after the consultation period has closed and up to a maximum of 30 days after the consultation period has closed the government must table a report in the Legislature setting out the proposed action with respect to a park or a recreation area. Then the Legislature would have to pass a resolution that would allow the government to implement these changes.

This would prevent the government from changing parks boundaries or from closing or selling parks behind closed doors by order of cabinet. It's my sincere hope that all members of the House will join me in supporting this bill and enact the protections for parks that Albertans are asking for.

With that, I am happy to take questions.

The Chair: Well, thank you very much, sir. Thank you for that presentation.

We will now go to questions from the members. Certainly, as is the tradition of this committee, this is an opposition member's bill, so we're going to start with the government members for questions. We have Member Glasgo for a question and a quick follow-up. Go ahead.

Ms Glasgo: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, and thank you to the member for putting this bill forward. I know that Albertans certainly do care about their parks. In fact, I have a very cool park in my riding, Dinosaur provincial park, as well as Tillebrook. We have quite a few different parks in Brooks-Medicine Hat, and I know how important they are to my constituents. I grew up near Cypress Hills provincial park and, actually, Golden Sheaf park, which I found out was called Golden Sheaf about last week, because we always just referred to it affectionately as Rattlesnake. We had no idea what it was called. I don't think anybody has actually called

it by its real name in my life. I know there are lots of parks close to Brooks-Medicine Hat that we definitely recreate in and we appreciate very much. Another area of the province that I recreated in, which wasn't a provincial park until the NDP came to power, actually, which actually closed my ability to be able to enjoy that park, was Castle.

In Bill 218 section (3), which amends section 6 of the Provincial Parks Act, I believe adds requirements that the government must consult and report to Legislature on the consultation. I'm curious how you, as an opposition member who was part and, I believe, in the cabinet of the former government, were planning on providing advice on how to give consultation given that one of the largest, I would say, mistakes of the previous government was their lack of consultation on the Castle and on the Bighorn.

6:25

The member was talking about lawn signs, and I think that on this side of the table we can remember how many signs there were on the steps of this Legislature when the NDP failed to consult on Bill 6, which brought thousands of people to this Legislature to protest their lack of judgment and their complete lack of understanding of rural Alberta. So I do find it interesting that we are talking about consultation, but can you elaborate, Member, on any similarities between Bill 218's consultation and your past record on consulting Albertans, which was nil?

The Chair: Go ahead, Member.

Mr. Schmidt: Well, thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to the Member for Brooks-Medicine Hat for the question. What I will say with respect to consultation is that, of course, the member is well aware that in February 2020 the government of Alberta published the optimizing Alberta parks plan, which outlined almost 200 different parks and provincial recreation areas which were set to be delisted. Of course, that caught many Albertans by surprise, because all of those parks appeared on the list with no prior notice to the people who would potentially be impacted with changes that the government was consulting.

Certainly, we heard from Albertans how upset they were that the parks department had apparently disregarded its own parks consultation policy at the time in creating that list. This bill is in response to that particular oversight on behalf of the Department of Environment and Parks and would enshrine in legislation the requirement to consult on these parks changes, that up until this point has only really existed as a matter of policy. Of course, we've all seen a number of policies that have been changed or rescinded by the government of the day that have created a lot of negative response from the public. The fact that the parks department has apparently done away with or disregarded its parks consultation policy is one. The 1976 Loughheed coal policy repeal is another. Those are just two policies that occur to me off the top of my head.

I think it's really important, when the government has policies that the people of Alberta expect will be followed, that they not be done away with so easily. I think that the parks consultation policy is one of those policies that Albertans were really upset was disregarded in the case of the optimizing Alberta parks plan, and that's why we're really dealing with this in the legislation, enshrining in legislation the policy to consult.

I think that, you know, the Member for Brooks-Medicine Hat has stated some concerns with some consultation practices of governments in the past, so I would hope that she would agree with me, Mr. Chair, that enshrining these kinds of consultation policies in legislation is a step in the right direction and that not only would she support this legislation but urge all of her fellow MLAs to

support this legislation as well, because her comments essentially agree with the position that I'm taking with this private member's bill, that consultation is really important. I think that having this kind of legislated protection for consultation practices is a significant step in the right direction.

The Chair: Thank you.

Member Glasgo, do you have a follow-up, please?

