

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY



Speaker: Hon. Colin LaVie

Published by Order of the Legislature

Standing Committee on Climate Change

DATE OF HEARING: 29 AUGUST 2019

MEETING STATUS: PUBLIC

LOCATION: LEGISLATIVE CHAMBER, HON. GEORGE COLES BUILDING, CHARLOTTETOWN

SUBJECT: ELECTION OF CHAIR AND WORK PLAN

COMMITTEE:

Lynne Lund, MLA Summerside-Wilmot (Chair)
Stephen Howard, MLA Summerside-South Drive
Heath MacDonald, MLA Cornwall-Meadowbank
Sidney MacEwen, MLA Morell-Mermaid
Robert Mitchell, Leader of the Third Party
Hon. Bradley Trivers, Minister of Education and Lifelong Learning and Environment, Water and
Climate Change

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

none

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

none

GUESTS:

none

STAFF:

Ryan Reddin, Clerk Assistant (Research and Committees)

Edited by Hansard

The Committee met at 1:30 p.m.

Clerk Assistant: Good afternoon, everyone; I'll call this meeting of the Special Committee on Climate Change to order.

As the committee has not yet elected a Chair, I'm opening the meeting and I'll ask for nominations for a member to serve as Chair.

Sidney MacEwen.

Mr. MacEwen: I'll move Lynne Lund.

Clerk Assistant: All right, Lynne Lund is nominated.

Any other nominations?

Ms. Lund: (Indistinct)

Clerk Assistant: Lynne Lund nominates Heath MacDonald.

Any other nominations?

All those in favour of Lynne Lund becoming the Chair of the committee please say 'aye.'

Some Hon. Members: Aye!

Clerk Assistant: I'm hearing three members.

All opposed say nay?

Some Hon. Members: Nay.

Clerk Assistant: Hearing two members.

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct)

Clerk Assistant: And no vote?

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct)

Clerk Assistant: Aye!

Ms. Lund: (Indistinct) but I would prefer to be –

Mr. Mitchell: You still have that option.

Clerk Assistant: All right, so I have four members in favour of Lynne Lund taking the Chair. So, seeing as that's a majority, we

don't need to proceed any further so I'll ask Ms. Lund to take the Chair.

Chair (Lund): So the first order of business will be adopting the agenda.

Do I have a mover of the agenda as proposed?

Mr. Howard: (Indistinct)

Chair: Moved by Steve Howard.

All in favour?

Some Hon. Members: Aye!

Chair: Fantastic. So the next order of business will be consideration of the committee's work plan. I have a copy of a work plan submitted by Brad Trivers.

Does anyone have comments or additions? Is there a suggestion that we'd like to discuss?

Mr. Trivers: Chair, I'd like to speak to it.

Chair: Brad.

Mr. Trivers: Working with the department responsible for climate change, of which I'm the minister, we talk about things and we talk about the purpose of the committee and sort of where we'd like to see things go.

So put together this letter and really if you read it, the theme is: let's get the facts out there about climate change science and impacts.

The first item here is to have an expert in the area, Dr. Adam Fenech, actually deliver climate change 101 and 102 to committee members to make sure we all start from the same base and we agree where we're starting from.

Then when you get into the other recommendations, a lot of it is of the greenhouse gas inventory again. It's making sure that we understand where we're starting from and same with carbon pricing and then with the climate change action in Prince Edward Island. Just see what the department already is doing with the Climate Change Action Plan and make sure we all

understand that and then we can discuss things starting from the same base.

When it comes to climate change, I think understanding the facts and being educated on what it is and what it means is very important. I know for example with the IPCC report, that was something that – Chair, you brought that to the attention of the Legislature and the public in general and we changed the target based on that. That's the sort of base line we need to get to; we need to all be working from the same spot.

I guess that'd be the theme of these recommendations without going into the details so much and that's why recommending them or putting them forward as recommendations.

Chair: Thank you, Brad.

Robert.

Mr. Mitchell: Thank you, Chair.

Obviously, I'd like to thank the minister for bringing forward these recommendations that I think are very well put together. Obviously yeah, I see a lot of work from the secretariat and in particular, Todd and Erin who are a big part of what we see here and it's a very logical order.

When I glanced at it first, obviously I was thinking carbon pricing maybe is on everybody's mind, maybe it should be up first, but I do believe there has to be logical stages and for those that aren't fully adverse or aware of all the aspects of it. I do agree, basic climate change, science and impacts need to come first so that the discussion becomes with flow and makes sense.

I do believe we probably have a couple of more recommendations; I'll let Mr. MacDonald present a couple of those; but I do like these, exactly the way they are in here and I think it would be a great place to begin the discussion on it and I look forward to where we get to with it.

Chair: Stephen Howard.

Mr. Howard: So, basic climate change science and impacts. Myself, I don't see a whole lot of – how long would we be tied up learning the basics of greenhouse gas

emissions and climate change science and all that?

Chair: Brad, would you like to answer that?

Mr. Trivers: Yes. This is where it's kind of good because we have this climate sense, climate change training program that's been developed jointly by the Department of Environment, Water and Climate Change with UPEI and it's presented as two half day courses normally. Dr. Adam Fenech, I believe, is the one who presents the courses, normally; but I think we could probably fit it into two meetings of the committee, that's what I'm told. We wouldn't have to go the full half day but say two; two-hour meetings should be enough to cover it.

Chair: Stephen

Mr. Howard: So do we feel like this committee is the best place for learning the basics about climate change and the like? Or, part of this process is going to be public consultation, as I understand as well. I'm wondering if that might be a better place for Mr. Fenech to put his efforts, is going out there to the public at those kind of sessions.

Chair: Brad.

