

Legislative
Assembly
of Ontario



Assemblée
législative
de l'Ontario

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

PH-11

**Standing Committee
on Procedure
and House Affairs**

Committee business

1st Session
43rd Parliament

Tuesday 21 March 2023

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

PH-11

**Comité permanent
de la procédure
et des affaires de la Chambre**

Travaux du comité

1^{re} session
43^e législature

Mardi 21 mars 2023

Chair: Jennifer K. French
Clerk: Christopher Tyrell

Présidente : Jennifer K. French
Greffier : Christopher Tyrell

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House Publications and Language Services
Room 500, West Wing, Legislative Building
111 Wellesley Street West, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Telephone 416-325-7400
Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario



Service linguistique et des publications parlementaires
Salle 500, aile ouest, Édifice du Parlement
111, rue Wellesley ouest, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Téléphone, 416-325-7400
Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

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ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

**STANDING COMMITTEE
ON PROCEDURE
AND HOUSE AFFAIRS**

**COMITÉ PERMANENT
DE LA PROCÉDURE
ET DES AFFAIRES DE LA CHAMBRE**

Tuesday 21 March 2023

Mardi 21 mars 2023

The committee met at 0905 in committee room 1.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Good morning. Welcome, everyone, to committee. Sorry to keep folks waiting.

We don't have a formal agenda this morning, but we do have a lot in front of us as committee members, things that have been shared in the SharePoint drive from folks in Ottawa. Certainly we have a report that requires our attention from research—thank you for putting that together—regarding the Indigenous consultation on the rehabilitation renovations of the legislative precinct. There's a new bill before the Legislature that, of course, is connected to this potential restoration/renovation, and so it has been a while since we've had a chance to talk about our next steps. I know, personally, just from having discussions in the halls and out in the community, that there's a lot of interest in what those next steps might be.

So without there being a formal agenda, we were hoping that we could discuss what that would look like and make some plans, if the committee is interested in that. Mr. Harris?

Mr. Mike Harris: Why don't we maybe take a look first at the report from research on the Indigenous consultation piece? There are just a couple of things in here that, at least from my perspective, I think might be a good way to proceed, and if the committee wouldn't mind indulging me, I would like to take a couple of minutes and just discuss that.

The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Seeing no objections, please continue.

Mr. Mike Harris: Perfect. There's a lot in here. I did a little bit of digging—and thank you to the research team for putting this together. So when we look at how we're first going to branch out and do this, I had a look on the Chiefs of Ontario website because I wanted to see who was covered off in that, and it's actually the first three—maybe the Mushkegowuk Council as well is part of that group. So I thought maybe they would be a good place to—

Interjection.

Mr. Mike Harris: Oh, yes, you would know. Absolutely.

Mr. Dave Smith: Six Nations are as well.

Mr. Mike Harris: So I think they would be a good place to start and get a bit of an idea, colleagues, as to who they think we should be consulting with, because they seem to have a pretty big network under their umbrella. I think it might be a good—I'm not going to say a one-stop shop, but it might be a good place to start.

The other thing that I thought was of interest was the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. With them not having an official council, they might be a good place to also start. I don't want to overwhelm us with too much all at once, so I thought maybe we could start from there, and then if we need to do any more branching out from that point, we can just see where it leads us.

I don't know if the committee is in agreement on that. I'm not sure how we would proceed doing that. I assume we would probably have the Clerk of the Committee reach out on our behalf and say we'd like to chat about some of the things that are going on, and we can decide what makes—whether it's virtual or in person—I would say, at their convenience.

Madam Chair, that's all from me on this specific point.

The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Mr. West.

MPP Jamie West: Just the conversation about Indigenous groups, not being from this area—I know from the land recognitions, but I don't have local connections or anything. Also, there are 124 ridings that are represented here. I don't know if that net needs to be wider or not, and—does it make sense to reach out to the chiefs to ask them who we should be meeting with, or do we start locally and ask them part of that question about where else do we go?

I'm just saying I'm not well informed and I want to make sure we do a good job.

0910

The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French): MPP Smith.

Mr. Dave Smith: What we're talking about is the crown's responsibility for the crown's building. In order for us to truly be respectful of the First Nations, we should be reaching out nation to nation to them. It should be us as elected officials, representing the crown at this point, to make the initial call to the chiefs themselves to show respect to the chiefs, and then take direction from the chiefs on who they would like us to continue the consultation with.

