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Electoral Boundaries Commission
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Electoral Boundaries Commission

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Electoral Boundaries Commission - Edmonton

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[Justice Miller in the chair]

The Chair: We've got several presenters lined up for this evening. We're going to start with Abigail Johnson. Please come forward, have a seat at the table, identify yourself, and tell us what electoral division you live in and which electoral divisions you wish to comment on.

Miss Johnson: All right. Well, thank you for allowing me the opportunity to speak. My name is Abigail Johnson, and I currently live in Edmonton-City Centre. I kind of want to comment more on Edmonton as a whole, and I think we should not be restricted to just Edmonton city boundaries when considering this. I think we should extend a bit more into the surrounding communities.

Some of the reasons for this are that, first of all, there's no legislative requirements to be following the city boundaries. It used to be communities like Sherwood Park, St. Albert, Devon, Beaumont were separate towns with separate identities, which made sense, that they were separate from an Edmonton constituency. But as the city has grown physically, they've gotten closer to these communities, and a lot of people from Edmonton have moved to these surrounding communities but are still heavily invested in Edmonton as a community, and there are a lot of ties there still.

The result of this has been that communities around Edmonton share the same interests; therefore, a community will be better represented if it is included with part of Edmonton rather than the more rural areas. You can see evidence of this change in the traffic patterns, in the shopping, in the schools, in the community sports. These communities are a part of the greater capital region, and boundaries should not be governed by an Edmonton city boundary. So that's what I'd like to present.

I also have a letter here from a resident of Beaumont who has a request of what they think the boundary should be, including them to be in one of the Edmonton constituencies. I'm not sure . . .

The Chair: Oh, okay. Leave it with Mr. Roth, and he'll get it to all of us.

Miss Johnson: Perfect. Thank you.

The Chair: Okay. Well, thank you.

Miss Johnson, you are advocating for hybrid ridings?

Miss Johnson: Yes.

The Chair: Okay. You've seen our map, and we've tried to do a little bit of that in Edmonton. Any comments on those specific proposals?

Miss Johnson: Yes. I've looked at it a bit. I think I'd like to see a bit more going into Edmonton-Ellerslie, connecting that with Beaumont a bit more. That's what I'd like to see. Beyond that, I don't have any big ones.

The Chair: Okay. We'll open it up to questions from the panel. This side?

Mr. Clark: Thank you very much for coming this evening. I'm curious how far you'd extend that. Would you take Sherwood Park, like half of Sherwood Park and part of Edmonton?

Miss Johnson: I think you could. I don't have specific guidelines for all of where we should go. I think you can go into Sherwood Park and take some from there, depending on the makeup of that

community. But I think Sherwood Park is a community that we can include in this. I think the main communities would be Devon, Beaumont, and, I want to say, Spruce Grove are the three main communities that I'm thinking of.

Mr. Clark: How about Fort Saskatchewan? Would you blend Fort Saskatchewan and northeast Edmonton?

Miss Johnson: I think we could leave it as it is. I'm okay with the way that the boundary currently sits for that.

Mr. Clark: I guess I'm just trying to identify sort of: at what point does it get to be too much? Do you know what I mean? I guess I'm just trying to identify sort of a common principle of how we define, like, what goes with what, if that makes sense.

Miss Johnson: Yeah, for sure. I do have kind of a proposed map as well. I could hand that out. I'm sorry I don't have more, like, specific . . .

Mr. Clark: No, no. I think that's great that you brought the map.

Miss Johnson: Yeah. Just kind of reaching out to the community surrounding a bit more. It's more so just making sure that we're not sticking just to the city limits because I think that's restricting a lot of the communities. Not all of the surrounding communities need to be part of an Edmonton constituency. I think we just need to give consideration to the fact that we can extend beyond those city boundaries.

Mr. Clark: Thank you very much.

The Chair: On this side, any questions?

Mrs. Samson: Thanks for coming out tonight. I agree with you that hybrids do have a place. It's just a matter of: where does it work? And to do it for a hybrid's sake is not a good enough reason. Has to be a lot more. The legislation has just changed, and we're testing the waters here.

The Chair: Tell me, Miss Johnson. Are you a student?

Miss Johnson: I'm not. I currently work.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you for your presentation.

Miss Johnson: Yeah. Thank you.

The Chair: You're excused.

Our next presenter is Leslie Thompson.

Sorry, Ms Thompson. We're just comparing lists here.

5:45

Ms Thompson: Oh, it's okay. I got here early, and I wasn't expecting to be up so soon, but, hey, we're good.

The Chair: Yeah. We are bringing you up early.

Please identify yourself and tell us what electoral division you live in and which ones you're going to comment on.

Ms Thompson: Okay. My name is Lesley Thompson. I'm a community leader. I live in Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview, and I'm speaking about Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview.

The Chair: I think you're the first person to present on Beverly today.

Ms Thompson: I'm a keener, so there you go.

The Chair: Okay. Please proceed.

Ms Thompson: Well, good evening, everyone, and thank you so much for having me present tonight. I really want to thank you for the opportunity to speak here and for the care, thoughtfulness, and hard work reflected in your interim reports. As you heard, my name is Leslie Thompson. I've lived in Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview for more than 18 years. Right now this is the heart of our riding, the Clareview area. I want to share with you tonight not just an abstract policy perspective but how these boundaries reflect the real lived experience of the people who call this community home.

My daily life is shaped by how interconnected this riding truly is. I live within walking and biking distance of the Clareview LRT station, the Clareview rec centre, the Clareview library, and a million other amenities including a Costco and stuff like that. Anyhoo, I regularly use these spaces. They function as neighbourhood-specific amenities, but they're also shared community hubs used by residents from across our riding, whether you're in the Beverly-Beacon Heights area or you're in the Clareview-specific area.

You know, we also have some great parks, Rundle park, Hermitage park, with walking, cycling, a bunch of nature things. These trails physically and socially connect our neighbourhoods. Even our major roadways like the Yellowhead do not divide how people actually live, move, and connect. From lived experience, Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview already functions as a cohesive community.

Now, I want to begin by sincerely thanking the commission for keeping Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview fully within the city of Edmonton with the limited, sensible exception of the landfill and the gravel pits. I know when I presented last time we talked about those lovely gravel pits that we have on the edge of our riding and the garbage dump and all of those extra amenities, but they're also big job employers in our riding.

Residents in this riding rely on the same municipal services, transit networks, infrastructure, and social supports. Keeping the riding within a single municipal framework allows our MLAs to advocate clearly and consistently for their constituents whose needs are shaped by the same city systems. This is not just administratively logical; it's democratically sound.

I want to express my strong support for how the interim report aligns. I really like what you folks have done with our shared history, our daily interactions, and clear geography. One of the changes that you brought in is that you brought the Fraser and Kirkness communities into Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview, and I think that's just amazing. The Kirkness community is connected to the Hairsine Community League, and the Hairsine Community League is already in Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview. Fraser is directly connected to the Bannerman Community League, and Bannerman is already in Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview.

Fraser and Bannerman both have two little elementary schools. Some of the residents that live in Bannerman: their kids go to the Fraser school. Some of the people that live in Fraser: their kids go to the Bannerman school. Depending on the different needs they require, whether it's English language supports or extra educational assistant supports for their students, they go back and forth, as well as some of the community needs from after-school programs. Bannerman provides a lot of after-school programs through the Abbottsfield youth group.

That's how Abbottsfield, Beverly, and Beacon connect to the Clareview area. We have many different social services providers, whether it's C5, Candora Society, or the Abbottsfield youth group. Just because they might be located in one area, they serve that whole community. C5 is located in Clareview, and Candora and the Abbottsfield youth project are more in the Beverly area, but they

run so many different programs that serve the whole community, whether it's at the Abbottsfield rec centre or through the community areas in the Clareview rec centre or in the community leagues for after-school programs.

As well, we removed Belvedere from the Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview riding, and you've put that into Edmonton-Decore. That is actually a smart, great choice because Belvedere is strongly connected to Balwin for the same reasons as Bannerman and Fraser being connected. So we think that's a good idea, because there's so much that happens between the Belvedere and the Balwin community leagues. And because Balwin currently sits in Decore and Belvedere sits in Beverly-Clareview, there's this crossover between the two ridings and the communities where they work as one hub. Having Belvedere and Balwin together is a great decision.

Our riding is also unified through shared community life. We have a big farmers' market in the summer, and then in the winter it moves into Riverview, formerly known as Abbottsfield Mall, and that's the Beverly farmers' market. This market serves a good chunk of northeast Edmonton, and people come and, you know, buy their produce, but also it's a coffee connection to see their neighbours no matter what area of the riding. It's a great way every week to be like: hey, how's it going?

So quickly here I'd like to just finally say that the interim report appropriately accounts for the ongoing and anticipated growth within Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview. I've seen this growth firsthand, particularly with higher density housing near our transit corridors. We have a lot of apartment condos: owned apartment condos and then rented apartments that have gone up, and more are going up every day, so this helps us there. These trends support your commission's conclusions.

We also have a lot of infill going into Beverly. So we have older, big lots that, you know – I like those big lots, but we have a bunch of skinny homes going up as well, and it's helping regrow those communities. Some of the areas in Clareview are now having the infill as well, and a lot of younger families are coming in because there's affordable housing for them. You have that growth because a lot that used to serve one family, one household, is now serving two or three. So everything is growing, and we like how you've adjusted for that and the future growth down the road.

Thank you so much for your time tonight.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms Thompson. You presented last time, too, didn't you?

Ms Thompson: Yeah.

The Chair: Thank you. Any questions on this side?

Mrs. Samson: No. Thank you, though.

Ms Thompson: Thank you.

Mr. Clark: We like praise.

Ms Thompson: Okay. Good. Thank you, everyone. I appreciate it.

The Chair: Thank you.

Sean McQuillan.

Mr. McQuillan: Hi there.

The Chair: Hi. Tell us what electoral division you're in and which ones you wish to comment on.