Mr. Trivers: Well no, that's a good point.

One thing about our standing committee meetings is they are public; they are streamed live on Facebook, the transcript is recorded and in fact, this probably is a good way to educate the public as well. It's sort of a way that the public could actually take a climate change 101 and 102 along with us if they so choose.

I think it would be useful to have that in the public eye, as long as we all – everyone on the committee – actually take climate change 101 and 102 and we're starting from that same base; if we did that outside of committee meetings, I would be willing to entertain that. I think it might be good, though, to have it actually as part of our committee meetings because of the public nature of the meetings.

I don't know if I'm going to get slapped down by UPEI on that if they're trying to get people to pay tuition to go take these courses, but yeah.

Mr. Howard: Well, public consultation, I guess, it boils down to what form that's going to take. We're going to have to do more than just have these videos available to people as our public consultation through this; so, having them there able to interact at the same time as we do with Mr. Fenech would probably be good for this whole process to get the people on board as well.

Chair: Brad.

Mr. Trivers: Yes, and I see, I understand your question now. And definitely as opposed to – well, public consultation is one way to put it. I think traditionally in standing committees you have witnesses in, the experts and you're able to represent the public as MLA's asking questions.

Although, I know that some standing committees in the past – and maybe the Clerk can speak to this – have gone out and specifically engaged the public by even travelling across different spots on the Island.

But, that said, these recommendations are to set the base for the committee and possibly the public as well, great, if they want to choose to partake, so we're all starting off from the same point.

I would think, Chair, for example, you would be on board with that, that way you can't say: So have you read the IPCC report? I was like: Well, actually I haven't read that yet.

Now we're all starting from the same base and we can begin to have real debate on the issues.

Chair: Since you brought that up Brad, I appreciate that. I will say that I think the problem of climate change is less of a science problem and more of a political one. I think that the information on climate change is pretty conclusive and I don't know if we need to understand the inner workings of climate change to create effective policies around it, but I do think education is an important point, there's no question.

Anybody else want to – Heath.

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you, Chair.

First of all, to the minister and his department, I think it was good. I think it's a great starting point for us.

One of our issues was public consultation. Obviously, Stephen brought it to your attention. I think that's important. I think we can do it pretty efficiently with three or four meetings across the province and allow people to have questions and answers.

The other thing I think that – I know we have a sequence of topics here in order and I don't necessarily think that we should have to believe in concrete solutions to each one of these before we move on to the next one. I think these are relevant, 1 through 5, that we should be able to hit on every topic and I think every topic will be touched upon through presentations and so on and so forth.

I think it's a really good start and kudos to the minister for putting it together; but I think the only thing that we really saw that was missing was the public consultation, so I think that's something that we should all focus on too, as well.

Thank you.

Chair: Thank you for that.

It just makes me think of the point that Stephen brought up about engaging with Brad's idea and having these public consultations include Adam Fenech. So, part of that discussion with educating the public on climate change and then also taking questions at the same time. Is that something we would be comfortable with as a committee?

Brad, would you be comfortable with that item being part of a public consultation piece instead of an MLA education piece – or do we –

Mr. Trivers: Yes, I think that's a fantastic idea.

We still do the climate change 101 and 102, but we invite the public to sit in with us for that education and enable them to ask questions. I think that's a great idea, yeah.

If we do need to do it – now the suggestion was, it would take two sessions to do this so that would mean two locations across the

province; I think that would be fine too, if we didn't want to do it right here in this Chamber.

Chair: I think the Clerk would like to speak to that.

Clerk Assistant: Just so the committee is aware, when the committee has a meeting and has witnesses before it as the minister mentioned, the committee has the right to ask questions of the witness, but members of the public or anyone in the gallery can't ask questions during the meeting.

I would suggest you might want to set something up like, where the committee has its chance to meet with Adam Fenech, with the public present; and then afterwards, perhaps, once the committee meeting concludes, the public could have opportunity to ask Mr. Fenech questions, outside of the proceeding – if you follow what I mean?

Chair: If I understood Robert and Heath correctly, I think the idea was to have public engagement events across the province, perhaps two or four.

Mr. MacDonald: Typically, yeah, I think that would be – and have Adam Fenech if he can do it and answer questions to get a real feel. I mean, some of these topics could be part of the agenda for Adam too, and we'll get the result as well; but I'm all for taking the two-and-a-half-hour course, or whatever it is, I think that's important for us as well.

Chair: Robert.

Mr. Mitchell: If I might, I think Stephen might have made that reference – if we're really sincere about engaging Islanders on it, I think we have to educate at the same time and there's no better educator on this topic than Adam Fenech.

I know it's a two-part thing you're going to do, but if you made it part-one-part-two, part one-part-two across the Island, at least people will get engaged and learn a bit about it.

Obviously, it's been a topic for a number of years ago when I had the file, but not everybody knows all aspects of it.

I think the real purpose of this committee is to ensure that we are doing the right work with it and I think making Islanders feel involved in it is the right work.

Chair: Thank you.

Stephen.

Mr. Howard: I have a fear of – I agree with everything that we're talking about here – I have a fear of getting bogged down before we really get going, because we have a real sense of urgency around this matter. There is a very short timeframe to make the kind of changes we have to make, and every year we delay, makes those changes harder to make.

That's my big fear with starting with: let's agree on climate change science in here as far as the work we're doing here.

So, I guess my concerns are around the frequency of our meetings and how long it's going to be before we get to making the plan that we're supposed to be making here.

Chair: Brad.

Mr. Trivers: Yes so, first of all, assuming Dr. Fenech is on board with this, perhaps –

Mr. Mitchell: (Indistinct) could (Indistinct) or something like that with a basic knowledge would be helpful.