I've said it before in the House and I'll say it repeatedly: The last thing that any of the chiefs of Ontario need is a

bunch of white guys telling them what they need, so we, as elected officials, as the representatives of the crown, have to follow our appropriate duties to consult by reaching out nation to nation to the chiefs themselves and asking their direction on where to go. That won't be considered as part of the consultation process, but asking them who they would like us to work with at the consultation process is the appropriate way to go.

The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I'm going to touch myself on the list for just a moment.

One of the things, Mr. Harris, that you had raised about the potential of a letter—this is just an idea, but, as we are going to be reaching out to First Nations and Indigenous communities, Métis communities, and we're also going to reach out to other equity-deserving groups who we want to have eyes on this place and feel welcome, all of these different groups, is it also an idea for the Clerks to frame a letter that is something along the lines of, "This is a first step. We're undergoing this process and we would like your input. How do we best connect with those who should have voice?" and almost have a template letter that then we make specific for talking about accessibility, talking about Indigenous voices? If that's happening in the background, perhaps that could come back to committee to approve and then start some of this.

Mr. Oosterhoff.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: I'm just going to build off MPP Smith's point. We're saying we wouldn't have the Clerk reach out as much as we would have you, as the Chair, or an elected representative reach out so it wouldn't be perceived as—no offence, staff members—it would be elected officials themselves.

The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I think the way that we have been handling correspondence, the thank you letters, for example, to Ottawa, were I had signed it on behalf of this committee—

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Okay. Yes. Just confirming.

The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Because this is the committee work and we do want to also talk about—I think the way I have been realizing this might need to be approached at this stage, and that will change, is we've got the outreach to people who we are wanting input from and reaching out to them, but also we're going to have a lot of—some unsolicited, some expected—in-reach, for lack of a better word, and perhaps we should also discuss what happens with that correspondence. Piece by piece do we bring it before the committee and then make that decision?

Mr. Harris.

Mr. Mike Harris: I think, just for Dave—I know you're subbing in today—this isn't an official consultation. This is more of a friendly chat to open the door and say, "This is what we're planning on doing." Any official consultation will actually come through the ministry, obviously, right? I just want to put that out there for everybody's edification.

I think on your point on having a template letter that we could amend as needed is not a bad idea, because, again, I don't think we want to overwhelm ourselves too much. We already have a lot on our plates to begin with, outside

of the committee. The more that we can do, I think, in the background to preposition a lot of these things isn't a bad idea, Chair. I'm completely comfortable with doing something like that.

The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French): So we'll ask—do we need to formally ask you? This is me formally asking. Can we have a letter that we can—okay. We'll have the committee look at that.

The other thing is, those letters, before they go out, we, as a committee, will need to think about which groups we are reaching out to, because we don't want some folks in heritage to wonder why they haven't been contacted when perhaps those in accessibility circles have. We do want to be thoughtful in terms of what that outreach looks like, but also, if I may, what that outreach is specifically for. What are we asking for? Are we asking for folks to give their opinions on whether or not they like Queen's Park, or what they think could be changed? I do think it's not just, "We're beginning this. What do you think?" Maybe we—not to push this further down the road—be thoughtful about what we're hoping to gain from that outreach.

Mr. Smith.

Mr. Dave Smith: No disagreement from me on the letters. But what I will say is that, as the Chair, it would be greatly appreciated if you reached out to the First Nation chiefs before they receive the letter to say that you are reaching out on behalf of the committee and they will be receiving a letter, just simply to be respectful of the position that they are a nation and that we're responding to them nation-to-nation.

The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I appreciate that. I think, adding to that as well, that if we reach out on behalf of the committee to say that a letter is forthcoming, even to ask them who should receive the letter as part of that first conversation, is a point taken. Good idea.

MPP Taylor.

Miss Monique Taylor: I think we need to actually define the structure of what we're looking for through our process, because as MPP Harris said, all formal consultations will happen with bureaucrats and that portion. So what is it that we're trying to glean to get us to what position? I think some kind of structure might be helpful. I know from my own mind, as I'm sitting here listening to this, it's like, "Okay, what is our role with each group that we're looking to reach out to? Where are we compared to where it needs to go?"

I think if we actually build that structure for ourselves, it might be clearer and help us through the process much easier.

The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Mr. Harris.