Mr. McQuillan: I'm currently in St. Albert, but I'm commenting on Edmonton-Riverview.

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. McQuillan: Great. Good evening. My name is Sean McQuillan. Thanks for the opportunity to speak. As I mentioned, even though I'm currently living in St. Albert, I'm speaking on Riverview because I spent most of my life going to St. Paul's United church in Belgravia there, so I've lived in and worked in that area for a good chunk of my life. I have family there, lots of friends who live there. I have a really close connection to that community, so when I heard that it was being dissolved, I felt compelled to come up here and say some things.

I do want to begin by acknowledging the complexity of your work. You know, the interim report clearly reflects the challenge of balancing population equality, communities of common interest, geography, and long-term demographic change, and I appreciate all the care that has gone into this process. I want to begin just by thanking you for all of your work so far.

I am here, however, to express deep concern over one recommendation, and that is the proposed dissolution of Edmonton-Riverview. I believe this recommendation both conflicts with the commission's own data and with the lived realities of the people in the communities affected.

The dissolution of a central riding is typically justified when population is declining or hollowing out, but Edmonton-Riverview does not fit that pattern. The neighbourhoods that make up Riverview – Belgravia, Windsor Park, Parkallen Garneau, Old Strathcona, Crestwood, Laurier Heights, Grovenor, McQueen, Britannia, Parkview, and others – are seeing ongoing infill and redevelopment and rising density. The interim report itself recognizes that Edmonton continues to experience strong growth and that mature neighbourhoods increasingly absorb that growth through densification rather than sprawl. University-adjacent communities in particular are stable population anchors. Student populations, research expansion, and higher density housing are not short-term trends; they are structural and continuous. So I'm going to say that central Edmonton is not shrinking; it is intensifying and it is strengthening.

5:55

Under the proposed boundaries Edmonton-Riverview is merged into a revised Edmonton-Glenora-Riverview riding, primarily. It's also with Edmonton-Strathcona, but it begins well above the provincial population average, roughly 10 to 14 per cent, according to your own figures that you had in the interim report there.

The commission is clear that population equality must be considered over the full 10-year redistribution cycle and not just on day one. The interim report also acknowledges that urban ridings which begin above average, especially in areas experiencing redevelopment, tend to exceed acceptable variance well before the next boundary review. This means that this proposal risks creating vote dilution, not in theory but in practice within a single cycle. Maintaining Edmonton-Riverview as a distinct riding would instead ensure that both ridings and, of course, Strathcona as well have a balanced sustainable population growth aligned with current data and future growth.

Now, population numbers alone do not define effective representation. The interim report explicitly recognizes communities of common interest and geographic coherence. They are both essential considerations as well. Edmonton-Riverview communities share proximity to the river valley; transit, density, and redevelopment pressures; deeply connected community leagues; and, well, for part of it, the university-centred community life.

When Riverview is dissolved, these communities are split and merged into areas that do not share the same realities. Belgravia is

not Bonnie Doon. Laurier Heights is not Woodcroft. They're very distinct communities. River-adjacent communities do not experience the city in the same way that further north or east central neighbourhoods do, and that matters for representation.

These are not abstract distinctions. They shape daily life, local priorities, and how effectively an MLA can advocate for the constituents. Electoral boundaries are not just lines on a map. They determine whether communities are meaningfully represented, consistently overshadowed, or diluted by being combined for convenience.

West central river communities face unique pressures: environmental stewardship, redevelopment intensity, student housing, and transit infrastructure, and these concerns require focused representation, not fragmentation. The interim report emphasizes that departures from population parity must be justified. So I would suggest that the opposite is also true: that changes that weaken community coherence require strong justification. And I'm not sure if there is a strong enough justification right now being demonstrated.

So for reasons of population fairness, long-term demographic sustainability, communities of common interest, and geographic logic, I respectfully ask the commission to preserve that Edmonton-Riverview has a distinct riding in the final report. This is not opposition to change; it is a request that change reflect both evidence and lived reality. I just want to thank you for your time. So thank you.

The Chair: Okay. Dr. Martin, any questions?

Dr. Martin: No.

The Chair: Okay. On this side?

Mrs. Samson: We had an excellent presentation before you today from MLA Sarah Hoffman, and she had a lot of facts to back up about the growth in that area. So you are heard.

Mr. McQuillan: Oh, good.

Mrs. Samson: Believe me, you are heard.

The Chair: You are heard on the population. The reorganizing is maybe a bit more of a challenge. So if you had to draw the lines, do you want to go to the map and just tell us what you would want?

Mr. McQuillan: Well, I mean, to keep Edmonton-Riverview. It would make sense to keep things along the river, taking out maybe even a chunk of McClung or dipping into Edmonton-Strathcona . . .

The Chair: So chop off the top 40 per cent. Is that what you're saying?

Mr. McQuillan: Well, it's basically – we're sitting to the edge of the Yellowhead. And when you extend to the Yellowhead, like, the differences in how people experience life are drastic. So the needs for people who live close to the river are just going to be different than people out by the Yellowhead. That's just a fact. So I think, beyond just the population shifts, that the type of representation people in those communities want varies vastly.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you very much, sir. I appreciate it.

Mr. McQuillan: Thank you.

The Chair: John Nibourg. Nibourg?

Mr. Nibourg: Nibourg. That's all right.

The Chair: The emphasis was on the wrong syllable.

Mr. Nibourg: Yeah. You're sort of used to it, but nobody throws things.

The Chair: You're from Stettler.

Mr. Nibourg: My family is from Stettler.

The Chair: Oh. Okay.

Mr. Nibourg: I'm one of those unique Albertans that was born and raised in Alberta, and even though I live in Edmonton, I was born in Calgary, so don't hold it against me.

The Chair: Oh, okay. Tell me what electoral division you live in and which ones you're commenting on.

Mr. Nibourg: Currently I'm living in the great constituency of Edmonton-McClung, so we're going in there, and I'm looking to comment not on specific ridings but the process going on. The biggest concern, as I say, is using populations as opposed to voters, citizens, to determine ridings.

The purpose of the Alberta Boundaries Commission is to set the boundaries of the electoral divisions that will be used by the citizens, the voters, to determine their representative to the Alberta Legislature as per the Alberta Election Act, the Alberta Electoral Divisions Act, and the Electoral Boundaries Commission Act, as well as following the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

This is important. Even the commission's interim report notes:

Section 3 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms states:

Every citizen of Canada has the right to vote in an election of members of the House of Commons or of a legislative assembly and to be qualified for membership therein.

Canadian citizenship is a right and a responsibility. Only citizens qualified and eligible under the various acts can vote if they choose. In order to vote in the provincial election in Alberta, a voter must be a Canadian citizen, a resident of Alberta, and at least 18 years of age. In a functional democracy it is the right and responsibility of a citizen to participate in the selection of the individual who will represent their values and concerns in the Legislative Assembly.

The section 3 Charter right to vote includes the responsibility as a citizen to participate in the democratic process, which is a core principle of section 3 of the Charter. It is a citizen that bears this burden and responsibility and is owed the right of effective representation. A number of court rulings state that section 3 of the Charter includes the right to cast a ballot and the right not to have the political force of one's vote unduly diluted and the right to effective representation.

Only one of the criteria in section 14 of the Electoral Boundaries Commission Act mentions population, yet it highlights the requirement for effective representation as guaranteed by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. According to the act population is the primary criteria for determining the boundaries, yet 14(f) indicates that voter numbers can be considered as well.

The commission must remain focused on the constitutional right of Canadian citizens in Alberta to vote, and how that right has been interpreted by the Supreme Court of Canada and the Alberta Court of Appeal. Absolute parity may not be achievable, but there is a need to balance citizen voter rights in an attempt to close the gap between population numbers and the number of eligible voters in order to try to achieve effective representation. Not considering the number of voters, the citizen, skews the narrative and adversely affects the citizen's section 3 Charter rights regarding voter parity that ensures relatively equal weight of each vote to allow for effective representation in the Legislature.

Historically in Alberta the relative number of eligible voters as opposed to the actual population has not fluctuated much, but between 2017 and 2024 Alberta's population grew by 20 per cent, but the number of registered voters only grew by 11.7 per cent. The current phenomenal population growth, especially in large urban areas, has created major disparities in effective representation. In many high-growth areas the population increase can be attributed to an influx of permanent residents and nonpermanent individuals.

Using eligible voters as our criteria for determining electoral divisions has led to criticism that this may disenfranchise noneligible residents, but the road to citizenship by these aforementioned groups is available by following standard documented procedures and processes. Some groups may not choose to obtain citizenship or participate in the electoral process for various reasons, but many permanent residents do not wish to obtain Canadian citizenship as they fear losing their passports and citizen privileges from their former countries. This should not be allowed to adversely affect the opportunity for effective representation by others and dilute the voting rights of citizens. This may even provide an incentive to actively pursue citizenship by some individuals and communities.

6:05

The electoral process is based on giving citizens the opportunity to choose who they feel would best represent them in the Legislature. By reviewing the various legislation and various court cases, by far the narrative revolves around citizens and voters. The Alberta Election Act refers to elections, electors, electoral divisions, and voting areas. The act shows that voters, or electors, are the basis of voting in determining electoral divisions, constituencies, without mentioning population. Section 13(1) charges the Chief Electoral Officer to maintain a register of electors from which lists of electors for voting areas for each electoral division is created. There are numerous sections and references to the number of electors in compiling and maintaining and using the list of electors. During elections the results are tabulated and reported as total number of votes cast with the percentage turnout of eligible voters also documented. There's no official mention of the number of votes cast versus the population.