Mr. Trivers: I think the key here is we actually have a formal climate sense training program that is literally climate change 101 and 102; and again, we don't necessarily have to do that in a standing committee meeting and maybe we don't, but we do need to engage the public. I think the question is: At what point do we do that?

I don't know; maybe the Clerk can make some recommendations about how we could get both those parts done, both get the basic education of the standing committee done, as well as engage the public.

I don't know, Ryan, if that's something you'd like to think about, or if you have any ideas right now.

Clerk Assistant: I might think further on it, but committees have gone on the road in the

past to different locations and perhaps they would have a witness with a presentation at the location, but then they might also have a time period for members of the public in attendance to come forward and say their piece as well. That's one approach that's been used before.

But usually it's not a case of people from the public coming and asking questions of the witness. It's more making their statement to the committee, and then the committee has the opportunity to ask them.

It's really just a matter of what is part of the formal proceedings of the meeting and what is an opportunity for question-and-answer with witnesses, or Mr. Fenech, or whoever, afterward.

Public engagement; often times committees also will put out an ad in Island newspapers to seek input from the public if that's something they're looking for on a given issue and so on.

There's various different ways, I guess, that the committees have done it in the past. But however the committee wants to move forward on this (Indistinct) work and direct me to carry it out.

An Hon. Member: Chair.

Chair: Robert is up next.

An Hon. Member: Can you add me to the list there.

Mr. Mitchell: Thanks, Chair.

I guess to Stephen's question as far as timing and urgency, I'm not exactly sure what urgent pieces that you speak of that we are so time-restrained on, as we did set a new target, and we know the date of that, and that's down the road a piece.

We are currently working with the federal government – or had been for a number of months now – on other measures of carbon offsets. I think it's really important that we do it with the support of Islanders, with their thoughts in mind.

So, I think we got to get out of the gate right. This is a brand new committee just struck, that have a very formidable task

before us, and we don't want to make any mistakes. We want to hear people, we want to have a good understanding of it, and we want Islanders to have, more importantly, a great understanding of what we're trying to do here.

So the urgent pieces, I'm not exactly sure what you're driving at there, Stephen, but I think we have time. We have time to educate the public. We have time to have the meetings. We might work on the structure of them and, obviously it's up to Dr. Fenech if he can meet what we need to do.

I think it's a proper approach of getting it done right, as we all – government, we always talk about getting things done right. So I don't mean to criticize your urgent pieces, but we have things in play now, but there are some Islanders that have questions on that, and we meet them every day, so I think that's one of our most urgent pieces, is to have them informed and educated.

Chair: Stephen, did you want to respond to that because it was directed to you?

Mr. Howard: Sure. The urgency I'm talking about is the longer we wait, the harder the goal is to achieve, so it could negate some of the work and plans that we would be able to do.

Mr. Mitchell: But if we have everybody heading in the right direction together, it makes the whole path easier. So, going down the road with the crowd, as opposed to working against the crowd, that's a much faster approach, from my perspective and anything that (Indistinct) –

That's all, that's my comment, that's all.

Chair: Brad.

Mr. Trivers: I mean, I'm looking at my recommendations here, and maybe what we could do is, is as we lay that foundation of knowledge for the committee, and ideally for the public, maybe at the end of each meeting we actually have a public portion as we move through items 1, 2, 3 and 4. So we just do a continuous public consultation. I think maybe that's what MLA MacDonald was talking about.

So we do our two-hour climate change 101, and then we have an hour of public consultation. We do our two-hour climate change 102, we have an hour of consultation.

We have Environment Climate Change Canada, and the Climate Change Secretariat talk to us about the greenhouse gas inventory, and we have an hour of public consultation. You know what I mean? Then we're making progress, and we're learning at the same time, and the public is able to comment on, in fact, the content of that standing committee meeting if they want.

Chair: I suppose I will ask the Clerk to confirm whether or not that's something that would be possible for us to be engaging with the public during our standing committee meetings.

But I was of the impression that when we have our committee meetings, they will take place in the Legislature, and there's no format that would allow for engagement with the public during that time.

Clerk, would you speak to that?

Clerk Assistant: I should clarify: you mean if you want to schedule a meeting, where, like you said, you have a specific witness for two hours, and then you reserve an hour, you could have other witnesses who are the general public. The easiest way would be if they could identify themselves as wishing to speak to the committee in advance of the meeting, so I can put them on an agenda.

But like I said, sometimes committees on the road, particularly, have reserved the time at the end for just anyone who happens to be there to come forward, give their name, say their piece. They're usually restricted in time.

And again, the committee asks them questions. They don't ask questions of the other witnesses who came before them.

Chair: Is that what you had in mind, Brad?

Mr. Trivers: That's what I was thinking of, yes.

Chair: Does anyone else want to comment on that?

Heath?

Mr. MacDonald: Yeah, I think that's exactly – I think that's great. I don't think four hours, six hours is going to hold up our advancement of this committee. I think it's all part and parcel of resolving some of the issues around climate change and some of the myths and some of anything that's out there.

And I think the only way we're going to do that is if we get involvement from the general public. If we get involvement from the general public, our agenda may even change on part of this committee.

So I think it's really important to involve the general public, and the outline that the minister stated, I think, is superb.

Chair: If I can make one comment on that.

I'm hearing a lot of discussion around the importance of engaging the public. I appreciated your comments, Robert, on how much further we will get with this if we bring people along with us.

Do we think it's an important agenda item to talk about different ways that we can effectively mobilize the community to be part of this? Conversations about how we can engage church groups and schools, how we can engage municipalities, and various parts of it?

I know in my research, any transition that has been successful had a lot of buy-in from the community first. Do we think that's an important agenda item?

Heath?