Mr. Mike Harris: Yes, I think that's a good point. I think we can certainly define some of that. Really, I think this is more of a first step of, "Hey, we want to chat. Let's talk about some of the history here. How have you guys been involved? What have you done in the past? It's great that we see you here for events and different things like that, but let's try and go that one level deeper and say"—

The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Are you still specifically referring to First Nations and Indigenous—

Mr. Mike Harris: To Indigenous consultation, yes—and just open the door to more of a free-flowing conversation I think than rather a really rigid, “This is what we’re doing.” Because I think one thing that we’ve seen from this committee that has worked really well is we’ve had free-flowing conversations. We haven’t had that, “We get 20 minutes, you get 20 minutes, Ted gets five,” whatever the situation is.

Interjection.

Mr. Mike Harris: Just making sure you’re paying attention.

I think that just trying to open the door to that conversation—and I think that that goes a long way, too.

Dave, being the former PA to Indigenous affairs, obviously has a bit more insight with some of the more nuts and bolts of how some of these things work. But any time I’ve had a conversation with Indigenous leaders, just being able to have that free-flowing conversation I think has enlightened me a little bit more than it would if I came in a little bit more closed-minded.

I do want to say, are we comfortable—we have a few other things on the agenda that I’m hoping to get to, but I—

The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French): You have an agenda?

Mr. Mike Harris: Yes, I do.

Are we comfortable with maybe the first reach-out to the Chiefs of Ontario and the Mississaugas of the Credit? For Jamie, that would be the local folks, and then the Chiefs of Ontario are that more overarching, all around the province umbrella.

Are we comfortable with that being the first initial reach-out? I just thought it would be good, because again, it’s going to give us a good baseline. But I want everybody to be in agreement; I don’t want to monopolize it.

The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French): MPP West.

MPP Jamie West: I am comfortable. I was just wondering, because you were talking about MPP Smith being the former PA, maybe if we just quickly check with the ministry and with Sol as the Indigenous critic and make sure that we’re doing this the right way. It sounds right to me, but I—

Interjection.

Mr. Mike Harris: No, I—

The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation isn’t on this list. It’s one of those—

Mr. Mike Harris: Here’s the thing. This is what I don’t want to get into. I don’t want to get into having to reach out to every single Indigenous group in the province because we’re literally not going to be able to. It just will not be possible. That’s why I’m hoping that—if you want to take it back to Sol, that’s no problem. But he’s probably going to say, “Well, why don’t you have X, Y, Z on here?” We can, going forward in the future, after we talk to these folks. And they may even have some suggestions that Sol or Dave, Holland or yourself—for certain, Kevin Holland. I don’t want to start to muddy the waters too much. That’s all.

0920

The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I think, as Mr. Smith has said, that if we start with that initial phone call to let them know that there is going to be correspondence coming that we will thoughtfully put together, we may learn from them, or in the meantime, before sending the letter, that there may be someone we don’t want to miss. Certainly, this is the Chiefs of Ontario, but Métis, Inuit—this building is in Toronto but this building is the seat of government for Ontario, so we do want to be as inclusive as allows this project to gain what it needs.

Mr. Mike Harris: I don’t disagree, Madam Chair, but if we’re going to be as inclusive as possible with every single group that we come across, we will never get anything done, and it’s going to be rather unfortunate.

The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Well, I think your question was, are we comfortable with moving forward?

Mr. Mike Harris: Yes.

The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Mr. Smith, you had your hand up.

Mr. Dave Smith: With respect to the list—and I don’t want to sound like I’m diminishing anyone on the list—in my personal opinion, we should be reaching out to the Chiefs of Ontario and asking who they would like us to consult with. We should be reaching out to the Métis Nation, asking who they would like us to consult with; and with the Inuit organization, asking who they would like us to consult with.

The only addition to those three umbrella groups would be the Mississaugas of the Credit because this is their traditional territory. With respect to other Mississauga nations, the Mississaugas have a fantastic agreement in place where if you consult with one of them, they accept that consultation for all of them, so meeting with the Mississaugas of the Credit would satisfy the Mississaugas of Scugog Island, Curve Lake, Hiawatha, Beausoleil, Rama and Alderville.

The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Okay. So what I’m hearing is that, as Chair, on behalf of the committee, we will reach out as recommended to the initial folks, get their input on who best to reach out to next and craft a letter that is going to be thoughtful and be done on behalf of the people of Ontario, and we will figure out what we are actually consulting and inviting input about.

Is there more discussion on that? Mr. Harris.