If the premise is using the number of eligible voters as a criteria for determining adjustments to the electoral divisions, constituencies, as per the Alberta Election Act and then using the 2024 data, the following information is indicated. The average number of registered voters for the current 87 constituencies is 34,094 voters. The largest number of registered voters per constituency is in Airdrie-Cochrane, which is 4,417 voters, which is 61 per cent of the population; Edmonton-South West, 42,412 voters, which is 55 per cent of the population; in Spruce Grove-Stony Plain, 4,840 voters, which is 66 per cent of the population. The fewest are in Peace River, which is 23,236 voters, which is 53 per cent of the population, mind you. Central Peace-Notley is 19,393 voters, which is 67 per cent of the population. And Lesser Slave Lake is 15,736 voters, which is 57 per cent of the population. Some of the other ones if you get in there: Calgary-North East has got 33,637 voters with a populace of 85,188. Edmonton-Ellerslie, 33,586 voters with a populace of 82,000, for only 40 per cent. The worst one is Calgary-Bhullar-McCall, 24,020 voters with a population of 70,633.

The disparity is, like, off the charts. The worst part of it is that the disparity and the changes are in the urban areas and not the rural areas. You're getting effective representation, which is covered through the various acts. The top electoral divisions where the average population deviation exceeds the voter deviation, which is ranging 58 to 80 per cent, are all in urban areas, where the average

voter deviation surpasses the population deviation is between 19 and 30 per cent, and they're all in rural areas. These numbers – there are lots of others I could give you; way too many numbers to show you – clearly show that in the current system of only using population as a base of determining electoral boundaries the concept of effective representation of voter parity and fairness is not evident. This is in a direct contradiction of section 3 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. It's not consistent with the various sections of the Alberta Election Act.

Again, the percentage of growth of Alberta's population was 20 per cent, and the percentage of registered voters was 11 per cent. Going through the rest of them, if you're using the criteria as per section 15(1) of the Electoral Boundaries Commission Act and applying it to the 2024 registered voters numbers regarding the 25 per cent, plus or minus, for adjusting electoral divisions, only Airdrie-Cochrane with 46,417 registered voters, for 36.14 per cent deviation from the provincial average, would have to be adjusted for exceeding the target. Seven other divisions would be below the target, which is Lesser Slave Lake, minus 53 per cent deviation; Central Peace-Notley, minus 43 per cent; Peace River, minus 31; Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo, minus 31; Calgary-Bhullar-McCall, minus 29; Fort McMurray-Lac La Biche, 29; and Cardston-Siksika. Using the criteria for 15(2) for the 50 per cent exemption, the existing Calgary-Bhullar-McCall boundaries would need to be expanded. Cardston-Siksika would require some minor adjustments, and the others would need to be reviewed in order to meet their criteria.

The current proposed boundary revisions are not consistent with the use of voter citizenship numbers as a prime criteria and is not following the concept of the requirement for effective representation as guaranteed by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. I strongly urge this commission and all legislators to take this to heart and rectify this error both as part of the commission's recommendations and section 14 of the Electoral Boundaries Commission Act.

The Chair: Thank you, and please – the numbers are hard to record – if you want, leave a copy of your presentation with Mr. Aaron Roth at the back, and he can get it to us.

Any questions on this side?

Mr. Evans: No questions.

The Chair: Any questions?

Mr. Clark: Yeah. If you don't mind, maybe just a point of clarification. I mean, part of the reason population is used is that the elected official represents all of those people. Some of the examples used, some of the more extreme examples – there are a lot of permanent residents who are on a path that are not yet voters, but they use health care, education, infrastructure, you know, provincial services of all different kinds, so in many ways using population – and that's not even to mention kids who are under 18: can't vote but count as population. That's historically been the rationale for using population, and I think that's what every Alberta commission to date has ever used, population. I think that's the reason that we use population, and from my perspective I think that's as it should be. I think your Member of the Legislative Assembly represents everyone, whether they're a citizen or a permanent resident or of voting age or not and, frankly, whether they voted for that MLA or not. You're their representative. Yeah. That's the reason that we use population.

Mr. Nibourg: That's a challenge, but it's the phenomenal growth. Historically, going through the data, it would work. They're

basically lockstep going through there between voter numbers and population numbers and growth, but this unprecedented growth is creating a lot of issues. Again, the same thing, too, as some of the – it causes a lot of grief, especially in the northern ridings, in rural ridings, where the growth hasn't taken place. Again, it's all the legislation. You go through all the legislation I've read; the only place it's mentioned, population for determining boundaries, is one note in the act, so either the acts have to change or . . .

The Chair: You provide us with some interesting information, but so what? You know, we have very limited control over that. Historically electors were the measure, up until the early '90s, in Alberta. It switched to population, and I'm not sure why. I would venture to say that almost every other jurisdiction uses population although I heard that maybe there is a Maritime province that uses electors. Seemingly, for reasons that are not clear, the last two or three generations we've made that change from voters to population, and our act is clear. It is population. Your point is well made that maybe we should make a recommendation – and, you know, we have the right to make recommendations – but your presentation is best made before a legislative committee than us.

6:15

Mr. Nibourg: As I said, it's one of these things I felt strongly and talked to a lot of people. It should be brought up because a lot of people are like: what is going on? And you're like: it's the changes, and they're trying to justify. Even going through some of the numbers I've got, a lot of the changes recommended for the various ridings you've got right now: well, they fall lockstep. They're perfectly aligned. It's these outliers, these anomalies, that when you're going through to figure, "Okay; how best are you going to deal with some of these various complaints?" I'm just suggesting things that: oh, take that into consideration. Is that going to help if you looked at that? You know, you can say: yes, we've looked at it, and it's not going to work.

The Chair: We have spent a bit of time trying to convince those people who advocate for one person, one vote that that's an American concept. That's not our system. However, our neighbours to the south do use population. They do not use voters.

Mr. Nibourg: Again, causing problems..

The Chair: Well, I mean, yeah. You know, it's an interesting historic question as to how we evolved to that.

Dr. Martin: One comment, sir. I've run these thought experiments, and I hope you find a legislative committee and make your case because there is a case. But one of the things that we would have to know is: what kind of a tool is this data set? You know, are you going to use it just at the margins of the most egregious cases, or are you going to use it as a back measure throughout all the ridings that you're adjusting?

Third point: the elections officer does keep records annually on voters, but he doesn't adjust them in accordance with us changing map boundaries and the like, so there's a data gap. So you can argue a case in principle – and I think you can go quite a long distance with that – saying it's out of whack with the population estimate approach, but you have to reduce it to a practicable tool. That's the challenge, I think.

Mr. Nibourg: And that's the thing. For the electoral lists, it's when they're updated for the elections and they go through there. You know this is year 1 as it's going through. It's one of the simplest, easiest ways to determine how many people are

eligible to vote in a riding because when they call the election, boom, this is the number.

Dr. Martin: The Calgary-North East riding that you alluded to: we have proposed to basically cut it in half, but we have no idea how the actual voters distribute themselves when we do that.

Mr. Nibourg: That's why I was looking through it. How is it determined to figure, like – because you can't do that. It's sort of a guess and a hope and a prayer. But when you start looking at it, I think, if you extrapolate it, less than 30 per cent of the population are registered voters.

Dr. Martin: Well, then you just don't know, do you? When you divide a riding like that to get the population more or less, you have no idea how many voters you're taking with you.

Mr. Nibourg: Yes. Right now my figures show there are about 20,000 registered voters in Calgary-Bhullar-McCall, and if you cut it in half, there are 10,000 voters for this.

Dr. Martin: We don't know that.

Mr. Nibourg: I know, so that's . . .

The Chair: Well, you made your point, sir. Leave a copy with Mr. Roth at the back.

Mr. Nibourg: Again, you guys have a tough job.

The Chair: Well, you just made it more difficult.

Mr. Nibourg: Thank you.

Dr. Martin: Everybody tells us this.

The Chair: Okay. Our next presenter is Philippe Johnson. No? Vincent Byfield?

Mr. Byfield: Yeah.

The Chair: Please make yourself comfortable. Tell us your name for the record and what electoral division you are in and which ones you want to comment on.

Mr. Byfield: My name is Vincent Byfield, and I'm speaking about the Edmonton-South West electoral division. I have some handouts.

The Chair: Sure. Just give them to Mr. Roth, and he'll hand them out to us?

Mr. Byfield: Perfect. Thank you very much. Just proceed with my presentation?

Thank you, Mr. Chair and members of the commission. My name is Vince Byfield. I appreciate the opportunity to speak this evening.

The first question before the commission is not where Devon should be placed within Edmonton but whether Devon should be incorporated into an Edmonton constituency at all. On that point the evidence is very clear. As the commission has repeatedly stated in past reports, communities of interest are defined by how people actually live, work, and travel. That approach is affirmed in section 14 of the Electoral Boundaries Commission Act, which directs the commission to consider effective representation, common community interests, and transportation and communication patterns.

Devon functions as part of the Edmonton metropolitan system. It is immediately adjacent to the city, located south of the North Saskatchewan river, and connected by multiple direct highway corridors. In daily life Devon is not oriented toward distant rural

centres. It is oriented toward Edmonton. That integration is already formally recognized at the regional planning level as reflected in Devon's participation in the Edmonton Metropolitan Region Board. This lived reality is also reflected in the town of Devon's own December 15, 2022, business profile, which states that roughly two-thirds of Devon's population has a short commute within the Edmonton metropolitan region.

Devon is capable of functioning as a self-contained community. However, the reality is that the breadth of the employment opportunities and services available in Edmonton has drawn the majority of Devon residents into the city for work and daily activity. That reliance extends beyond employment to major institutional services, including health care, postsecondary education, and other Edmonton-based regional services.

Rather than speak only in abstract terms, I think it's important to hear directly from someone who can describe the lived reality of daily life connected to Edmonton. The following testimony has been provided by Ingrid Rust, a resident of the town of Devon, and this is being read with her permission. She was supposed to be here to join me tonight, but her father passed away and she's been called away on that. These are her words.

In Devon it's generally understood that most people work in Edmonton. If you talk to your neighbours, you'll find that a large portion of households have at least one person commuting into the city every day. That's true on my street, and it's true throughout the community. Devon is a great place to live, but it's not where most jobs are. People commute into Edmonton for work or to areas immediately adjacent to Edmonton, like Acheson to the north or Nisku to the east. That's just the normal pattern of life.