Mr. MacDonald: I think through that consultation you're going to find out that there's an education component, that maybe it's from K-12, maybe there are church groups, maybe it's home and school.

There are all kinds of avenues, I think, that will result from the discussions we have with the general public.

Chair: Thank you.

Anyone else?

Robert.

Mr. Mitchell: (Indistinct) other community entities to come forward: oh, I didn't realize till something (Indistinct)

I think allowing the opportunity, it's kind of like: if you build it they will come, scenario. But I think a lot of community groups, associations, members of the public, will definitely show up for this.

Chair: And in addition to getting them to show up, inspiring them to be part of it is an important part of it. So do we think a discussion on what that could look like would be important for our committee?

Brad?

Mr. Trivers: I think I understand what you're getting at there. We need to make recommendations to the Legislative Assembly and the general public on how we can educate people about climate change.

I know that's something in my role as Minister of Education and Lifelong Learning people have approached me on, and, in particular, students in K-12 who are very passionate about the climate change subject, as I said.

For example, one thing that seems very feasible is have an environmental fair or take the science fair and heritage fairs and make them have an environmental theme.

So if we had a list of ideas and completely outside potentially of our meeting, but recommendations we could make to other departments or to the department of education, is that where you're getting at?

Chair: Exactly where I'm going with this, yes.

Mr. Trivers: Okay. I think that would be another action item to add to our work plan, for sure.

Chair: Does anyone else have any comments?

Robert.

Mr. Mitchell: Being as, based on your suggestion and ways of, I guess, garnering

that support to come and talk, would there be any value to putting out, for lack of a better term, kind of an op-ed letter, signed by all of us through the Legislative Assembly?

Could we share through our own three parties, members of the community, to say we're going to be at Souris or we're going to be at Rollo Bay or we're going to be at Alberton on this night? We really encourage all Islanders to come out and partake in this. One of the newspapers may pick it up as well, or something like that, which would really get a broad reach, maybe broader than most to say: look we're doing this together, and this is a real issue, it's Prince Edward Island and Prince Edward Islanders, and we hope you come and be part of it.

That's just something – I don't think it's ever been done before as a way of engaging Islanders to be part of something.

Chair: I think that's a great idea.

Stephen.

Mr. Howard: (Indistinct) these meetings on the road and letting people know ahead of time –

Mr. Mitchell: Yes, basically put out a letter, I guess, or a document that says: Hey, we're coming to this community next week and we certainly – these are what the topics we're doing. We can even kind of break that down a little bit.

But the thing about it is, we all sign it and say: we really want you to be part of this. We're really encouraging you to be in the chairs and to help us to guide what it's going to look like for Prince Edward Island.

I think that would be revolutionary; never done before, as far as I know, and put out by the Legislative Assembly, shared by all of us, shared by our parties, and just get as broad a reach as we can to ensure that people are there.

Chair: Brad.

Mr. Trivers: Yes, thanks. You know, I think there's a lot of merit to that idea.

When I was chair of Public Accounts, we had the national conference here on PEI a couple of years ago – our Clerk, Ryan Reddin did a great job of organizing that one, by the way – but one of the things they talked about was communication plans for Public Accounts.

And they did lots of different things. I mean, what you're talking about is fantastic, getting everybody to sign a letter, saying we're engaging the public together, but they had, in some cases, their own website specific, they had press releases that they released as part of their general processes. They had Facebook pages, social media, all of the above.

It's something to consider. I don't know how far we want to go down that path, but to start off with, to engage the public with a press release. –

Mr. Mitchell: (Indistinct)

Mr. Trivers: – (Indistinct) start off (Indistinct) generate a press release signed by all of us, I think would be a great start.

Yeah, that would be excellent.

Chair: Thank you.

Stephen.

Mr. Howard: Yeah, this sounds great, especially in combination with allowing the public to come in themselves and be witnesses, as we're on the road if anyone in any particular area wants to come in. I think that's probably the most effective use of both of our time and also engaging the public. So, that sounds good.

Chair: I appreciate that. I know in my research on leading transitions in other places, one of the biggest parts of it is mobilizing the community. It's getting that buy-in. It's normalizing conversations on climate change, and finding ways to excite people about getting involved.

So I really like, for example, the wellness grants that exist, having something that's similar that promotes community engagement on climate issues and brings awareness to the issue; it will not solve the

issue, but it creates the buy-in that you need for the other policies.

I love where this discussion's going. I think it's very positive.

Anyone else have agenda items that we need to add to our list?

Sidney.

Mr. MacEwen: Just to add on that, I know I get, Steve, the sense of do we need to go through with some of the – I wouldn't say basic training – but I'll echo a lot of the comments.

I was literally just on a ball field coaching, and I had to leave early, and I said I'm going to the climate change, special committee on climate change that we went through. And there was three people said: Why do you have a special committee for that? It's not of mean spirit or (Indistinct), it's just that I think we still do have to keep people – realize that right now in PEI we have an ambitious plan to get to 1.4, and as a committee we're trying to find ways to get to 1.2.

I think that's part of the process of what you guys talk about; it's a lot easier to move this forward when we have the majority on board. So I think that first part is key.

My second point is that, though, the former government did do a lot of consultation on the energy strategy and the climate change plan, and we do have a plan, the department to get to that 1.4 number. As a committee what we're trying to do is to: Okay, how do we do that, increase that, how do we do it faster, smarter kind of thing, too.

So I think when we do go to these public consultations, it's not reinventing the wheel or anything. We go there with the idea and presenting to the public that we have a plan now, but we're trying to get there. We're trying to get there quicker and more efficiently, I guess, is my question.

But you know, we're not going there looking for ideas just – let's all get in electric cars. We have a plan now, how do we make that plan even better, I guess, is what that mindset.