Ms Glasgo: I absolutely do. Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you, Member, for your answer. I think we can totally agree that consultation is extremely important, especially when it comes to issues that Albertans care about so much, and we know parks is one of them.

Another issue that Albertans really care about and Canadians care about is knowing that our indigenous partners have been consulted and making sure that they are part of the decision-making process. I would be remiss not to mention the record of the former Indigenous Relations minister, the Member for Edmonton-Rutherford, when he thought that it was, I guess, inconvenient to consult the Sunchild First Nation. I think he was actually quoted saying: I thought you guys would like it. That was his idea of consultation on the Bighorn. So I'm concerned. I think just a simple yes or no answer will do here: is this your idea of consultation on parks issues with indigenous people?

Mr. Schmidt: Well, you know it's . . .

Ms Glasgo: A simple yes or no.

The Chair: No. Let the member answer.

Mr. Schmidt: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Sorry. Just for my own clarification, how much time do I have to answer this?

The Chair: We've got 13 minutes. I think there are some other members who want to ask some questions, too.

Mr. Schmidt: Forgive me for clarification on the rules, but is there a specific time allotted to specific members for questions?

The Chair: No. Not really.

Mr. Schmidt: Okay. Thank you very much for that.

The Chair: Member Irwin is up next, so don't worry.

Mr. Schmidt: On the issue of indigenous consultation, I'm proud of our government's track record in creating co-management policies with indigenous people with respect to the Castle parks. That was, as far as I understand it, a first-in-the-country endeavour. If I'm wrong on that, it was certainly among the first in the country to create an official co-management plan with indigenous people in a protected park or protected area. I know that this government also values the principle of co-management with indigenous people, because I believe that they've continued the principle when they expanded some of the provincial parks in the northeast part of Alberta.

I believe that indigenous consultation is incredibly important, and certainly I think that it's important that the government live up to its constitutional obligations to consult with indigenous people at all times. I know that – I'm certainly concerned that the Treaty 6 nations have just let their protocol agreement with the government lapse. That's a significant concern to me. You know, I have concerns that these kinds of things, when they happen, will impede the government's ability to consult meaningfully with First Nations

people. I certainly hope that if the member is sincere in her desire to consult with indigenous people on matters regarding parks as well as other issues that the provincial government is engaged in, that she urge her colleagues in Executive Council to repair the relationship with Treaty 6 people and urge them to re-create a protocol agreement with Treaty 6 as soon as possible.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Mr. Schow: Mr. Chair, If I may.

The Chair: Yeah.

Mr. Schow: Pause the clock. I know it is the first time that the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar has attended our committee. It just might be worth noting to both members who are asking questions or answering them that though there is no allotted time, we like to try to get as many questions as possible, so if both questions and answers could remain relatively short, that'd be great. I just ask that for the presenter and members asking those questions.

The Chair: Yeah. I think that's fair as well – right? – for members asking questions. Thank you very much, sir. We do have 10 minutes, so we'll try and get at least a couple more questions in there.

Member Irwin, you have the floor. Go ahead, please.

Member Irwin: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just, first of all, thank you, Member, for your work on this file. We know it's been very busy, and you've been an incredible advocate for environment and parks. I guess I want to ask – you know, we've both seen, in my neighbourhood, in your neighbourhood, across the province, I know my sister's neighbourhood in a UCP riding in Calgary, a whole heck of a lot of Defend Alberta Parks signs. We know, thanks to the advocacy of countless Albertans, that we have had some success in hampering the UCP's abilities to attack our parks. So some might say: why are these protections needed now? Are our parks still at risk?

6:35

Mr. Schmidt: Well, the answer to that question is that we don't know. Really, the only person, I suspect, who knows is the current minister of the environment, who hasn't really indicated for certain what his plans are with parks.

You know, it was interesting to me that a couple of days before Christmas, the ministry quickly announced that they were going to put on pause their plans to sell off or close down almost 200 parks across the province. What was really concerning to me was this statement that implied that they had, in fact, found partners to manage all of these parks. It was a curious statement because the list of parks partners that they published didn't correspond with the list of parks that they were looking for partners for, if that makes sense.