Mr. Mike Harris: I think it’s just really important that when we do that reach-out, this is not an official consultation on behalf of the government. I just don’t want anybody to think that this is that piece where we’re coming in and we’ve triggered a duty to consult or what have you, that it’s more of a friendly conversation with the committee in particular.

The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I think the spirit of these consultations are what everyone would hope that they would be.

Mr. Mike Harris: Perfect.

The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French): We want folks to have involvement in this from the get-go.

Does research or the Clerk need anything more from us on that? Okay.

Mr. Harris, you said that you have some things to go over. Before you do, one other thing I will say is some of the folks that we are in the halls with and our colleagues are starting to have really good ideas. I'd like to plant the seed for the committee and hope that you take a look at the surveys that we were provided from the folks in Ottawa. Some of those are very specific to the library resources, which is part of the survey. Everyone has a good idea, some about accessibility needs, some about construction thoughts. We're going to need to come up with a place to put those ideas, I think.

As far as tours, I would like to know if there's a potential, as we move further down the road, for groups to do walk-throughs to appreciate the space we have now and maybe then when they come to depose, they can say, "I saw this and I think that's a problem," or "This was very meaningful; I hope that moves forward." Because to just invite people to come and tell us how they would like Queen's Park to be better—they may not have seen some of the things that deserve attention. That's just a thought, for an answer for later.

Mr. Oosterhoff.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: I would say that I understand that. I just would have a desire to ensure that security measures are in place, because obviously that was something that—we were even in some areas not supposed to take pictures, if I remember, because of security.

The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French): And I was just wondering if it was possible if somebody could lead walking tours through, not looking at the cables, not in the guts of this space, not so much that. When people are weighing in about this building, if they've seen it, then they might have more—

Interjection.

The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Yes, more thoughtful, meaningful areas.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Oh, okay. I was thinking more—

Interjection.

The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French): And that's getting ahead of ourselves. But as people are having interest, they don't necessarily know what our art looks like or what the accessibility challenges already are, that kind of thing.

Mr. Harris.

Mr. Mike Harris: Another thing I wanted to put on the committee's mind here is, we had talked a little while ago about maybe visiting some jurisdictions other than Ottawa. My office has done a little bit of a deeper dive. You guys have had a chance—I think there was a jurisdictional scan of the buildings that were sent around through the Clerk's office—and thank you again, Nick from research, for putting that together, you and your team.

I wanted to propose potentially visiting Saskatchewan and Manitoba and also Quebec City. They have all undergone or are currently undergoing some renovations. Quebec has built a new visitors' centre underground,

which is very nice from the pictures I've seen. Unfortunately, I don't think they put underground parking in—

Mr. Graham McGregor: We can't build underground.

Mr. Mike Harris: Yes. Well, we can't go 18 floors underground.

Manitoba is currently undergoing some substantial renovations, and Saskatchewan as well has just completed some. I thought it might be a good idea to have the committee get a better sense of what some other provincial capitals look like, get some feedback from some of their officials, similar to what we've done with Ottawa, to learn some more about best practices, learn how they've interacted with members, a lot of the same kinds of ideas, but obviously on a bit of a smaller scale.

Those are the three that I have identified. I'm certainly open to—it doesn't have to be right now, but if you want to put that in your back pocket over the next while, maybe we'll wait till the weather gets a little bit nicer and we can—

Miss Monique Taylor: No Caribbean islands?

Mr. Mike Harris: No Caribbean islands. Sorry, Monique. What was it? Like, St. Kitts has always wanted to be part of Canada, hasn't it—or Turks and Caicos or something?

Interjections.

Mr. Mike Harris: Turks and Caicos. They must have a government House that we could go see down there, but I don't think that would be appropriate in this particular circumstance.

The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I am certain it would not.

Mr. Mike Harris: Colleagues, if you want to maybe think about that a little bit when we have our next meeting or perhaps Jamie and I, as the subcommittee members, could have a further discussion on that and put something forward. I don't know if there's any discussion from the committee on that particular piece, Madam Chair.

Interjection.

The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Sorry? Is there further discussion—okay, Mr. West.

MPP Jamie West: I think that's a good idea. As well, I'm the co-chair of the Council of State Governments—East, who we're actually hosting in Toronto this summer. But because they represent provinces and states—they have researchers that love to look into stuff like this. Would it make sense for me to reach out on behalf of the committee to find out if there's anything similar in the States that we can—

Mr. Mike Harris: Sorry. What group, Jamie?

MPP Jamie West: CSG, Council of State Governments—

Mr. Mike Harris: Oh, yes.