I'll just add those two points.

Chair: Thank you for that and it makes me add another potential discussion point to our topic.

Do we want to call forward witnesses who have led transitions in other places so that we can understand what that would look like?

I understand that we would be able to make use of some technology where we could speak to people who led transitions in other Island nations that are not dissimilar from ours. What if we ask them questions on which policies were most effective?

What if we brought in people who have written their master's thesis on exactly what energy transition needs to look like to be successful?

Those are some of the types of items I would like to add to our agenda, instead of just rehashing what we currently have. Let's look at what transitions genuinely look like.

Brad.

Mr. Trivers: I would be in favour of that, for sure.

Again, I'm just saying, let's lay the foundation first; then we'll get to those pieces.

I think other things to add in there, is when we're talking about quantifying the costs and the benefits. As the member from Morell said, let's not lose sight of the actual goal of this committee is bringing in people from the agricultural community, people from the aquaculture community, to talk about how climate change is impacting them today, and what help they need – what kind of costs are incurred with that, and what it means to mitigate climate change to help out their industries.

That's something; again, once we lay the foundation a little further down the road –

Chair, with your indulgence, I want to recognize one of my constituents in the gallery here. So Stephanie Arnold, here, is in fact a climate change scientist. We're very lucky to have her living up in North Rustico

at the rotating house if you're ever by there – so a little plug for the rotating house as well. I think they're open for business; you can book a room if you want.

Anyhow, Stephanie, great to see you here, and I know you're doing your PhD in how climate change impacts, I believe potato production, specifically. So, who knows, you may even be a presenter at some point in the future on this committee.

Thank you, Chair.

Chair: Thank you.

Anyone else?

Yes, Robert.

Mr. Mitchell: – (Indistinct) wondering if on this particular topic, I know often on these standing committees we kind of develop our work plan early on and stick to it all the way through. Is it possible to keep our work plan open-ended so as things present – we got oh, we should add that to part of the work plan, whether we get to it in the next meeting or five meetings or whatever.

I would like to see it left open-ended so that, if three meetings' time we say: Oh, should have did that, we have that opportunity. I don't know that if they're always closed, Ryan, but – or we can add things, agenda items at any time? I'd like to see that on this particular one, because I think there will be potential items that will be new and innovative, just like the one you brought up, that we don't want to dismiss because, oh, we're full of our work plan items.

Chair: I appreciate that comment.

Is the rest of the committee comfortable with that idea?

Fantastic, thank you.

Anyone else have items they would like to see brought forward in the short term?

Stephen.

Mr. Howard: Thanks, Chair.

Sustainable transportation discussion would be a big part of this, with transportation

being a big part of what our greenhouse gas emissions are. I think it's going to be an important part for this education of Islanders and get the buy-in from them as well to have some sort of sustainable plan that involves activating all those Islanders who probably want to make the changes anyway, but are just waiting for the proper policy, which is what we're here to do. I think sustainable transportation has to be a big part of what we talk about.

Chair: Agreed.

Please, Brad.

Mr. Trivers: Thank you for bringing that up.

In fact, when we have the climate change secretariat in, they will talk about the sustainable transportation action plan that's underway, and it'll be a great chance to ask what the plan is and have some input, bring up things and any gaps that you feel might be missing, any of those things.

So that's – again, this really points to why I think it's so important that we lay this foundation, right? Because I think, frankly, we need to do a better job of marketing all of the great work that our department's doing and the plan that's actually in place right now. It'll go a long way to having them in to talk about some of the things that are already happening. Then we can identify some of the gaps.

Chair: Any other comments on that?

Do we have additional agenda items that need to be done?

Stephen.

Mr. Howard: Yeah, so right now, we're setting the – we're going to leave it open-ended?

An Hon. Member: Yeah.

Mr. Howard: We've left it at that?

Chair: We can add more to it as necessary, but I'm just wondering if anyone else has ideas they would like to get on the table so that we can be prioritizing what needs to be done first.

Mr. Howard: Sure, yeah.

So carbon abatement costs is something we should be looking at, and someone from the eco-fiscal commission or Jim Sentance, someone with a firm grasp on the eco-economics kind of thing would be great to have in here.

Chair: I do believe that was included, carbon abatement was – cost of recommendations, yes. So would we be comfortable about speaking with the eco-fiscal commission?

An Hon. Member: Sure, yeah. (Indistinct)

Chair: Fantastic. Great.

And if there's nothing else to add to the committee's work plan – just double checking.

Oh. Please, Clerk.

Clerk Assistant: I'd just like to clarify; just to make sure I'm properly understanding what the committee's deciding it wants to do.

Has the committee decided that it should begin following through on the recommendations proposed in the letter from Minister Trivers, starting with, I guess, climate change 101 and 102 with Dr. Fenech, including a public consultation at the end of each meeting?

And then various things have been discussed here as possible further things, like sustainable transportation and carbon abatement costs, keeping all those subjects on the committee's work plan for future, closer examination, and adding things to it as we go?

I might also add to the communication part about writing a letter, news releases, that's kind of another topic. Perhaps the committee would want to – I don't know how to approach that – would you want me to draft kind of a communications plan for you to send out? Or do you have things to propose?

Mr. Mitchell: I think I'd be comfortable with that (Indistinct)

Chair: Please.

Mr. Mitchell: I'd be comfortable with that, Ryan. I think if we reference basically these pieces – now, all of these pieces may be discussed at those, I'll say, open-ended public meetings, or they may not, which they may require more addressing right here in this type of Assembly arrangement; but if you indicate this is what we're going to discuss along with some of the things that Stephen brought forward and the presentations by other islands and those that – just to make it quite clear to people what our goals are overall so that they can bring their thoughts on that. If you draft it and we read it and like it and sign it, then I'm quite comfortable with that.