The same applies when it comes to shopping and entertainment. For major shopping people don't stay in Devon. If you're doing a Costco run, for example, you're either going to the Costco in Winterburn, in west Edmonton, or the Costco near Nisku. Both are essentially the same distance, at roughly 20 minutes away. For groceries, hardware, clothing, or services, many people go to the Windermere area. For dining, movies, or entertainment, Edmonton is where people naturally go. Devon has local amenities, but Edmonton is where people spend much of their time outside of the town. That's simply the reality of how Devon fits into the region. People live in Devon, but they work, shop, and are entertained in Edmonton.

6:25

The rest is my closing here. Thank you. What you've just heard from me confirms what the data already shows. Devon functions as a part of Edmonton. The remaining question is which Edmonton constituency best reflects that reality. Geography provides the first answer. Devon lies south of the North Saskatchewan River, as does Edmonton-South West. Edmonton-West Enoch lies entirely north of the river. The commission has consistently treated major natural features, particularly rivers, as meaningful and logical boundaries. Real-world travel patterns reinforce this distinction. We examined travel times from the centre of Devon to downtown Edmonton. Whether a resident travels north-south using highway 60 or east-west using highway 19 and connects through Calgary Trail or gateway corridor, the travel time is essentially identical, about 41 minutes in either case. That tells us something important. Devon's connection to Edmonton is broad and systemic, not tied to a single corridor to the north of the river: daily flow of people into Edmonton-South and South West.

Population balance provides a second important, objective reason. In your electoral boundaries commission report published in October of 2025 the proposed new boundaries show Edmonton-South West at approximately 54,000 residents and Edmonton-West

Enoch at 57,000. Devon has approximately 6,500 residents. Adding Devon to Edmonton-South West brings that riding into balance. Adding Devon to Edmonton-West Enoch would make it the most heavily populated riding in the city. Placing Devon within a large, predominantly rural, urban district also risks diluting the effective representation of a commuter-based community whose priorities are distinctly metropolitan.

When geography travel patterns, population balance, growth trends, and lived community reality are considered together, the conclusion is straightforward. Devon belongs with Edmonton, and Edmonton-South West is the logical place for it. Thank you for your time and consideration.

The other parts are just to supplement what I've been saying here, but they're pretty self-explanatory. Thank you.

The Chair: Okay. So Devon is 6,500 people?

Mr. Byfield: Correct.

The Chair: So adding it would bring it up to 60,000.

Mr. Byfield: Sixty thousand. Yeah, pretty much.

The Chair: Okay.

Questions on this side?

Mr. Clark: Yeah.

Thank you very much for being here. I saw your written submission ahead of time as well. Thank you very much for sending that in. You know, one of the things we struggle with, of course, is the rapid population growth, and southwest Edmonton is one of those areas. Even though we've set Edmonton-South West at 54,000 or so, we're a little worried that's going to grow too quickly and overpopulate. As I think one of the previous presenters suggested, it's one of the challenges with urban constituencies. You're not really skating to where the puck is going to be. In some ways you're skating where the puck has been, and you're a little bit behind just because population tends to be attracted.

We did think about whether Devon would fit with Edmonton. Part of the struggle I think is: does it solve a problem we have, or does it actually make a problem we have worse than that? If that's now 60,000, it'll be very quickly way out of whack, right? Then we're pulling from some of the rural areas. I also think it's worth noting that we haven't heard from the town of Devon as a formal submission, which always makes it a bit tricky to know what they're thinking. The regional model is breaking down a bit too as an EMRB has been dissolved.

Mr. Byfield: Oh. Interesting.

Mr. Clark: Yeah. I used to chair the CMRB, so I know that firsthand, although I know municipalities work quite closely in the region notwithstanding that. You know, more just data points I think is what we're thinking. Isn't to say we're dismissing it out of hand. We'll take this under consideration like I think we do every other submission. Yeah, With that information if you have anything else you want to add.

Mr. Byfield: Well, I would actually in the sense of just... [An electronic device sounded] Sorry, I have to shut this off. I apologize.

I've grown up in west Edmonton, and the one thing I've been noticing because we have season tickets to Rabbit Hill is that on the south side that area seems to have somehow stopped. I'm not sure why, but I don't see as many developments happening there, but on the west end I am seeing quite a lot of developments, especially south of Edgemont going west towards, basically, the Devon

highway. There is a fair amount of expansion happening there, so I agree with you. There's still a lot of farmland in Edmonton-South West, but I haven't seen any significant developments happening there. I'm seeing a lot of developments, for some reason, in the west end.

The Chair: Do you live in Devon?

Mr. Byfield: I do not live in Devon. That's why I wanted Ingrid Rust to be here. She does live in Devon.

The Chair: Okay.

Any other questions?

Mr. Clark: No.

The Chair: Okay. Well, thank you for your presentation and thank you for, you know, giving us the written one so concisely. We make no promises, but it is a very live issue.

Dr. Martin: I did have a question.

Mr. Byfield: Oh, yeah. Sure.

Dr. Martin: Mr. Byfield, you make a case for the work patterns in particular, taking people to Acheson to the north on 60.

Mr. Byfield: Or Nisku, yeah.

Dr. Martin: Using 19 to come up into Edmonton proper. Do you feel that people in Devon still work in Nisku, going along 19 and just heading to Nisku?

Mr. Byfield: So I interviewed Ingrid quite a bit on this. She's lived there for some time, and she said that if she were to hazard a guess, half or more live in Devon but work in Edmonton. There is a relatively small portion that work in Acheson and Nisku, but her gut is that it's about equal. Right? The Nisku one is slightly larger; therefore, it draws quite a bit as well, but I don't have solid data on that.

Participant: I could help out. I live in Devon.

Mr. Byfield: Yeah?

Participant: About 23 per cent of our population works in Nisku.

Mr. Byfield: Twenty-three per cent of the population works in Nisku?

Participant: Either works in Nisku or within that area between Nisku and Leduc.

Mr. Byfield: That's fascinating. Can I ask the source for that?

Participant: Well, the mayor right now is Mr. Craddock, and I've lived in Devon since 1974. I watched the inception of the end of Imperial Oil and the gas plant in Devon itself, but if I was really to make it a very conservative educated guess, about 20 per cent of the population.

Mr. Byfield: Interesting.

Participant: And not just the oil field industry. I'm talking about that whole corridor of Sparrow Drive all the way to Leduc, so including the people that are commuting to Leduc to work as well.

Mr. Byfield: In that 2022 Devon study they said that in terms of occupations, which would be one indicator for this, the number one

occupation of people who live in Devon is construction, and the second one is public administration. I don't think they need that many public administrators for the town of Devon, so that would argue that they're probably working in the Edmonton area.

Thank you.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you very much.

Our next presenter is Jordon Northcott. Please make yourself comfortable and tell us what electoral division you're in and which one you want to talk about.

Mr. Northcott: Okay. Good evening, commission members. My name is Jordon Northcott. I'm the reeve of Clearwater county, and we appreciate the opportunity to provide input on the Electoral Boundaries Commission's interim report and to comment on the proposed redistribution affecting the current Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre electoral division. The interim report proposes dividing Clearwater county among multiple provincial electoral divisions, fundamentally altering the county's longstanding representation within one single riding.

6:35

While the commission's mandate to reflect population changes is understood, Clearwater county has significant concerns that the proposed boundaries will negatively impact effective rural representation and local governance. First, the proposed redistribution would result in Clearwater county no longer being contained within one provincial electoral division. This loss of unified representation would weaken the county's ability to advance a cohesive and consistent voice on matters of regional importance, particularly on issues such as infrastructure, investment, agricultural policy, emergency management, and rural service delivery.

Second, the proposal would fragment the county across multiple ridings, including the proposed Banff-Jasper, Mountain View-Kneehill, and Lacombe-Rocky Mountain House electoral divisions. Splitting the county among several constituencies risks diluting rural interests and dispersing Clearwater county's population across ridings with differing priorities and urban-rural dynamics.

Third, the proposed ridings are anticipated to encompass significantly larger geographical areas, a trend that continues to disproportionately affect rural Alberta. Expanding the geographical size of rural electoral divisions places additional strain on Members of the Legislative Assembly to effectively serve constituents, attend local meetings, and maintain a meaningful presence across the vast and diverse regions.

Finally, Clearwater county among multiple MLAs would create practical challenges for residents, council, and administration. These include confusion regarding representation, increased administrative complexity, difficulties co-ordinating provincial advocacy, and added complications when seeking grants or engaging with provincial ministries. Collectively, these risks diminish Clearwater county's effectiveness and visibility within provincial decision-making processes.

Clearwater county respectfully urges the commission to reconsider boundary options to maintain Clearwater county within a single provincial electoral division wherever possible. The county requests that the commission give due consideration to the importance of cohesive rural representation, the realities of geographical size and service delivery in rural municipalities, and the cumulative impacts of repeated boundary adjustments on rural communities. Clearwater county submits that electoral redistribution should balance population quality with effective representation, ensuring rural residents continue to have accessible, meaningful, and equitable representation at the provincial level.

In conclusion, Clearwater county appreciates the commission's careful consideration of these comments and the opportunity to participate in the electoral boundary review process. The county remains available to provide further information for clarification should that be of assistance to the commission.

Thank you.

The Chair: Well, thank you. This area is an issue that we had some discussion on last week in several presentations.

I think maybe it's fair if every one of us had a shot at questions, starting with you, Mr. Clark.

Mr. Clark: Yeah. Thank you. First, I really appreciate you being here today. You know, it is an area that we've heard from quite a bit. Some of the folks in school divisions and things, I mean, quite a few ordinary citizens and folks, lots of folks, have written in and also presented to us. I think it's especially helpful when elected representatives who represent the whole community are here to speak on behalf of your community. That's very helpful.