The department has stated its intention to take those parks on the optimize Alberta parks list and turn them over to third-party managers, but when I had the opportunity to ask the minister about who is, in fact, managing or who will be managing these parks on the list, he wasn't able to provide me with an answer at the time that I asked him the question, at budget estimates. He directed his ADM to provide me an answer. I followed up with the ADM in writing shortly after that meeting, and I'm still waiting for an answer. It's been almost three months since we had that meeting around the budget estimates. So it's concerning to me, as it is to thousands of Albertans all across the province, that we still don't know who, if anybody, apart from the parks department is going to be managing

our parks. Not only that, but we don't have any understanding of under what terms and conditions they'll be allowed to manage the parks.

So I certainly hope that the minister provides answers for Albertans to that really important question, because people have been waiting now for six months since he made that announcement, and he hasn't provided any further details. I think, you know, to preempt that – right? – it would be really important for us to take a look at passing this legislation. It wouldn't necessarily solve this issue around third-party managers – I think that would be a separate issue – but certainly if the government had plans to change or eliminate parks or provincial recreation areas, this piece of legislation would make it much more difficult to do that. We certainly know that Albertans felt shut out of the process, and we think that by bringing forward these changes that require the government to propose the changes to the Legislature and then have the Legislature debate the motion and vote on the motion, that would be a better way of giving Albertans their say on how our parks are managed instead of letting cabinet make these changes by order.

The Chair: Let's let Member Irwin ask a follow-up, please.

Member Irwin: Yeah. I mean, I think you nailed it. I mean, this is a government that's repeatedly asked Albertans to just trust them. You know, the example of the third-party managers: I mean, there are just so many unknowns and so many questions, and there's a clear lack of transparency from this government as well. So I think I echo your comments that for this government, this would be a wise move to show that they truly do regret their past moves on parks and are committed to protecting them moving forward.

You know, you mentioned that you're continuing to hear from Albertans again, even after the initial correspondence we all got. Have you chatted with any Albertans, average Albertans in your riding about this piece of proposed legislation? What are you hearing from them?

Mr. Schmidt: Yeah, I have heard from Albertans, not just in the constituency of Edmonton-Gold Bar but from all corners of the province, that this kind of legislation is a step in the right direction when it comes to providing additional protections for parks. Certainly, like I said in my previous answer, people felt shut out of the process. They think that this would be a way to improve the transparency and accountability of government when it comes to what happens to our parks system. They're certainly hopeful that members of the Legislature will vote in support of this legislation and take this much-needed step to protect the parks.

The Chair: All right. Thank you.

Member Getson, go ahead, please.

Mr. Getson: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to the member for bringing this forward. Edmonton-Gold Bar: I had the chance to visit that area when we were first elected. The river valley down in Edmonton is just phenomenal. You know, most MLAs get a chance to visit those areas. I went on a walk; I was walking with soldiers. I was actually hoping to meet the member there. It was the first year that I was elected and meeting new members and those types of things. Unfortunately, I didn't see the member there supporting the veterans in the area at that time. I'm sure he was pretty busy, probably doing something else.

When it comes to looking at the parks, I think that's something that we share on both sides of the aisle is the concerns for it. It's one of the biggest things that we have out in our area. I have the

Pembina park out there, grew up out in that Wildwood country and very close to the mountains in doing that. I also worked, you know, in the industry and bounced across different parts. I'm surprised that the member is such an advocate; in one regard, very pleasantly surprised. One of the first iterations I heard him speaking about with – I don't want to say this – a little bit of disdain, I guess, with the mosquitos and those types of things being out in the environment. It seems there's been a lot of – attacked and a play on words, Member, with this whole for sale type item. I believe you were quoted agreeing with the Transportation minister at one point that their parks were not for sale. That quote was: "I... want to clarify... one thing that the member said [and] the fact that parks aren't for sale. I just want to say that I agree with the Minister of Transportation when he says that parks aren't for sale, because technically they're not for sale. Rochon Sands provincial park... not for sale." As the member admits that we're not selling parks, it seems like it's more a matter of debate, and it seems like there are a lot of items that are really charged because, again, most Albertans are really in favour of their parks, and it's something that we hold near and dear.

To the member. Technically, it looks like a good bill, but I'm just kind of concerned about the intent of the bill, if it's being potentially capitalized more to prey on people's emotions. You understand fully the commitment that this government has to the parks, the understanding of the difference in the nuances of management of the parks. That may be up for debate, and that may be an area of concern for you. But do you honestly believe that this bill is needed, number one, and do you honestly believe that your bill will, if it comes in and is put to the House and debated and passed, would add any more measures than are already there, given the record that we all have as Albertans, the concerns for the park, all the park systems, and the fact that, again, the minister has been such a strong advocate for parks, including his own backyard in the area of Sundre? Would you mind commenting on the comments about continually going on about selling the parks when you're on the record...