Chair: Any other comments on that? No?

Further questions, Clerk?

Clerk Assistant: No. I think I'm –

Chair: Good?

Clerk Assistant: – on solid footing.

Chair: Fantastic.

Mr. MacEwen: Madam Chair.

Chair: Please, Sidney.

Mr. MacEwen: So I'm torn between doing – and probably we can combine two and three into one meeting, I'm not sure, Minister, if you're thinking of that – I'm torn between doing these, this initial groundwork in here and then going on the road for public consultation versus – like, is that what we're planning? Like, say, four meetings to cover these five, and then still going out for public, like, for input to come up with ideas, too? Or how do you see that going?

Mr. Mitchell: I see (Indistinct) –

Chair: Robert.

Mr. Mitchell: – (Indistinct) initially, right out of the gate. we do our 101, 102. We incorporate all of this as part of that discussion as well; but if there's something that doesn't get addressed in there, then we need to have it here. I'm assuming that we will get it all on the road so there are no duplications or repetition, but it's hard to

know that until you get it completed; but I'd prefer to go out and do it all out there in the community if we can.

Chair: So to clarify, Robert, are you imagining that we would get Adam Fenech, if he's willing, to give a short presentation on climate 101 in a couple of communities, engage with the public, let them participate, and then ask questions at the end of it? Is that the idea, and then possibly the same thing with climate 102? Yeah?

Mr. Mitchell: (Indistinct) Adam's a busy guy, so that would be my choice.

Chair: Thank you.

Any other comments on that? Sidney, does that answer your –

Mr. MacEwen: So would we do that – so then, for the next one, would we potentially have another public meeting, combine two and three together, and do the same thing? An hour with us, an hour for public or something like that and then do the same thing for four?

And then do we – I guess we could then reassess to see what we need. Like, I would envision a meeting where we've got really awesome people coming to us and saying: Here's a way to do it, if you just look at the math, like let's do with this. And then we engage with them and say: Well, we already heard from the department this, why are you saying that?

That's where I want to have that interaction. It's think it's important to – you know, once we have more detail on our climate action plan now, we'd be able to say: Are you sure we can do that, because the department is telling us this? Or: That's an awesome idea, yeah; let's make that a part of our recommendation to the department.

So do public meetings on this; reassess, then we'll know what we need to call for next, so to speak?

Mr. Mitchell: (Indistinct)

Chair: And do we have an idea of timelines that we would like to achieve these goals in?

Mr. Mitchell: (Indistinct) crossing my mind, so I –

Chair: Robert?

Mr. Mitchell: – I’m going to ask you, Chair, through the minister: If Adam is doing a – and there may be a benefit, maybe you won’t see benefit to have the department person in the room that in case the question is more specific-related that Adam can’t answer as to what the government’s doing, if you could have somebody in the room that could stand up and take that question, that would be helpful so that we don’t have to get that information back. Is that possible?

Chair: Brad?

Mr. Trivers: I think that’s very possible. I think I understand where the member from Morell is coming from here as well.

We could be talking about climate change 101 and 102, and then someone could ask a very pointed question about the Climate Change Action Plan that we currently have, and we need a department staff there, because I mean we don’t all necessarily understand exactly what that Climate Change Action Plan is.

So I think what the member is saying: Let’s get that base done, maybe just so that once we get to the public consultations then we can speak more intelligently in those conversations. If we don’t have the base done – I mean, I’m willing to do it both ways.

I think I understand where the member’s coming from, but if we do decide it that way, to answer your question, I can definitely have someone from the department there. I think, you know, we can make that happen. Yes.

Chair: And what do we think is a reasonable timeline for our first public engagement meeting?

Suggestions from the Clerk on that?

Mr. Howard: (Indistinct).

Chair: Absolutely true.

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct).

Mr. Mitchell: I suppose in essence the schedules (Indistinct) – say, for instance, we establish four is what we want, four across, so if we did two in the evening, two in the afternoon, just to keep it if that works for Adam, you know what I mean? We want to be flexible on getting these done. They don’t all have to be in the daytime, from my perspective, anyways.

Chair: Any other comments on that?

So if that is our first order of business, the first thing that we intend to do is set up public consultation meetings and we don’t know exactly when our first meeting would take place, do we want to meet to discuss additional topics while those are being set up, or are we proposing that we wait?

Stephen?

Mr. Howard: Yes, we should carry on with as much as we can get done in here while we’re waiting to figure out what we’re doing out there.

Chair: Other comments on that?

Clerk Assistant: Can I clarify?

Chair: Please.

Clerk Assistant: So, for example, like if we’re waiting to set up meetings with Adam Fenech and have the public come, you mean, move on to number two and these recommendations and have that meeting?

Mr. Mitchell: (Indistinct) about if that’s the case, that we can’t get (Indistinct).

Mr. Trivers: Chair?

Chair: Please, Brad.

Mr. Trivers: I think I would be on board with that, although the preferred order would be to do one, two, three, especially number one with that base. Hopefully we can get that done as soon as possible; but if there’s a delay and we end up doing number three first and then number two, I think I would be okay with that.

I don't know, anyone one have any other comments?

Chair: Stephen.

Mr. Howard: Well, just getting the basic climate change science is not going to change what our greenhouse gas inventory is, just for instance. So it's not going to really – like, it's the logical order, I agree, but it's not going to change anything for the meeting number two, for instance. That might change some other things, but that one in particular is a fairly rigid.

Chair: Brad.