MPP Jamie West: Not that we would necessarily want to go or have to go, but just to see if there's anything—

Mr. Mike Harris: So Minnesota actually has done a \$500-million revamp over the last 10 years. That would be one to probably go and check out. I'm trying to think—there was another one too in the States. I don't know if we

ever circulated—did you guys get the one from my office that had the US and some European nations as well? No?

MPP Jamie West: A couple of months ago, we got a broad one. I don't know if it was from you or from research.

Mr. Mike Harris: Yes. Let me see if I can pull it up. But yes, that's certainly, I think, something that we could explore.

I don't know, Madam Chair, if there are implications with travel to the US. I know it's easier to travel within Canada for the committee.

The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French): We can find out what would be required if we were travelling to various jurisdictions.

I'm going to circle back to a comment that MPP Taylor had raised about the structure of what the committee would like to accomplish in the next stretch, because certainly travel to other jurisdictions to learn from what they are doing is probably going to be more beneficial if we, as a committee, figure out what we're hoping to see there or what questions we might be going with. It might make it more beneficial for the work that we're wanting to do.

Mr. Mike Harris: Chair, I think if we look at the Ottawa model and what we were able to experience there and the folks we were able to chat with, I think it would be a lot of similar interactions.

The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French): The work of this committee with the bill before the House, Bill 75—I'll just speak from experience. There's a lot of interest and assumption about what this committee will be doing in terms of what decisions it will be making, and I'm not clear as committee Chair what work the committee is actually responsible for. I know that we can do a number of things in terms of information-gathering that may be relied upon down the road, further in the process; that if we are meeting with various interested parties and getting their voices on the record, the government or the project may refer to that and be glad that we've done that legwork to consult far and wide. But in terms of the construction and design and all of that, I think we'll figure out as it moves forward where the committee's reach ends.

0930

Mr. Harris, as the parliamentary assistant to the minister, might be well suited at a different meeting to help shed some light on that.

Mr. Mike Harris: What a segue, Madam Chair. If you'll indulge me for another second—

The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French): And I didn't even know what was on your agenda.

Mr. Mike Harris: So—sorry. Go ahead, Jamie.

MPP Jamie West: Just before we go on, should I ask for feedback, or not? Just on my question about—

Mr. Mike Harris: I don't think it hurts.

MPP Jamie West: Okay.

Mr. Mike Harris: Again, segueing into this—at least the conversations I've had with my colleagues, from what we're looking for as members of the committee, I think we're really going to be one of those groups that is the

conduit between members of the House and what is happening on that greater scale with the renovations. When we go and we look at other jurisdictions, we can see where we, as members, say, “Oh gosh, that would be great if we could have that,” or, “Look at the flow here, look how all of this works,” or, “Look at how these offices are laid out.” It would be really great for us to be able to impart some of those ideas here. I think that's why it's important to visit some of those other jurisdictions.

As far as where we go as the committee, obviously it's our prerogative to decide what we want to do. One of the unique things here is we've never done this before, right? It's a blank slate. We can move and be fluid and say, “Okay, this is working great; this isn't, and we need to change things up.”

With that said, Bill 75: We are hoping to have that before committee over the next month-ish. Part of this, obviously, will be some of that consultation piece and having deputants come that we alluded to earlier. I wanted to just lay a few things out for you and see if the committee is prepared to move forward in this step. The Minister of Legislative Affairs, Minister Calandra, and the deputy minister—we have a hold in their schedule for the 18th of April. It's a Tuesday, so a regular meeting time from 9 till 10. If the committee would like, we can bring them in for those initial deputations. I know, Madam Chair, you and I have talked about having the minister come and present and give a bit of a once-over of how that new ministry and secretariat is going to interact, obviously, with the committee and with the Legislative Assembly and with government. We've set some time aside there, if that would work. That can be the kickoff, if you will, to the Bill 75 committee process.

I don't know if there's any discussion anyone wants to have on that.

The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French): The only thing I would note date-wise is a responsibility with the Good Roads conference at that time, personally.

Mr. Mike Harris: Sorry, Madam Chair—duly noted.

The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French): That is not necessarily a conflict. I just wanted to make sure that—but that Mr. Rae is a fine fellow.

Mr. Mike Harris: Understood. However, it is the regular sitting time of the committee, right? It's not like we'd be straying outside the box.