I'm curious. You had one MLA, and I think sort of your argument is that you develop a relationship, you can work with them, and they advocate on behalf of your county. But many other counties, I'd say most, have more than one MLA, and they find that quite helpful. It's interesting. We've had a number of different municipal districts, counties, cities, and towns that – I'd say it's almost half and half. Some of them would say: "I can't believe you're taking away our second MLA. We really love having two MLAs. That's really helpful." Then others are saying: "Well, wait a minute. I don't want to deal with more than one MLA. I kind of like dealing with the one." I guess I'm just wondering if you think there is any possible benefit to actually having more than one MLA that represents Clearwater county.

Mr. Northcott: With the regional success in the past many residents and even council members feel that it may dilute the efficiencies of having one representative representing us as the MLA.

Mr. Clark: Okay. Fair enough. That's a clear answer. Thank you.

The Chair: Just for clarification for me, your county is quite large as compared to other counties, right?

Mr. Northcott: Yeah. It could be considered that way.

The Chair: Okay.

Dr. Martin.

Dr. Martin: Thank you. Thank you, Reeve. I wanted to ask you – I have it on a map somewhere. Just tell me: what is the eastern boundary of the county?

Mr. Northcott: We are just, oh, probably from Caroline roughly 15 miles to the east of Caroline. Then you would run into Red Deer county.

Dr. Martin: Okay. Thank you.

The Chair: Okay. Mrs. Samson?

Mrs. Samson: I don't have any questions, just the comment that this is turning into a real hot spot. It's a hot potato. It's not just for all the points you mentioned. We also have had pressure right across the province because of the loss of a rural voice, another seat. Yeah. We're going to talk about it more.

Mr. Northcott: Thank you very much.

Mr. Evans: No questions. Thank you.

Mrs. Samson: Thank you for coming out.

Mr. Northcott: Thank you very much for your time.

The Chair: Thank you.

Kimberley Gutsche. How did I do?

Mrs. Gutsche: It's actually Gutsche, like the handbag but with no money in it. I figured after a long day, butchering my name is a good thing because then I can tell a joke.

The Chair: Okay. Tell us your home riding and which ones you want to comment on.

Mrs. Gutsche: Okay. Members of the commission, ladies and gentlemen, my name is Kimberley Gutsche, and I'm a constituent of the Strathcona-Sherwood Park riding. I sit before you today to engage in a vital conversation about the proposed electoral boundary changes impacting my community. As Alberta navigates the challenges and opportunities of growth representation, it's essential to reflect on our demographics and the socioeconomic ties that unite us. I firmly believe that the proposed boundary changes for Strathcona-Sherwood Park are not only unnecessary but could also jeopardize the effectiveness of our governance.

Let's begin with growth, a topic backed by clear numbers. Our population currently stands at around 51,000 give or take, comfortably within the legal 10 per cent variance permitted by provincial regulations. This means we have no immediate legal need for change. I'll just also say that I'm a change management professional, so I'm not averse to change. We are naturally progressing towards the provincial target of 55,000. Developments continue to be built in communities like Ardrossan and the Hillshire subdivision. The Hillshire subdivision alone is projected to add around 3,600 residents upon completion. Between these two communities, this means we'll reach the 55,000 target organically in just a few years. I also want to note that Ardrossan is projected to reach 6,000 residents in the short term. Why disrupt our thriving community with boundary adjustments for a problem that is already being resolved?

Now, think about Heritage Hills, a neighbourhood that has been an integral part of our riding for over a decade. Separating this community from communities north and south of it risks impacting valuable relationships at a government level and has profound impacts on families. Families who reside in Heritage Hills and have children who attend schools that are in other communities today such as Davidson Creek elementary will be left having an MLA represent their school's interests and a different MLA where they reside. We need representation that connects closely with our educational institutions, ensuring parents have a strong advocate to secure quality education for our children.

6:45

Next let's address the proposal of adding parts of Beaumont community to the Strathcona-Sherwood Park constituency. Residents of Beaumont often look toward Leduc or south Edmonton for work, shopping, and services, indicating a lack of natural community of interest with Sherwood Park and Strathcona county. This disconnect weakens representation for all involved.

Rather than forcing boundary changes that don't align with our shared interests, let's consider another option if changes must be made, adding Tofield. Tofield residents already integrate into our commuting patterns, using highway 14 to access jobs and services in our community. They contribute to our local economy and utilize

our health care services. Incorporating Tofield into our riding would enhance representation by uniting a coherent community that shares needs and community services.

Finally, we must evaluate the complexities of governance and economic ties. Strathcona-Sherwood Park operates in a specialized municipality, sharing one municipal government with the Sherwood Park constituency. Combining Strathcona-Sherwood Park with Beaumont, a distinct community, or potentially with other agricultural areas like Camrose would complicate representation, forcing one MLA to balance entirely different municipal frameworks and economic priorities. We need to ensure our governance aligns with our economic and communal interests for the benefit of all residents.

In conclusion, it is essential to re-evaluate the rationale behind these proposed changes. Our growth is a natural progression that needs no artificial boost, and Heritage Hills deserves to remain with the Strathcona-Sherwood Park constituency. If a change must be made to add a community, Tofield offers a more sensible route for cohesive representation, and we must respect the unique governance structures that support Strathcona county's success.

I want to take a moment to acknowledge the challenging task that the commission faces in proposing boundary changes. I do not want your job. This is no small undertaking, and I appreciate the diligence and thoughtfulness that goes into evaluating community demographics and needs. Redrawing boundaries requires balancing a multitude of factors, including population growth, community interests, and the practical implications of governance.

I understand that you are striving to create a framework that serves everyone effectively. However, it is vital to consider that solutions we pursue must genuinely reflect the unique character and cohesiveness of our communities rather than impose arbitrary changes that could disrupt it. Your efforts are commendable, and my hope is that we can find solutions that respect both the commission's challenges and the needs of residents.

Thank you for considering my remarks.

The Chair: Thank you for your very precise presentation.

Mr. Evans, any questions?

Mr. Evans: No, but thank you for your suggestions.

The Chair: Yeah. We like solutions.

Mr. Evans: Yeah. Appreciate that.

Mrs. Gutsche: We always say at work: come with a solution, not a problem.

Mrs. Samson: Thank you for coming out tonight. I want you to know that we had a lot of written submissions and a lot in person on this very topic. Thank you for showing up in person.

Mrs. Gutsche: Excellent. Thank you.

The Chair: Dr. Martin.

Dr. Martin: Yeah. Thank you very much for your presentation. I would like to say that we received many, many submissions in the past six weeks around these points. I wanted to press you particularly on something we did, not merely the Beaumont piece but the Looma piece that is down in that corner as well. What do you think about that little area? Is that, in some form of life, different than the county?

Mrs. Gutsche: I'm speaking as a resident. I would say that probably Looma would make more sense than Beaumont. I know people that live out that way. I ran into somebody at the

grocery store yesterday who lives out that way. They work in Sherwood Park.

Dr. Martin: Which grocery store? In Sherwood Park?

Mrs. Gutsche: Yeah. It was on Baseline, the Sobeys there. You know, I think that residents, especially if they're urban based, do come more to Sherwood Park than maybe they would go – without looking at a map exactly where Looma is. I've driven past it; I just can't remember where. But I also know people that live in Beaumont. They frequent Edmonton: Mill Woods, Ellerslie area, so forth. It makes more sense, if Beaumont needs to be carved up, that it would join up, do that hybrid approach with an urban-rural, with one of the Edmonton ridings.

Dr. Martin: Thank you.

The Chair: Mr. Clark.

Mr. Clark: Yeah. Thank you. You know, I guess I wanted to ask about the pace of growth. One of the things we're struggling with is not just absolute growth because many parts of Alberta, not all but many, are growing, just not all at the same time.

Part of the challenge, I think, in the Strathcona-Sherwood Park area and the Sherwood Park area generally is that the growth tends to be a bit lower density. Over the last seven years Strathcona-Sherwood Park grew 7 per cent, and the province's average is 20. Sherwood Park itself grew about 10 per cent against an average of 20. So they are growing, absolutely. By any other measure 10 per cent growth is pretty darn good. Relative to Alberta it's half, so that's part of the challenge. You know, part of your argument at the beginning was: well, if we just kind of stay status quo, we'll eventually catch up. There's a chance that at the very best you kind of get to about the average, because there certainly is a lot of development and growth happening. It's just a question of: would you exceed the growth of other parts of the province, in particular the big cities, Edmonton and Calgary?

Having said that, the idea of Tofield is not the first time we've heard that. That's interesting. And then some of that local knowledge on Looma is really interesting as well. So it certainly gives us something to work on as we kind of poke away at our online maps and things.

Anyway, I just want to thank you for that.

Mrs. Gutsche: Yeah. I appreciate that. You know, I don't know what the population growth is for Beaumont. I know that their population is 26,000. What you guys have carved out: I don't know what makes up that population. But in looking at Tofield's population of 2,130 – we've got Heritage Hills at 3,200 and then the projected short-term growth of 6,000 for Ardrossan – I think that we would make up that difference if it was 13,000 coming from Beaumont. Right?

I put some thought into this. I just think, too, that that municipality and the fact that residents that are – I think it's important that residents that live in the areas that utilize services are the ones that are considered, and that's why I feel strongly about the Beaumont piece.

Mr. Clark: Thank you very much. That's really helpful.

Mrs. Gutsche: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

Okay. Philippe Johnson. Mr. Johnson, make yourself comfortable. Tell us what electoral division you are living in and which ones you want to comment on.

Mr. Johnson: Of course. I live in Edmonton-Strathcona in the community of Ritchie.

The Chair: I've heard of it.

Mr. Johnson: I have some general comments that I'd like to provide, not specific to a riding, but I hope they're valuable nonetheless.

The Chair: Okay. Please proceed.

Mr. Johnson: I know I have six minutes, so I will respect everyone's time.

Again, my name is Philippe. I am a lawyer. I was a candidate in the 2012 provincial election. I was also a political staffer for 10 years, and I'm an active volunteer in the community. You can call me the typical soccer dad.