Mr. Trivers: So I would agree, though, we need to make progress on this file. We need to keep going forward, and we don't want to end up where we're waiting for a month to have our next meeting because we can't get the witness lined up. I've been on standing committees before when that's happened, and it's not a good feeling when you want to make progress.

And Chair, on another note, if you don't mind, I just wanted to point out that recommendation number five or item number five in my letter is a little bit different than the others and it's really the first four that we're talking about. I think we should come back to, maybe, number five at a different meeting to discuss.

Chair: That's perfectly reasonable.

Other comments on that? Fantastic.

Have we decided how often we want to meet? Does anyone have suggestions on that?

Mr. MacEwen: (Indistinct)

Chair: Sidney?

Mr. MacEwen: It'll depend on what's available for a public meeting. Where we want to book, how flexible the audiovisual team is, all that stuff. So –

Chair: Thank you.

Mr. MacEwen: Because we're not going at our usual time. You know what I mean? Like if we've got this time set aside for

committee, but if we're going to meetings it's going to be a little trickier to book everybody in and make that happen.

I know being on the committee for democratic reform it's not the easiest thing to schedule. Whether it's a school or the Murphy Centre, you've got to go on what their schedule is for public meeting, and you've got to have enough time to advertise the public meeting, put it out there so you can get a good sense of who's coming in, so that communication part of it will be key, I think.

You kind of – you book all four meetings at once and roll it all out at once. These are our topics and these are what is going to be presented on, and so they can pick and choose which one they want to go to, whether it's East or West or Summerside or Charlottetown.

Chair: I would absolutely agree with that. And also I believe it's the pleasure of the committee that while those meetings are being set up, we would continue to meet to discuss the other topics on the agenda? Is that my correct understanding of –

Mr. MacEwen: We had said that all the meetings are going to be public meetings, right?

Chair: So perhaps I had a misunderstanding. I was of the impression that the committee just said they would like to continue to meet to discuss these topics.

Mr. Mitchell: I guess from my perspective –

Chair: Robert.

Mr. Mitchell: – if there was a month delay before you get the first one established – if you can get the first one established next week, then we just – begin on the road.

I guess if you could – and I guess in all fairness, if you had a few days to determine ahead of schedule and when at least the first one could be booked.

Well, I guess within the next few days we should be able to determine how long it's going to take. If it's going to be three weeks to a month out the road, maybe we meet, I

don't know, next week or the week after on Thursday afternoon and talk about the inventory, you know, something, we could do that.

I think that's what we had agreed to. But if we can get this rolled out within the next two weeks to get on the road, then let's go do that.

Chair: Sidney.

Mr. MacEwen: So that's a little bit different.

So which ones are you okay with having in here, and which ones do you definitely want on the road then? Because originally you did say let's do them all on the road and have that meeting.

Mr. Mitchell: Yeah, so I guess what I had said was I see that we will probably be able to talk about all of these on the road, but if for some reason we don't, then I don't want to miss anything. These are all important pieces.

Then we'll make sure that we do have a chance to discuss – for instance, if we get out on the road and nobody asks about the Climate Change Action Plan, which would never happen. Then we'd have to discuss it here; but I think all of these will be addressed on when we're doing our cross-Island visits. If for some reason they don't, then we bring them back here.

But I agree with Stephen, if there's a big long delay on getting this out of the gate, then maybe we'll have to do some of them here or maybe one of the ones you suggested or what you suggested, and have a video screen or something like that. You know?

I don't want to hold the meeting up, but I do want Islanders involved, and I want Islanders to be a part of how we develop our recommendations.

Chair: Heath.

Mr. MacDonald: Can I make a recommendation that the Clerk and the Chair work together on first the notification and setting up these meetings, and if we deem it something that we're going to struggle with or we can't accomplish within

a suitable timeframe for everyone, then we go to plan B with Stephen and get back to work.

Chair: Is that the pleasure of the committee? Okay.

Thank you.

Sidney, did I hear you say you would like to speak?

Mr. MacEwen: No, I think that's fantastic. (Indistinct) organize it, get it going, and if we're having trouble making it work, the public meetings and all that, bring us back together and then we'll reassess.

Chair: Fantastic.

Mr. Mitchell: We'll request that (Indistinct) folks put this as a priority. I know that (Indistinct) with every other committee.

Some Hon. Members: [Laughter].

Chair: Stephen.

Mr. Howard: Yeah, that all sounds great.

The only item – well, there's two of them, I guess – the number five there, the cost of recommendations isn't one we can really have right now because we don't have recommendations but the greenhouse gas inventory – I guess what I'm getting at is that the public consultation should be around things like Sidney was getting at where we have to make sure the public knows what the basis of the climate change issue is, and then there's also a lot of public awareness required around carbon pricing and things like that.

So maybe if we could identify the issues that would really actually engage or inform the public as opposed to just spouting some numbers about what our greenhouse gas inventory items are would be a more effective use of our time.

Chair: That's a fair point.

So can I suggest we just take a quick look at those items again, the first one being climate basic science. I think we're all comfortable with the idea of that being a public

consultation? Do I have agreement on that? Fantastic.

And item number two, greenhouse gas inventories: so, Stephen, is it my understanding that you feel that that would not be the most useful public presentation?

Mr. Howard: It could be a very small part of the carbon pricing talk, I think, just to say here's where our carbon emissions lie; but I don't think that's an entire session kind of thing. I think Sidney alluded to that as well, as you could combine two and three.

Chair: Okay.

Brad.

Mr. Trivers: So greenhouse gas inventory, in fact, it's more complicated than I think most people realize. How you actually calculate what the greenhouse gas emissions are for any given, you know, jurisdiction. Right?