Mr. Graham McGregor: The only thing I'd add on there is I think this is what the minister and deputy minister have blocked in their calendar. It's not necessarily prescriptive, but I think the idea was this is a regular sitting time in the committee anyway, and, to be very respectful of everyone's calendar—

Interjections.

Miss Monique Taylor: I think that Good Roads is an important piece for—

The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I'm not sure it's a conflict.

Miss Monique Taylor: But it is an important piece—

Mr. Mike Harris: But it's the regular sitting time of the committee anyway, right? I guess I just—

The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I was just flagging that I saw something in the calendar. It was just information, not an argument.

Mr. Mike Harris: I don't think anyone's saying Good Roads isn't important, for sure. If you have meetings scheduled during committee time, I don't know why you would do that.

Miss Monique Taylor: Fair enough.

The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French): We also have a very able Vice-Chair in an emergency.

Mr. Mike Harris: Absolutely. I just thought, Madam Chair—

Interjection.

Mr. Mike Harris: Okay. Can we agree that April 18 can be the start of our deliberations on Bill 75? Does that work for everybody?

The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Start of deliberations?

Mr. Mike Harris: Well, the bill is before committee, correct?

The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French): The bill has been called to committee?

Mr. Mike Harris: I believe so. The bill has been referred to the committee.

Miss Monique Taylor: It's been referred to this committee.

Mr. Mike Harris: It's been referred, yes.

The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Okay, but it hasn't been called—

Miss Monique Taylor: So it's just a matter of choosing a date.

The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French): So this is now planning?

Mr. Mike Harris: Yes, for Bill 75.

The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Okay. Mr. West?

MPP Jamie West: I'm sure I'll be able to sub someone in, but I won't be available on the 18th. I'm scheduled to be at a different committee, just so everyone knows.

Mr. Mike Harris: Traditionally, we would do this as a motion. I think we all know how committee has been handled over the last little while, but I think, in the spirit of collaboration, we want to try and get as much input as possible. If we need to move dates or what have you, or it doesn't work, then we can do that, but the 18th is currently held in the minister's calendar. That's why I think it's important that we try and adhere to that.

We can change it, if you like. If you have a conflict and Jamie has a conflict as well—I think it would be important for you both to be here. Maybe we can look at amending that date. Ultimately, it's up to you guys.

The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I serve at the pleasure of the committee. If we want to make this decision now, if you wanted to do it at subcommittee, if this is actually planning—I don't know what is required for planning to actually pull it to committee.

Mr. Mike Harris: We can do it at any point. We can set forth parameters right now. Or, if you'd prefer, Jamie

and I can connect and move forward in that way and then hammer it out and bring it forward, if you like.

The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French): My other question is, when you say, "starting deliberations of Bill 75," is this a visit from the minister to talk about things with our committee? Or is this actually a 20-minute presentation of the minister, beginning—

Mr. Mike Harris: Correct.

The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Okay.

Mr. Mike Harris: So we would call Bill 75 before committee. The minister and the deputy minister would lead off the deputations, and then we would have public hearings fill in behind them, just as we would with, really, any other bill that we bring before committee. Of course, then we've got amendments—clause-by-clause. We want to leave as much time for amendments as possible. We certainly want to entertain any amendments that either opposition parties or ourselves want to bring forward to the bill. I think it's very important. Obviously, the spirit of bipartisanship here is something that we want to keep at the forefront. That's why I'm saying that Jamie and I can certainly have the conversations, if you don't want to do it as a broader committee right now. It's up to you guys. I don't want to sound like I'm monopolizing the conversation, because I think I have enough.

Monique or Jamie, do you have any comments?

MPP Jamie West: If we can move it to a different date, it would work better for me. I am subbed in for clause-by-clause for the whole day.

Mr. Mike Harris: Sure. Why don't we take it away. We'll look at another alternative date to start, then. We'll see if maybe the following sitting day could work. The thing is, we just want to make sure we leave enough time for all of the consultation pieces.

The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I know that we appreciate that the minister is interested in coming before the committee, so we will make sure that that's prioritized.

Mr. Mike Harris: Okay. Colleagues, the subcommittee can connect and we will hammer out another date.

I think we do want to try and make sure that we don't linger too long. I think early May is when we'd like to try and have things wrapped up, because we obviously need to get the ball rolling with the ministry. Just being aware of those timelines, I think, is also important.

Miss Monique Taylor: Was that his first date available?

Mr. Mike Harris: I'm not 100% sure. It was just what was advised to me, that the 18th—

Miss Monique Taylor: Because we're still in March, right?