I would like to applaud the commission overall. I think it did a very good job, but like most things in life, I think there's some room for improvement. I'd like to focus my submission today on two aspects of my written submission. First, I'd like to talk about my argument that Edmonton requires two additional ridings, not just one. In particular, I'd like the committee to ensure they take into account the anticipated population growth in the central Edmonton area.

Second of all, I would like to comment on my argument that there should not be a removal of a district in the central Edmonton ridings. I don't think it's justified, and I'd like to talk about how the proximity to the Legislature should not be used as a justification to unproportionately burden or dilute the votes of those in central Edmonton.

Now, with regard to my argument about the two ridings, I'd like to ask the committee to explain in their final report how they took into account the anticipated population growth in central Edmonton. The report focuses a lot on population growth rates in the suburbs. Through omission it discounts future population growth in the central core and does not provide any projections for the central core.

This discounting does not reflect my own personal experience in Ritchie, having lived there since 2008 and especially since 2019. From what I could find, between 2016 and 2021 Edmonton's growth rate was 1.6 per cent. Ritchie's was 1.4, not far behind. I think it is likely much higher now given the densification policies of various governments, including provincial and municipal. There have been, as I'm sure you've heard, changes to zoning, improved transportation, infrastructure, drainage, and education.

6:55

I'd like to just tell a quick story about education. In 2007 both the public and the Catholic school divisions had decided to demolish the elementary schools in Ritchie. There was public backlash. In 2010 new school boards were elected, and they decided to support mature neighbourhoods instead of contribute to their decline. In 2015 through 2019 the government committed to building new schools in Edmonton, and new elementary schools were built in Ritchie, one for the public and one for the Catholic. This government has also committed to building new schools.

Since then there has been an explosion of growth in my community, especially since 2018. More families are coming in, more infills, more restaurants, more breweries, more bookstores, condos, apartments. The growth has been exemplary. In 2008 I could walk down the street in Ritchie; you would barely see a child on the street. Now you can hardly throw a stone without hitting a family walking their dog. I would not recommend it. I will never do that.

I am also an example of this growth. In 2017 I purchased a duplex with my parents. Where there is the duplex, before was a single bungalow with an elderly woman living in it. Now there are my parents in one half of the duplex; me, my wife, and my two children in the other. Behind me there used to be two duplexes, also with two elderly people living in them. They are now gone, and there is slated to be a new apartment building that is seven to eight storeys high.

I just don't see this reality reflected in the current report. I fear that Edmonton central voters will have their votes unduly diluted if the current boundaries go ahead. I would like to ask that the commission – and maybe you've done this already – consider neighbourhood-level growth projections to ensure effective representation, provide growth projections in your reasons in the interest of helping the public understand your decisions, to shield from arbitrariness, and to promote the principles of accountability and responsive justification.

Now, with regard to my argument that a removal of a central Edmonton district is not justified. I would like to posit that proximity to the Legislature, to the urban core should not be used to justify the dilution of votes compared to other people living in suburban Edmonton or other like jurisdictions such as Calgary. Now, seemingly, again maybe through omission, the proximity to the Legislature seems to have been used to justify having four of the districts with a greater than 11 per cent variance in Edmonton. They're all in Edmonton, including Edmonton-Glenora-Riverview with 12.5. The variance is a couple of points higher than Calgary.

Distance from the Legislature must be considered by the commission. The further you are away from the Legislature, it means more time to travel from the Legislature to your constituency. But this only applies in very limited circumstances such as when the session begins and ends and on Thursdays, when MLAs go back to their constituencies for constituency breaks. Other than that, when MLAs are in Edmonton at the Legislature, they are focused on legislative business. When they're not in Edmonton, they're in their ridings dealing with their constituents.

You should also take into account the number of sitting days. Last year the number of sitting days was relatively small. We had 58 sitting days out of 365 in the year. You should also consider that night sittings are becoming more prominent. Night sittings represented 35 per cent of all sitting days, at 20, in 2025, and I think this is probably likely to grow.

When MLAs are in Edmonton, they're focused on the Legislature. There's no benefit to having the Legislature in your constituency during the legislative sessions. The reality is that there's next to no effective representational value. There are no special services, there are no special favours, and you get very little access to your MLA during legislative sessions whether or not they live in Edmonton or Medicine Hat.

Because of this, proximity should not be weighed heavily when considering if the core has effective representation or should be used to justify dilution of votes. If distance needs to be accounted for because of distance from the Legislature to your constituency, then that is a burden that should be shared by all Albertans who do not have a relatively unreasonable distance between them and the Legislature, not just the people who live within close proximity to the Legislature.

I believe that's my six minutes, so thank you very much.

The Chair: Thank you. Your last two sentences I didn't follow.

Mr. Johnson: Sorry. As it seems right now, the proximity to the Legislature was used to justify a relatively higher dilution of votes in proximity to the Legislature. There wasn't a direct correlation,

but when you describe the justification for removing a central Edmonton district, part of the justification in the report now is the proximity to the Legislature. By baking that into the formula, you're essentially saying that because you live close to the Legislature, it's justified to have more vote dilution, but I think that's flipping the argument upside down. The distance from the Legislature is a reason for rural districts who are far away from the Legislature to be below the percentage; it's not a justification for people who live close to be high necessarily. It might be by necessity, but if someone's votes have to be diluted so that . . .

The Chair: Well, I don't think we're comfortable with those kind of terms. We talk about effective representation as opposed to one person, one vote. Effective representation includes the average and then a range of 25 minus or 25 plus, so I'm not sure that the word "dilution" is helpful because the range is the range.

Mr. Johnson: Oh. I believe it's a term used by the courts.

Mr. Evans: You're conflating voter parity.

Mr. Johnson: Yeah. Like, proximity to the Legislature shouldn't be used as a justification to increase the voter parity. There should be some sort of benefit for having your vote diluted. Maybe you don't like the word "diluted," but some sort of benefit. I mean, I didn't come up with a different word because I think that's the word that the courts use.

You know, there are 40,000 people in Edmonton who live in constituencies that are above the average. That is because we don't have a one person, one vote parity system. We rely on some areas having fewer residents, like you said, in order to compensate for things like living in a rural area. Perhaps it's more difficult to serve a rural area, and we're compensating for time it takes for rural people to travel around. There has to be compensation for that, and other ridings have to have more voters in them to compensate for other ridings having fewer voters in them. Part of that justification should not be proximity to the Legislature necessarily. It should be weighted very low given that when in the Legislature, your MLAs are occupied by legislative business, so there's really no benefit to living close to the Legislature when the Legislature is in session.

The Chair: You tell that to the MLAs who drive five hours to Edmonton.

Mr. Johnson: Yeah. There has to be some compensation for that, right? But that burden should be borne proportionally by all Albertans who don't have a five-hour drive. It shouldn't be borne disproportionately by people who live close to the Legislature.

The Chair: Okay. You're making a very, very fine argument that maybe I'm just not getting, sir, but I'll let the rest of the commission dialogue with you.

Mr. Johnson: Sure.

The Chair: Mr. Clark.

Mr. Clark: I'm trying to decide if it will make Justice Miller unhappy if I continue asking about this, just to clarify it.

The Chair: Well, if you can clarify it, go ahead.

Mr. Clark: In our report on page 33, I think, you talk about Edmonton. There's a part of that paragraph that says proximity to the Legislature is part of our consideration. It isn't sort of, as far as I can tell, a specific argument around any particular constituency.

It's more just a general sense. And if I'm hearing what you're saying, you're saying: listen, being a Member of the Legislative Assembly involves many things, being a legislator but also being in what the courts have called an ombudsman role as well, advocating for your constituents. You're saying that task is sort of a universal task of Members of the Legislative Assembly that has absolutely no bearing on how close. If you can see the Legislature across the river, if it's a six-hour drive: those things don't matter if I'm advocating for somebody to get health care or build a school or a road or something like that, and that is a core part of the job of a representative of the people of that constituency. Is that what you're saying?

Mr. Johnson: Actually, the opposite. When you're in the Legislature, your job is legislative in nature, and that is a difficult job and your time is preoccupied with that. If I'm a resident in Edmonton-Strathcona, I'm not going to have access to my MLA when there is a session, when the Legislature is sitting. The same thing goes for every other MLA. Whether my MLA is from Medicine Hat or my MLA is from Ritchie, I'm not going to have access to them during the session. I've been there. I've seen what it's like. I've been a chief of staff to a minister, and I've tried to get a hold of my MLA. They're just not available during those times. You know, during the legislative session there's no benefit for being close to the Legislature.

7:05

The Chair: It shouldn't be a factor. That's what you're saying.

Mr. Johnson: Yeah, or it should be weighed. You know, you need to consider distance from the Legislature – it's part of your mandate – but it should be weighed relatively low, especially during session. Really, if you think about it, it only factors in when the MLA needs to drive back, right? The only difference between living in Ritchie or living in Mackenzie is the amount of time it takes to go home when the session is done, and they only go home on Thursdays or at the end of session, so really we're only talking about a few days out of the year where an MLA from Mackenzie has to drive farther than an MLA from Ritchie. It's very minimal. You don't describe to what extent you've put weight to that in the report, but I'm asking the commission not to give much weight, right?

When MLAs are in the riding – granted, if I live in Mackenzie and I have to drive from High Level to Fort Vermilion to see a school board, yes, that takes longer to get there and that should be compensated for, but you know, in Ritchie you also have a number of school boards, you also have a number of community associations that you have to go to. MLAs in every riding – and I ran in Lac La Biche and I've been a lobbyist for the municipality of Lac La Biche and for Grande Prairie county. I've made my rounds. There has to be compensation for that, but there are always way more demands on an MLA's – I don't care if you're from Medicine Hat or Mackenzie or Drumheller – time than you can possibly go to and get face-to-face time with your constituents. So really, we're just trying to compensate for the fact that if you're going to Fort Vermilion, it takes you a little bit longer to get there, right? That distance, that driving time was, you know, talked about quite a bit in your report.