It really makes a difference, and I know we're all here we're focused on the outcome, right? Which is to make sure that, in general, even globally we're reducing our carbon emissions; but very specifically when we're talking about the money we spend on Prince Edward Island, the actions we take on Prince Edward Island to reduce our greenhouse emissions, we need to understand how that inventory's actually calculated.

For example, you know, installing PV solar panels on Prince Edward Island don't necessarily give us credit towards a lot of greenhouse gas emissions on Prince Edward Island, right?

And so, I think it's a really important one to understand. I don't want to trivialize it, because the decisions we're going to be making as a government to allocate resources and spend money and ask Islanders to take real action are based on these inventory calculations, and I think it's really important that we all understand them very well.

So whether we need public consultation on that, I don't know, but I don't want to: Yeah, all we need is 15 minutes, no problem; we'll

get a few numbers. It's not quite that simple, I don't think.

Chair: I can appreciate what you're saying, Brad. It sounds like that's a discussion that we as policymakers need to have. Is that a conversation we need to have in public for consultation? What do we think?

Mr. Mitchell: (Indistinct)

Chair: Robert, please.

Mr. Mitchell: My experience in public – when you engage the public in open public meetings, it's very hard to dictate what's going to be discussed and what isn't, especially when you're talking issues that are very close to your heart: water, air, our environmental issues.

So I think people will – I think – that's why I say I think a lot of these will be addressed, and there may be some, as the hon. Member beside me said, myths that we need to deal with. So I mean, that will probably come up: But what about this or that?

Somebody will have to be able to identify that, and it's really hard to control that we're not speaking about that when you're actually looking for a full engagement. That's my experience, anyway. It's hard to close the door on anybody coming to discuss what's very close to their heart, and neither should we either, I guess, is my opinion on that.

Chair: Brad.

Mr. Trivers: And the way I was looking at the public consultation pieces is, yes, let's try and tie them as closely as possible to the subjects that our witnesses are talking about, but I mean, like the Member said from across, you can't really control a public consultation.

You have to let people talk about what's on their mind. So it's more about doing the two jointly – educating the committee and the public, at the same time allowing the public to have their say even if they're jumping ahead.

I think my first preference would be to get the foundation in place, then have public consultations; but I fully appreciate what the Member across is saying. We need to get at

this, we need to let the public have their say, and there are lots of people that want to talk.

So it's really having the public consultations jointly with our education, not necessarily related specifically to the piece of we have witnesses or not at any given time.

Do you know what I'm saying?

Mr. Mitchell: Yeah, I do.

Mr. Trivers: You know?

Mr. Mitchell: (Indistinct)

Chair: So I'm still not entirely clear on whether or not we want the greenhouse gas inventory to be a public consultation discussion.

Brad?

Mr. Trivers: So the answer is we would have a public consultation section allocated after we had the meeting that discussed greenhouse gas inventory, but the public might not necessarily be restricted to talk about greenhouse gas inventory.

We'd say we want to hear your thoughts on climate change, which is why the Member across said can you have someone from the department there so if they start asking questions about the whole myriad and the wide scope of what climate change is, we can have some intelligent answers for them.

Chair: Fantastic.

So the committee has decided that the Clerk and I will take this under consideration and come back with a proposed schedule. Do we have any new business? Anything else we need to be discussing?

Sidney.

Mr. MacEwen: Thanks, Chair.

Just going back to that, and just from our experience of the former committee that went on the road, had that discussion with the Clerk, too, about other formats, about who's moderating, who's controlling, you know? Not time limits, but you know, if you've got a – sometimes it's flexible.

If we're going to have meetings where there's six people show up, and then more people are going to get a longer chance to talk, we're probably going to have a meeting across the street here at the Murphy Centre, and there's going to a big crowd at that, so, unfortunately, it's not as much time per person to be able to speak unless we go until midnight or something like that, too.

So I guess just that format of setup, with audio, microphones, recording the whole thing, too, how we're going to – if we're going to put that audio online for each public meeting so everybody can hear the presentations.

There's a larger piece around that whole communications stuff that I don't – either we have to talk about it here or you guys come up with a bit of a proposal and bring it back to us. I'm flexible either way, but planning all that is important, too. Just so we can let everybody know how it's going to play out.

Chair: That's good feedback. I appreciate it. The facilitation around it will also be proposed and presented to committee, if that's to the satisfaction of everyone?

Mr. Trivers: Sounds great.

Chair: Fantastic.

With no new business, we have nothing else on our agenda item.

Do I have a motion to adjourn?

An Hon. Member: (Indistinct)

Chair: So moved.

Mr. Howard: (Indistinct)

Chair: (Indistinct)

Mr. Howard: Did we set a – when are we meeting next?

Chair: It is the pleasure of the committee that the Clerk and I would have a discussion around scheduling those meetings, and once we have a more clear picture of what the timeline will be, we will potentially make a recommendation that we meet first or just

move right into the public consultation part of that.

Mr. Howard: (Indistinct) get back to us?

Chair: Very fair.

What is a reasonable timeline for us to get back, Clerk?

Clerk Assistant: Well, we could set up a meeting next week, I would say, and get moving on it. It depends as well on, as mentioned, Adam Fenech's availability and the other witnesses under number two and three, so – but we can get – I'm available next week to get moving on it if you are.

Chair: I am, yes.

Mr. Howard: Sorry, we also talked about if there is municipal issues in getting that up and going that we're going to have our regular meeting here anyway. That's also what we discussed, was it not?

If indeed there are logistical issues that are going to push that off, we don't want to delay having another meeting of some sort of meeting here, and making some progress on one of these items.

Mr. Mitchell: That's correct.

Chair: That's my understanding as well.

Mr. Mitchell: Okay, great.

Chair: Fantastic. So, that's meeting adjourned.

Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Thank you.

Chair: Thank you.

The Committee adjourned