Mr. Mike Harris: Yes, so maybe we could move it up a week, potentially. We have the constit week, right, which kind of—

Interjections.

The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French): It also seems that the goal of this is that we want to hear from the minister who has an interest in the committee, and we have questions. There may be a bit of lag between that visit and the deputations, however that's structured. Even if he were

to come earlier and that gives us more of something to work with for the deputations—I'm just throwing it out there. It sounds like we're all wanting to move forward in a good way with this.

Mr. Mike Harris: Yes. Let's chat and we'll see what we can figure out. Listen, maybe it's the 18th, and unfortunately that's the only date. We have to be cognizant of the minister's timetable.

Interjection.

Mr. Mike Harris: Perfect. Okay. So why don't we leave it there, then, if the committee is okay with that?

0940

Madam Chair, that's all I had on my agenda today.

The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I appreciated that precinct properties offered a second tour. MPP Taylor went on that tour, and I kept her company. It was actually very interesting to do the tour a second time, having seen Ottawa. It made you appreciate things a little bit differently to imagine what was behind what we were seeing now.

One of the things that we did discuss on that tour was the reach of the precinct, but also some of the connecting pieces, and that may be something, as the committee does its work, down the road—there were discussions about different property use or some contracts with folks that interconnect and just things that we may have to take inventory of and even gather that information, so not just people's input on the building, but also what is underneath the land. Yes, the TTC involvement, but there's a lot of stuff in terms of electrical. It doesn't sound like anyone is really sure what's underground and connected. Some of those things are more in the guts of this, I would say, that we may take on. So just considering that or giving that some thought as information comes to you, maybe that can be part of the process later.

There were thoughts of under Whitney actually, but under, under Whitney, the potential for underground beyond what is there now. There were interesting ideas that perhaps we want to just gather and hand over to the secretariat as things we have learned.

Are there any other thoughts or questions that people might have based on the conversations they're having or in the wake of Ottawa and reading this new bill? Mr. West.

MPP Jamie West: This might come out of the deputation with the minister in the future, but I think if we were to reconfirm our scope of work as a committee. In the beginning, it was just us taking information, learning about the bill and getting caught up, and then in MPP Harris's role, he has a more thorough understanding of what's going on with the ministry and where they're going. But I think as a committee, it would be helpful to know—like, I think of construction projects and FEL 1, FEL 2, FEL 3, that kind of stuff.

Right now, you're going to gather information and then the next stage that the committee is going to work on is whatever else. At some point, we are going to transfer—I don't believe our committee is going to be picking colours of the carpet and things like that, right? So we transfer over to the project management group and our role becomes the

connection between the local MPPs and staff and what the project manager—I think if we just, broadly speaking, have that scope-of-work idea of this is what we're focused on right now, and then the next stage will be guidance towards procurement—or maybe it's not. Maybe it's just who is going to—you know what mean?

I'm not quite sure. I think we want to do a really good job because it's once in a lifetime, but I think if we have a—it doesn't have to be detailed, but just, we're in this stage and this is what we're doing in this stage. Now we're going to move to the second stage and this is what, broadly speaking, we're focused on.

The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Mr. McGregor.

Mr. Graham McGregor: I think that's a good point Mr. West made about scoping the work. What I think is helpful to scope what we do in the next two months is really amend and submit back to the House a possible third reading of Bill 75, which is what sets out the framework of everything else that's going to be happening. I think, really, the opportunity we have in the next two months is, how do we use deputations, witnesses to make sure we actually got the bill right?

Reading it, I like a lot of it, but I'm sure when we hear from Indigenous groups or from different Legislatures, there may be gaps that we have, and I think the government is eyes wide open about the fact that there may be gaps in the bill as put. I think that that would be a helpful scope for the next two months, to look actually at just what Bill 75 needs to be.

Mr. Mike Harris: Madam Chair, if I may.

The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Mr. Harris.

Mr. Mike Harris: I think you're bang on with that. That's a great point. I think when we have the minister and deputy minister here to do deputations, that will really set the framework for us as committee members to understand the role between the new secretariat or ministry and the role of the committee and the role of some of the other organizations and agencies that are going to be playing a part in this.

But I do think MPP McGregor is bang on with that. I think if we want to talk about true scope for the next couple of months, Bill 75 should be that focus, and then we can look at maybe some travel pieces and some of the other things we talked about, once we get the bill in good shape for third reading and report it back to the House.