There are other factors, too. This wasn't part of my submission today, but . . .

The Chair: Okay. I'm going to leave the rest for questions.

Dr. Martin: It's our time.

Mr. Johnson: Yeah. Sorry.

Dr. Martin: I want to ask you about Ritchie. As you can tell from our interim, we have put Ritchie, Hazeldean, and Argyll into Edmonton-Gold Bar. We've heard more than once that that's really not natural in any respect, that it should be perhaps the Mill Creek ravine. So my first query is: do you feel that that is the more appropriate way to go? Well, it leads immediately to our dilemma, because there are 9,000 people in Ritchie, Hazeldean, and Argyll. Do you want me to put them into Edmonton-Strathcona?

Mr. Johnson: I think Mill Creek ravine is a natural boundary on one side, and I think Whitemud is a natural boundary on the other. Argyll, I think, makes sense to go into my friend's riding.

Dr. Martin: Edmonton-Gold Bar.

Mr. Johnson: Edmonton-Gold Bar. Thank you.

Dr. Martin: There's no easy road from Argyll to Gold Bar other than Argyll Road itself.

Mr. Johnson: Yeah. You'd have to go around. There's also, like, one road from Argyll into Hazeldean, too. It's kind of an isolated area. I'm pretty sure that in the past Argyll was part of Gold Bar as well, but I can't recall. Anyway, that's a way to sort of deal with it.

Dr. Martin: So the main point is: what are we going to do with those 9,000 people?

Mr. Johnson: I think the natural boundaries make sense, and there's a way to deal with the boundaries on the southern side or just put them in the riding. Like, I'm not opposed to bigger ridings, but it needs to be for the right reasons.

Dr. Martin: So you are suggesting – I mean, I can see the wheels going in your head and you're working it through logically, and I commend you for that. When you do it, the consequence is that Ritchie and Hazeldean go back into Edmonton-Strathcona, so to speak, but that's 9,000 people, and that makes Edmonton-Strathcona 62,000-ish.

Mr. Johnson: What percentage would that be? I haven't done the math.

The Chair: Well, 68,000 is the limit.

Dr. Martin: We project 68,000. It would be the biggest riding in the city. Then, of course, Edmonton-Gold Bar would be that much lower and it would become the lowest riding in the whole city, so you can see we're just trying to juggle it.

Mr. Johnson: Yeah.

The Chair: Short questions, short answers, okay?

Mrs. Samson: Thanks for your submission. It was really good. I like the information. I have no questions.

Mr. Johnson: Thank you.

Mr. Evans: We've heard a lot about this inner-city densification, and this all stems from bylaw 20001. That one was jumping off from bylaw 12800 in 2023. All of this development that everyone has been talking about was only approved – the bylaw changes were approved in 2023 and 2024, and we're now hearing that there are, you know, all these buildings that have been built. I just don't think that's possible. So we're talking about projected, what may take place, right?

Mr. Johnson: Yeah. I mean, I'm not an urban planner, but I've certainly seen the infills, you know, like many, many duplexes on my road, on 76th Ave, that have been going in well before 2023. I think the bylaws you're talking about, densification, allow for less parking, more units in a building, and that's certainly happening, but the densification has been happening before that.

My case is a point of example. There was a single bungalow. I don't know what it was, 600 square feet with a bunch of trees. They're all gone, and in place now is a massive duplex with a three bedroom in the back and a two bedroom in the front. It's me, my wife, my two kids, and my parents in the front. My grandson is having the time of his life.

Also, as I mentioned in my submission, it goes back to other things like education, like the school boards. In 2007 the school boards in Edmonton had decided that mature neighbourhoods were done. They were done servicing mature neighbourhoods: the population demographics had changed, the families weren't coming back, and they were going to bulldoze both the schools in Ritchie. There was a push-back, and the community said: no; we want you to support renewal in these neighbourhoods. That happened in 2010 when the board changed, and then by 2015 I think there was a decision to build two new schools. I think they were completed by 2019. Since then, you know, the explosion in the number of families in my community has been huge. I think the school board decision – and that's why I came here to tell you in person tonight – was pivotal in my community being rejuvenated as a mature community and seeing families come back into it. Dollars to doughnuts that's happening in other parts of the city as well.

Mr. Evans: What year did the school board make that decision?

Mr. Johnson: In 2007. I'm pretty sure by then the school board had made a decision to bulldoze both of the schools. The school board election of 2010 elected a new . . .

Mr. Evans: Which board is it?

Mr. Johnson: I'm talking about the Edmonton public school board, but I think Catholic school board elections happen at the same time. I know the people who got elected. I helped them get elected. There was a decision to stop the destruction, the demolishing of the two schools in Ritchie. Then it wasn't until the 2015 government, where the monies were put into place to build those schools, and the transformation since then has been something else.

I'd like to go back – sorry; short answers. When I moved into my house, there was a bit of an oddity. There was lead in the water, and there was lead in the water because the builder had forgot to change the pipe to the main line. That means that every single one of those little bungalows that are still around my house have lead in their water at a level that is above the standard health guidelines.

Those communities not only need to be building new schools; they need to be building new houses, too. That's happening and that's taking time, but the new houses that are building – like, they've got back-alley suites. There are a lot of duplexes now with the bylaw changes. There are going to be these apartment buildings going in and stuff like that. So things are changing, and it goes way back before 2023.

The Chair: Okay. Philippe, thank you so much.

Mr. Johnson: Merci beaucoup.

The Chair: I was pushing because I thought we were under the gun, but the next two presenters aren't here, I'm just advised. I'll just call out: Dean Kakoschke or Helen Wowk. No? Okay.

Mrs. Samson: That's it?

The Chair: Yes, but in fairness they're not scheduled till 8 o'clock, and we've been pushing people through here faster than I expected. Let's take a break for the two that we missed earlier today.

[The hearing adjourned from 7:15 p.m. to 7:40 p.m.]

The Chair: Okay. We've got Dean Kakoschke. First, just make yourself comfortable at the table, identify yourself, tell us what electoral division you're in and which ones you want to comment on.

Mr. Kakoschke: My name is Dean Kakoschke. I will be commenting on the constituency of Sherwood Park and also a little bit on the neighbouring constituency of Strathcona-Sherwood Park.

I looked at the recommended new boundaries for Sherwood Park, and if your goal is confusion, then you have succeeded.

Mr. Evans: Yes.

The Chair: Does anything more need to be said?

Mrs. Samson: There are no questions. Thank you.

Mr. Evans: Job is done.

The Chair: But you got here.

Mr. Kakoschke: The boundary currently separating Sherwood Park and Strathcona-Sherwood Park is Clover Bar Road, which runs through urban Sherwood Park. Already people living in that area driving to work down Clover Bar Road will see a candidate and a party on the side of the road. Then when they come home driving on the other side of the road, they will see another candidate but the same party. It's already confusing as it is. By adding the neighbourhood of Heritage Hills, as you can see, it's going to make it even worse.

As a citizen of Alberta I want people to come vote. I want to make it easy for people to vote. I don't want to make it frustrating for people to come vote. I've worked in numerous elections, and more than once I've had people come to the polling station and I tell them, "Sorry, you're at the wrong one. You need to go to this one." "Well, I was just there. They told me to come here." I take him to the map. "No, actually you need to go back to that one." And they get so frustrated that they go home, and they express that, say "I'm not voting because," right? Adding that neighbourhood will make it even worse.

I understand that you guys are worried about balancing the numbers. If you need to do that for Sherwood Park, my recommendation would be to go north of highway 16 and include that rural area up to the edge of the city of Fort Saskatchewan and then east up to and including Josephburg, and you could call it Sherwood Park-Josephburg constituency. That will take care of the numbers you require to match the 53,000, 54,000, whatever it is, and it will take away the confusion of adding that Heritage Hills subdivision.

The Chair: You mean Strathcona-Sherwood Park would go north of 16?

Mr. Kakoschke: No. Sherwood Park. Sorry. I'm only talking about Sherwood Park right now. I believe it should go north.

North of highway 16 is currently Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville. That is my recommendation. Less confusion would be my goal as a citizen, and that solves a number problem of going north of highway

16 to include that rural up to the city of Fort Saskatchewan and then east up to and including Josephburg.

The Chair: Give back Heritage Hills to . . .

Mr. Kakoschke: Give it back to Strathcona-Sherwood Park.

The Chair: Then go north if you need more population?

Mr. Kakoschke: Yes.

Another thing. People living north of highway 16: their addresses are Sherwood Park. Okay? When people in that area vote municipally, they vote for Strathcona county council and mayor, which includes Sherwood Park. If Canada Post says north of 16 is Sherwood Park and municipal elections include north of 16 as Sherwood Park municipality, Strathcona county, then why not have the provincial electoral boundaries go that way as well?

The Chair: Okay. What do you say to the name of Strathcona-Sherwood Park? Does that add to confusion?

Mr. Kakoschke: Yes.

The Chair: Should we get rid of Strathcona or should we get rid of Sherwood Park in the name?

Mr. Kakoschke: Right. I'll answer your first question. Yes, I find it confusing because Strathcona people automatically think Old Strathcona, Whyte Ave.

The Chair: So get rid of Strathcona.

Mr. Kakoschke: I would like to see that, but I don't know what to change it to.

Mrs. Samson: Beaverhill.

Mr. Kakoschke: Maybe.

The Chair: We'd have to go farther west to get Beaverhill.

Mr. Kakoschke: Right.

Mrs. Samson: Oh, true.

Mr. Kakoschke: Strathcona is the county, but yeah.

The Chair: You've generated food for thought.
Mr. Evans, any questions?

Mr. Evans: No. I'm all for the lack of confusion. I mean, I said that I was in favour of it before, but I was just kidding. No, I could see that that would be problematic if you're driving down the road. Entertaining at the same time, though.

Thank you.

The Chair: Susan.