The Chair: Let's let the member answer. We've got one minute.

Mr. Schmidt: Well, thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to the member for artfully turning character assassination into a question. I think, in answer to his question, it is more important now than ever to implement these kinds of legislative changes to the Provincial Parks Act because we know that this government has tried to sell off or close down a number of parks. I appreciate that the member takes issue with the language that I'm using. If he has concerns about selling off or closing parks, I encourage him to vote him in favour of this legislation because it will make it that much harder to do the things that the government wanted to do to parks.

The Chair: Member, thank you very much for your presentation. Thank you to the members who were able to ask questions.

We will now move on to decisions on the review of Bill 218. Hon. members, the committee must now decide how it would like to conduct its review of Bill 218. The committee may choose to invite additional feedback from up to six stakeholders, three from each caucus, or the committee may choose to expedite its review and proceed to deliberations.

Does anyone have any thoughts? Mr. Nielsen.

6:45

Mr. Nielsen: Thank you, Mr. Chair. First off, Mr. Schmidt, thank you very much for your presentation on your bill. I appreciate it. You know, I guess you can always have these types of subjects and

have many, many questions that you would love to ask. It's too bad we don't have more time to do that.

I know the correspondence that I received in my office: phone calls, social media messages, and everything else. I know my colleagues have received that. I think that when we have a piece of legislation like this in front of us, that sort of, I guess, solidifies what the process should be going forward, given the passion that it seems Albertans have shown. But let's be sure. Let's absolutely rule out, one way or another, how Albertans feel. I will make a motion that the committee invite stakeholders.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you very much, sir. I believe we have a draft here. I'll add your name to that. Mr. Nielsen would like to move that the Standing Committee on Private Bills and Private Members' Public Bills invite up to six stakeholders, three proposed by the government caucus and three proposed by the Official Opposition caucus, to make presentations regarding Bill 218, Provincial Parks (Protecting Park Boundaries) Amendment Act, 2021, at an upcoming meeting and provide a stakeholders list to the chair by noon on Thursday, June 3, 2021. Does that sound about right, Mr. Nielsen?

Mr. Nielsen: Mr. Chair, it's amazing. You can even pick out the times that I would have suggested as well.

The Chair: You're welcome.

All right. This is open for further conversation. Go ahead, Member Glasgo.

Ms Glasgo: We're in the discussion portion, Mr. Chair, I'm assuming?

The Chair: Yeah.

Ms Glasgo: Okay. I wanted to again thank the member for his thorough presentation. Because of that thorough presentation, I think he demonstrated quite clearly just how many Albertans have reached out to him, to members of the opposition as well as government, around the issue of parks, Mr. Chair. I do say, you know, that I've been impressed by the tenacity with which Albertans defend their parks and love their parks. I think that we all know that Alberta's parks aren't for sale. I mean, the government sure knows that. I think Mr. Schmidt has even admitted that himself, that Albertans' parks aren't for sale.

You know, I have to say that because of the wide range of consultation that MLA Schmidt has said he's done on this bill – and I believe him; I will take him at his word on that – I actually don't think we need to invite stakeholders. I think that Albertans have voiced their opinions pretty loud and clearly on this. I would like to see this expedited to the Chamber as soon as possible, so I would appreciate that we actually vote against this motion and make sure that MLA Schmidt gets his bill to the Chamber as quickly as possible.

The Chair: Okay, but we still have to deal with the motion before us at this time. I will open up the floor to any other questions, comments, concerns. Okay. All right.

I'll read this one more time. Member Nielsen will move that the Standing Committee on Private Bills and Private Members' Public Bills invite up to six stakeholders, three proposed by the government caucus and three proposed by the Official Opposition caucus, to make presentations regarding Bill 218, Provincial Parks (Protecting Park Boundaries) Amendment Act, 2021, at an upcoming meeting and provide a stakeholders list to the chair by noon on Thursday, June 3, 2021.

All those in favour, say aye. Okay. On videoconference? Thank you. All opposed, say no. Okay. On videoconference? Thank you.

That motion has been defeated.

Mr. Nielsen: A recorded vote.