So maybe if we want to make that our mission over the next little while, in tandem with starting to open the door for some of the Indigenous consultation pieces. I know from my perspective, I'm sure my colleagues agree, that that's probably the best path forward, certainly for the next bit.

The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French): MPP Taylor.

Miss Monique Taylor: Do you see any amendments already? Have you been notified? Have you talked to folks that you see there are already pieces?

Mr. Mike Harris: I don't want to presume. I think there will be some that will come from the government after we've had some more time to speak, but we're also looking for anything that opposition members want to bring forward.

Again, we're in a very unique position with this committee where we truly are able to have carte blanche and decide and discuss and independently do what we feel is right as members for this building and for the people of Ontario, realistically.

Certainly, I'm sure there will be. I just can't really speak too much to it at this point.

Miss Monique Taylor: All right.

The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I'm getting a sense that—I've heard the term "phases." If we know that we're going to have the bill before this committee, it's going to be very challenging and not beneficial for anyone if we're splitting screen in too many different ways. But phase 1, I would say, has been started, if not completed, with the interim report, where that was the initial look.

Now, we're moving into a focus on the secretariat and the bill. But I would say that while that is happening, we can reach out to the Chiefs of Ontario with that initial touch-base and connection, and I'm happy to connect with the Clerks to do that properly.

Then, I think one of the things that I would anticipate during the committee work is that we get a lot of input and a lot of outside interest that doesn't fit into the bill, that is not relevant necessarily to that particular legislative framework, so we will need a place to put that. If we gather letters, or if people say to you, "Hey, you need to remember this," direct them to the Clerk, and we'll start keeping that correspondence and figure out—we'll have to continue talking, almost as a side process.

Mr. Mike Harris: The other thing too, when we look at who is going to come for deputations, I think we as the committee are going to need to be prescriptive as to who that is. I think we've got a good idea of who we'd like to see, but again, we want to keep it relevant to the bill. We don't want people just coming for the sake of appearing before the committee. We want them to have some knowledge and understanding. Like when we talked about the historical societies for example and some of the different—what were some of the other groups that we had chit-chatted about through our deliberations?

Mr. Graham McGregor: Accessibility groups, for sure.

Mr. Mike Harris: Yes, exactly.

Mr. Graham McGregor: I don't want to box the Indigenous side into that as well, but obviously that's something we have to get right.

The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I think it's going to be our job, and that of the government, to communicate that these committee hearings are specific to the bill, but that there will be opportunity for public and interested-party engagement going forward with the committee.

Mr. Mike Harris: True. And, of course, written submissions, different things like that, just as we would—

The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Yes, but that this is not the only chance for people to be a part of this project. How that is communicated, we'll have to navigate that.

Mr. Mike Harris: Just in the essence of time, we've only got about five or 10 minutes left, but is everybody in agreement that that's the best way to move forward? And Jamie and I can have a conversation about where we need to go with getting the bill scheduled.

The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Yes. And I would add to your agenda for the subcommittee a bit of a rough outline for maybe some of the—now that you've heard this—next couple of phases after committee, because there may be an interest in, as you've said, other jurisdictions over the summer. So some of that will need to be put into place before the House rises.

Mr. Mike Harris: Yes, good point. Yes, absolutely.

Now, one other thing: If that time on the 18th doesn't work, would there be an opportunity to look at—I know it's outside of the regular meeting schedule, but as long as the Legislature is in session, the committee can agree to sit at any point. We just have to pass it through the committee. So if that morning doesn't work, would there potentially be another opportunity that day? Or is the 18th kind of a write-off?

Miss Monique Taylor: It's conference day. Tuesdays are conference days here.

Mr. Mike Harris: Yes, that's true.

Mr. Graham McGregor: And Jamie is in clause-by-clause all day.

Mr. Mike Harris: Oh, okay. I see. All right, so we'll look at another day, period. Like, if we could—

Interjection.

Mr. Mike Harris: No, Dave.

But if we could do it on, say, the 19th, for example, it would be outside of our regular sitting day. We have cabinet that day too, right? But—

The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French): So I will join in the subcommittee meeting and be far more helpful and useful with scheduling.

Mr. Mike Harris: Okay. I think it's really going to boil down to the minister's time, to be honest, and we may need to do it at 9 o'clock on the 18th. But anyway—okay, I'm done.

The Chair (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Any other thoughts from committee members that they'd like the subcommittee to consider other than that?

Okay, guys, thank you very much, and have a good day.

The committee adjourned at 0951.

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