Mrs. Samson: No, I don't have any questions, but thank you for taking the time and making it out here. We were waiting for you.

Mr. Kakoschke: Yes. Thank you for waiting for us.

The Chair: And you weren't late, just so you know. We kind of finished our day early.

You probably have no questions, Dr. Martin, or comments?

Mr. Clark: Do you have any thoughts on Sherwood Park?

Dr. Martin: In the map, the interim map for Sherwood Park itself, we've included Hillshire, which as you may recall is a big old development just on the south flank of Wye Road.

Mr. Kakoschke: That's correct.

Dr. Martin: And there's quite a lot of development in there. I hear varying reports that there are 290 units. Actually, if you go further down when Clover Bar starts getting a number instead of a name, immediately beyond Hillshire there's a new development being scraped out and sewer pipes being put in. That must be another 50.

Mrs. Samson: High density?

Dr. Martin: I don't think so. I think it's big houses.

Mr. Kakoschke: That's correct. Yes, it is.

Dr. Martin: I think 50 in there, where they've just finished putting in a roundabout.

Mr. Kakoschke: Yeah.

Dr. Martin: Yeah, just back in there. So there's certainly some development going on in this area.

I want to put a question to you since you obviously know the area. You see where the so-called urban service area boundary is just south of Wye Road? It's a very lumpy, bumpy one, but if you go along the quarter section line, you know, everybody who lives in here: it's not all that many people, but they all shop on Wye Road.

Mr. Kakoschke: That's right.

Dr. Martin: So they're not sort of rural in any classic sense. So we're tinkering with the notion of just drawing a straight line over here. Would that be offensive to your point of view?

Mr. Kakoschke: Not at all. Those people consider themselves living in Sherwood Park, and again, even then to be in the other constituency would throw them for a loop.

Dr. Martin: Yeah. Okay. Thank you.

The Chair: If you come up with something on the name to help streamline, you know, or eliminate the confusion as it relates to Strathcona, be sure to ask around your community and get it in to us because, yeah, for people who have been there a long time it's not confusing, but I can see why it is.

Mr. Kakoschke: Absolutely, it is.

Mr. Clark: Yeah, no. We're just drawing. We've got a mapping tool here that can give us a quick population estimate. So what you're talking about: if we go north all the way to Fort Sask, up to highway 15, over to basically just south Bruderheim on the border of Elk Island park, and then south down to 16 and that whole swath there: that's about 3,500 people. So that's a big piece, but is that what you're thinking, something like that?

Mr. Kakoschke: Yes. That's the area I was referring to.

Mr. Clark: And then we would trade that off with Heritage Hills.

Mr. Kakoschke: Yeah.

Mr. Clark: We received some feedback on Heritage Hills, it's safe to say quite a lot of it.

Mr. Kakoschke: I bet you did.

Mr. Clark: It's good, though. It's very helpful.

The Chair: You have no opinion on Beaumont?

Mr. Kakoschke: That's not my constituency, but I do have an opinion if you want to hear about it.

7:50

Mr. Clark: As it relates to electoral boundaries.

Mr. Kakoschke: Splitting Beaumont right in half is ludicrous, in my opinion.

Dr. Martin: Did you write that letter?

Mr. Kakoschke: No, I did not.

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Kakoschke: Yes. I know that people in the Strathcona-Sherwood Park constituency are not pleased with that boundary as well.

Mrs. Samson: They told us.

The Chair: They're not overwhelmed in Beaumont by it either.

Mr. Kakoschke: I bet.

The Chair: I just said to my colleague: basically, it's an arranged marriage. We're not very good at that, I don't think. It's not going to last. Okay. Thank you very much.

Mr. Kakoschke: Right on. Thank you for your time. Thanks for waiting for us.

The Chair: Okay. No problem.
Helen?

Ms Wowk: Yes.

The Chair: Wowk?

Ms Wowk: Yes.

The Chair: Okay. Same drill: say your name for the record, what riding you live in, and what ridings you want to comment on.

Ms Wowk: Well, my name is Helen Wowk, and I live in that wonderful Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville riding. I am the said person that lives in that area that is frustrated with distance, for one, to, you know, attend meetings or anything like that regarding the constituency, and just everything. The distance for us to travel to Vegreville to do that is just not acceptable. Many of the people in our area are frustrated because, again, as Dean was saying, they don't understand how the municipality works, the provincial works, the federal, the confusion of all the different people that are running for various things. I certainly would love to see us get more people informed at an easier level so that they will come out and vote and understand who they're voting for.

I live just north of the highway on range road 225 and highway 21.

The Chair: Okay. And that's in the Fort Saskatchewan area?

Ms Wowk: Well, it's actually Sherwood Park. My address is Sherwood Park. I pay my taxes to Sherwood Park. Everything I do is in Sherwood Park.

Mr. Clark: Your constituency is Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville.

Ms Wowk: That's correct. I'm one mile north of highway 16 on range road 225.

The Chair: Okay. So you want to be where?

Ms Wowk: Part of Sherwood Park.

The Chair: Not Strathcona-Sherwood Park; Sherwood Park.

Ms Wowk: Strathcona – well, again, this confusion, right? Sherwood Park, okay? Thank you.

The Chair: Okay. Can you maybe go to the map and just point for me because, you know, I'm not that familiar with the highways there. I used to be, when I was dating my wife 40, almost 50 years ago, but things have changed.

Ms Wowk: Right about here.

The Chair: Okay.

Ms Wowk: So Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville is all, as you know . . .

The Chair: So you're recommending a westerly boundary that would . . .

Ms Wowk: Probably the border of Fort Saskatchewan, as Dean was mentioning, which is probably about up here and up to, like, this area in here. Correct?

Mr. Clark: Would you go as far north as Bruderheim?

Ms Wowk: Yes.

Mr. Clark: All the way up. So you'd basically just follow – is that highway 15 diagonally there?

Ms Wowk: Well, yes, because, again, look at this distance here. Whenever there's anything going on within the constituency, they're choosing it here in the town, saying that this is central. Well, it's really not. Okay? So, yeah.

The Chair: So you're suggesting a straight line north and south on the west side of Bruderheim?

Ms Wowk: Yes.

Mr. Clark: Yeah, but not including Bruderheim; south of 15.

Ms Wowk: Yes.

Dr. Martin: Just south of the Fort Saskatchewan boundary is about – what road would that be, sort of 545?

Ms Wowk: It's 540 or 542.

Dr. Martin: Yeah. It doesn't really solve the problem that you were talking about with the very large distances and so on and so forth. But this allows Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville to not have this dogleg on the west side of Elk Island park.

Ms Wowk: Right. And, you know, definitely we're closer to Sherwood Park.

Dr. Martin: Well, there's part of our confusion. The county captures all of it, right?

Ms Wowk: Right.

Dr. Martin: We have the mighty hamlet taken out. Then we've got Fort Saskatchewan up here, too. It was kind of always out of it. So everything remains county in that northern bit, then part of it stays in Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville, and part of it comes back into the county riding.

Ms Wowk: The county of Strathcona.

Dr. Martin: Yeah.

Ms Wowk: That's right. Yeah.

Dr. Martin: Okay.

The Chair: Well, I think we've got your position . . .

Ms Wowk: The gist.

The Chair: . . . whether we can deliver – and as you can appreciate, all these decisions have cascading effects.

Ms Wowk: Right. Yeah.

The Chair: Have you put anything in in writing?

Ms Wowk: I hadn't up to this point.

The Chair: Okay. It wouldn't hurt to send something in.

Ms Wowk: Okay. Yeah. For sure.

The Chair: Give us precise . . .

Ms Wowk: Yes.

The Chair: Like, you know, attach a map even if it's hand-drawn.

Ms Wowk: Yeah.

The Chair: Yeah. Do that.

Ms Wowk: For sure. Okay.

The Chair: Then we can manipulate it and determine exactly what kind of population you're talking about.

Ms Wowk: Right.

The Chair: That's a factor for us.

Ms Wowk: Absolutely. The ridings need to be within that 50,000?

The Chair: The average is 55,000, so 25 per cent up or down. That's a rough calculation. Yeah.

Ms Wowk: Okay. Very good.

The Chair: Any other questions?

Mrs. Samson: None for me. Thanks for coming out.

Ms Wowk: My pleasure.

The Chair: Greg, any questions?

Mr. Clark: No. We're just tinkering with the map.

Dr. Martin: Which is really rude of us.

Mr. Clark: You know what we're doing? Jumping ahead.

Ms Wowk: That's okay. That's okay.

Mr. Clark: We're jumping ahead to figure it out. I mean, we have both the paper map and the GIS system to give us a population estimate.

Dr. Martin: Can I ask you a question that's different? Honest. I want to know where you shop.

Ms Wowk: Sherwood Park.

Dr. Martin: Okay. Thank you.

Ms Wowk: Like, we're literally not even five minutes to Sherwood Park, right?

Dr. Martin: Yeah. Are you going to be . . .

The Chair: He runs a food truck, and he just wants to make sure where he can . . .

Dr. Martin: Bremner, when it finally grows, will be right on your doorstep.

Ms Wowk: That is me. That is right on my doorstep, yeah.

The Chair: Have they scraped the dirt yet?

Ms Wowk: Yes.

Dr. Martin: They have. I thought they were going to.

Ms Wowk: Yeah. That's going to be a big change there.

Dr. Martin: No Tyvek yet.

Ms Wowk: Not yet. But the taxes . . . Right?

Dr. Martin: Really?

The Chair: That's another indicia we should be using.

Ms Wowk: Yes.

Mr. Clark: That's what we need, more data.

The Chair: Well, thank you very much.

Ms Wowk: Okay. All right.

The Chair: We will put all of this into the hopper.

Ms Wowk: Pardon me?

Dr. Martin: We're getting a little punchy, but I do thank you.

Ms Wowk: Thank you. Thank you for listening.

Mr. Clark: Thank you for your help. Appreciate you coming in.

[The hearing adjourned at 7:59 p.m.]