The Chair: A recorded vote? Yeah. We'll do a recorded vote. I will ask, of course, the folks within the room, for the yeas and the nays, to raise their hand, and then, when we get to the videoconference component – sorry, folks. What I've been told: I'm not permitted to call you by name, so you're just going to have to interject yourself and at that point identify who you are, and we'll let the clerk know whether you're voting yes or no.

We'll start with the folks within the room. All those in favour of this motion, if you can just raise your hand. Thank you. I see Mr. Nielsen. Thank you very much. I see Member Irwin. Thank you very much. Okay.

Now we will go to the videoconference. For those that are in favour, if you can just identify yourself and let me know your vote.

Ms Sigurdson: Lori Sigurdson. Yes.

Mr. Dang: Thomas Dang. Yes.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you.

We'll go back to the room. Is there anyone opposed to the motion? If you could just raise your hand, please. I see Mr. Schow, Member Glasgo, and Member Rutherford.

Now we will go to the videoconference. Is there anyone opposed?

Mr. Getson: MLA Shane Getson. Opposed.

Mr. Sigurdson: R.J. Sigurdson, MLA, Highwood. Opposed.

Mr. Amery: MLA Amery. Opposed.

The Chair: Thank you.

I'll let the clerk tally up the votes.

Mr. Huffman: Thank you, Mr. Chair. For the motion, we have four; against, six.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you. Again, that motion has been defeated.

I guess that we will now move on. We're going to move on to the deliberations, whether to recommend or not recommend that this proceed. Now, I did hear a comment from the government members' side that they might indicate that they might want to have this proceed into the House expeditiously. Mr. Nielsen, to offer your comments.

Mr. Nielsen: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yeah. Well, I'm glad that there is such faith by members opposite in the consultation that took place and how Albertans feel about their parks. I see absolutely no reason why the committee should vote any other way than to have this bill proceed to the House for debate, and I'm happy to make that motion.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Nielsen, for a possible draft motion.

We'll have the clerk get that up there, but I'll read it. Mr. Nielsen would like to move that the Standing Committee on Private Bills and Private Members' Public Bills recommend that Bill 218, Provincial Parks (Protecting Park Boundaries) Amendment Act, 2021, proceed. We'll get that up there.

I will open up the floor to any other questions. Mr. Rutherford, go ahead.

Mr. Rutherford: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I appreciate MLA Schmidt for his presentation and the bill here today and for all the comments, which I think really encompassed everybody's feelings around parks, how much we appreciate them, how many Albertans have reached out and expressed their desire to maintain our parks and to make sure that they're protected for future generations. I would support the motion, personally, that we should have this go to the Legislature.

The Chair: All right. Thank you very much.

Again, I'll open up the floor one more time, and then I'll put the question to the committee.

Hearing and seeing none, okay. Once again, Mr. Nielsen would move that

the Standing Committee on Private Bills and Private Members' Public Bills recommend that Bill 218, Provincial Parks (Protecting Park Boundaries) Amendment Act, 2021, proceed.

All those in favour, say aye. Okay. On the videoconference? Okay. Any opposed, say no. On videoconference? Hearing and seeing none, okay.

That motion has been passed unanimously.

Fantastic.

All right. Hon. members, the committee has concluded its deliberations on Bill 218 and should now consider directing research services to prepare a draft report, including the committee's recommendations. Would a member move a motion to direct research services to prepare the committee's draft report? Member Rutherford. Thank you. Member Rutherford will move

that

the Standing Committee on Private Bills and Private Members' Public Bills (a) direct research services to prepare a draft report on the committee's review of Bill 218, Provincial Parks (Protecting Park Boundaries) Amendment Act, 2021, which includes the committee's recommendations, and (b) authorize the chair to approve the committee's final report to the Assembly on or before noon on Friday, June 4, 2021.

Any questions?

Hearing and seeing none, I'll put the question, then, to the committee. All those in favour, say aye. Thank you. On videoconference? Okay. Any opposed? On videoconference?

Hearing and seeing none,

that motion has been carried.

Other business. Are there any other issues for discussion at today's meeting?

Hearing and seeing none, the date of the next meeting will be at the call of the chair.

Would a member like to move to adjourn?

Mr. Nielsen: So moved.

The Chair: Mr. Nielsen. Thank you.

All those in favour of adjourning, say aye. On videoconference? Any opposed? And on videoconference? Hearing and seeing none, that motion has been carried. Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen. Have yourselves a good night.

[The committee adjourned at 6:55 p.m.]

