

Legislative
Assembly
of Ontario



Assemblée
législative
de l'Ontario

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

HE-17

**Standing Committee
on Heritage, Infrastructure
and Cultural Policy**

Committee business

1st Session
43rd Parliament
Monday 20 March 2023

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

HE-17

**Comité permanent du
patrimoine, de l'infrastructure
et de la culture**

Travaux du comité

1^{re} session
43^e législature
Lundi 20 mars 2023

Chair: Laurie Scott
Clerk: Isaiah Thorning

Présidente : Laurie Scott
Greffier : Isaiah Thorning

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INFRASTRUCTURE
AND CULTURAL POLICY**

**COMITÉ PERMANENT DU PATRIMOINE,
DE L'INFRASTRUCTURE
ET DE LA CULTURE**

Monday 20 March 2023

Lundi 20 mars 2023

The committee met at 1400 in committee room 1.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Good afternoon, everyone. The Standing Committee on Heritage, Infrastructure and Cultural Policy will now come to order. We're joined by staff from legislative research, Hansard, and broadcasting and recording. Please wait until I recognize you before starting to speak, and as always, all comments should go through the Chair. Are there any questions before we begin? Everybody's good?

On today's agenda is committee business. Are there any motions? MPP Thanigasalam.

Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam: I move that the committee enter closed session for the purpose of organizing committee business.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Any debate or discussion? I believe I see MPP Harden's hand go up.

Mr. Joel Harden: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, members of the committee; it's nice to see you. Okay, I'm going to make a pitch. I've done it before, but I have a specific reason this time, Chair, to not move into closed session, and it has nothing to do with my grandmother, just so you know, from the last time we had this discussion.

This time, I would love to have this discussion not in closed session because it's a particular issue that's been brought to my attention germane to what I think would be an expansion to this bill, and that's the issue of abandoned gas wells. This bill deals with the issue of carbon sequestration—a legitimate topic, an important topic, but I happen to know, across Ontario, there's a lot of people that would like to see the Hansard record of our decision about how we plan the work on this committee and how we plan public hearings who are experts on the issue of abandoned gas wells.

The people of Wheatley, Ontario, as the member from Chatham-Kent-Leamington could say better than all of us, are dealing with this issue. It's a very topical matter, so I want to invite the member opposite to consider not moving

into closed session and keep us planning the work of this particular bill—how we hold hearings, how we debate it—in open session.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Further debate and discussion? I see MPP French, please.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I'm pleased to be able to join the committee today. I am going to say something that I've said many, many times before about going into closed session: This is committee. I mean, everything we do here on this public matter, I would say, should be done openly and transparently. I don't know why everything has to be treated as a secret, especially considering that we're just doing organizational planning. That should be public.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Further debate and discussion? MPP Andrew, I believe, just before MPP McMahon.

MPP Jill Andrew: I just want to echo the comments of my colleagues. Not only do we not want to be in a closed session, it's public business and we feel that the communities that we represent have a right to know what's happening and how we do business in committee, especially as we know that there have been issues with consultation on government bills. It's always good when we can be as transparent as possible with our community.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): MPP McMahon.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: I agree. In committee, we are here, we are public servants doing public work and Ontarians expect and are demanding transparency and accountability. I don't have anything to hide; I think that we all should be working together openly and publicly, so I will be voting against this.

The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott): Any further debate or discussion?

Seeing none, I will now put the question. Shall MPP Thanigasalam's motion carry? All those in favour, please raise your hands. All those opposed, please raise your hands. I declare the motion passed.

With no further business, the committee will take a few minutes to go into closed session, so we'll just take a break for a few minutes.

The committee continued in closed session at 1404.

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