



SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON TRAFFIC SAFETY

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SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON TRAFFIC SAFETY

Mr. Darryl Hickie, Chair
Prince Albert Carlton

Ms. Danielle Chartier, Deputy Chair
Saskatoon Riversdale

Mr. Herb Cox
The Battlefords

Mr. Roger Parent
Saskatoon Meewasin

Mr. Warren Steinley
Regina Walsh Acres

Mr. Doyle Vermette
Cumberland

Ms. Nadine Wilson
Saskatchewan Rivers

[The committee met at 08:01.]

The Chair: — Well good morning, everybody, and welcome members to the Committee on Traffic Safety, all-party Committee on Traffic Safety. This morning we have with us Mr. Parent, Ms. Wilson, Mr. Steinley, Mr. Vermette, and the Deputy Chair, Ms. Chartier, and myself.

First item of business is to table documents, the written submissions to the committee: TSC 2/27 to TSC 25/27. Committee members have a list of those documents. These documents will be available for viewing on the Legislative Assembly website.

Next item to discuss, the public hearing agendas. Members have copies of the agendas that the steering committee has drafted. You can speak to the agendas. Any questions from the members? Any questions? Ms. Chartier? No? Okay.

So I ask a member to move the following motion:

That the Special Committee on Traffic Safety hold public hearings on the following dates and locations: May 21st and 22nd, 2013 in Regina; May 28th, Estevan; June 3rd and 4th, Saskatoon; June 5th, Prince Albert; June 10th, Pelican Narrows; and June 11th, La Ronge.

So moved by Ms. Chartier. Is that approved? All in favour?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Next item, consideration of the expert witnesses. The steering committee recommends that Doug Beirness present to the committee. Mr. Beirness has submitted over time, from what I saw on the portal, back to 2007, in fact, some of the most recent data on issues involving blood alcohol contents, suspended driver kind of sentences, along with various things — interlock devices and many other traffic safety considerations. So Ms. Chartier and I talked about this, and we believe that Mr. Beirness will be a great expert witness to bring in. However he's from Ontario, and we do have provisions within the actual committee to pay for travel of expert witnesses. So I'd like to recommend that we bring him in.

He will be much like an SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance] . . . He'll be a foundational kind of a person from the research perspective. He's been involved with many different projects, involving Saskatchewan as well, and other provinces, other jurisdictions, as well in the States.

So I would like to have that happen, and Ms. Chartier as well. So I'd ask a member to move the following motion:

That pursuant to rule 131(3), the committee requests the appearance of Doug Beirness; and further, that pursuant to rule 131(4), the committee authorize payment of his expenses.

Ms. Wilson? Ms. Wilson.

Ms. Wilson: — Yes. I so move the motion, please, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: — Okay. Is that all approved? All in favour? It's carried. Thank you. After we're finished today, Kathy will go through, when the cameras are off, Kathy will go through the logistics of our flights and hotel accommodations and stuff, our travel.

One thing that I want to make sure the members are still aware of is to go back and review the mandate of the committee. We are going to hear, as you can see from the . . . or look at the agenda, we're going to see from groups and individuals. Now be cognizant, and I am also aware, that some of these individuals will have particular perspectives to their region or to their particular area, and they may make recommendations they want to see fixed and remedied and rectified in their area. That's not a problem. The committee can, when we sit after we're all done, talk about what a particular group or a particular area or region, constituency has raised.

However we have to be very aware that the mandate we have is to form policies that are going to have a provincial perspective and impact provincially. So let's say and if . . . One thing that came to mind over the weekend was if one area in this province talks about a very busy intersection and they wish to have more signage and more lighting for the intersection, nothing stops us from mentioning that particular area we went to or the particular presenters that brought that up. But the committee has to then consider a recommendation that would be province-wide, such as asking Highways to look at every major intersection with traffic flows of a certain volume per se and then to recommend signage. That's all the kind of things we're supposed to do.

So having said that, it's going to be a fun trip, fun task, I believe. We're going to get a lot of things from different people. But we will, the steering committee, will sit. We'll talk about the final dates we're going to meet because we have to get back together again at the end of the June probably for a couple of days to make the final recommendations as an entire body.

So as we go through the presentations, keep that in mind — looking for global policy perspective and also recognizing that we may have some very passionate individuals that may want us to make a recommendation while we sit in front of them. I just caution any member that . . . should never make a recommendation or promise anything prior to the full recommendations coming out in its totality because we can't guarantee that we'll be able to solve everyone's problems immediately or rectify everyone's problems either. So the committee will do the best they can I'm sure.

Okay. That's about all for today. Mr. Vermette.

Mr. Vermette: — Well seeing you . . . And it's good that you've explained the process. But I guess at the end of the day if you have communities that have loss of life due to traffic safety, fatalities, that we're supposed to be looking at to lessen them, then I think it's good when people come forward to express that. And you're right. You're going to have experts. I guess engineers from Highways will be presenting.

So you have people who will want to talk about fatalities, and I think that's what we're trying to accommodate so people that are aware of where there are fatalities, to lower them . . .

[inaudible] . . . and the risks. So there might be people who have ideas and suggestions, which is good that it's open to them to share that, to try to lower the number of fatalities in our province. I think that was the mandate. Correct? Or am I wrong?

The Chair: — Yes, Mr. Vermette, you're completely right. What I mean though is not to . . . As everyone will come to us and talk to us about what their recommendations are, but we may find that one individual may say that this particular one corner in my riding or one corner on my highway in my area needs to be fixed. That's fine. That's a good thing to say. We'll make that as part of the final report. But then if we're going to make a recommendation, it can't be that we're going to fix every corner and every highway. But we would task Highways to ensure that they do the utmost to ensure that the concerns raised to the committee are brought forward to their particular departments, section heads to consider and move forward on.

But you're right. Reducing fatalities is the primary goal of this particular committee. And one thing the committee members should be aware of, the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] issued a report just last week that indicated that in the first four months of this year, fatalities are down over last year. So that's a good sign. Maybe just the simple fact that there's been a lot of public awareness made to this is the start, which we may want to consider as well, more public awareness or media.

So having said that, any more questions at all? No? This meeting does now stand adjourned. Oh I need a motion for adjournment, please. Ms. Chartier. Everyone in favour of the adjournment?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — So moved. Carried.

[The committee adjourned at 08:08.]