

National Citizens' Inquiry

Meeting of the Support Committee

Minutes

August 24, 2022

1. **In attendance:** Andrej, [REDACTED] Dave, [REDACTED] Shawn, Kari, [REDACTED] Preston, [REDACTED] Scarlett, Ted,
2. **Review and approval of previous minutes**
3. **Review and approval of Support Committee's Terms of Reference**
 - Revision made to Section A – Background to more clearly articulate areas of concern for the Committee.
4. **Review and approval of Conflict of Interest Form**
 - "Short form" for Committee members approved as is.
 - Secretary to distribute forms to members for completion.
5. **Commissioner Selection Process**
 - Members reviewed and agreed-in-principle to process proposed by the draft critical path.
 - Noted potential value in advertising commissioner positions in legacy newspapers; group noted that independent and social media may be more fruitful avenues.
 - Members agreed the number of Commissioners should be five (5).
 - Members agreed to constitute a Commissioner Selection Subcommittee consisting of Preston (Chair), [edited out], and Shawn. Per approved critical path, the Subcommittee shall oversee the recruiting process and make selection recommendations to the Committee.
 - Noted the paramount importance of ensuring Inquiry is "credible", which shall very much depend on the credibility of the selected Commissioners.
6. **NCI Legal Entity – Corporate Structure**
 - Members agreed to proposal to create federal NFP corporation and for Directors to be Preston (Chair), Andrej (Secretary), and David (Treasurer)
 - Noted that a registered charity can contract NFPs to do work (would be one additional way to finance some of the Inquiry's work).
 - Andrej to establish virtual office in Ottawa, David and [edited out] to establish phone service
 - David to establish bank account
 - [edited out], David, and Andrej to establish secure webhosting and on-line donation.
7. **Review of Inquiry Expenditure Brief**
 - Reviewed briefing document listing the various standard categories of expenditures for an initiative like the Inquiry.
 - In order to refine further, and attach numbers, decisions need to be made as to the scope and nature of the proposed Inquiry process (see below).
8. **Comprehensive Discussion of the Inquiry's Logistics**
 - Reviewed document outlining three potential models: one single mega inquiry, travelling inquiry featuring local hearings in a number of locations, and "momentum inquiry" featuring a series of hearings but each highlighting a particular theme – and variations of each.

- Noted the importance of the first hearing event-whatever it is – as it will set the tone for the rest and if done well will feed interest and demand for further hearings.
- After discussion of Single or Multiple hearings it was agreed that the plan should be for **Multiple Hearings**.
- With respect to the themes of the Multiple Hearings, noted the importance of each covering a specific theme with the nature and content of Provincial Health Orders being a common feature; Members agreed and suggested that each hearing should also invite/be open to additional inputs so hearings do not look cooked to produce a certain outcome.
- Consequently agreed that **each momentum hearing should have three elements**: A general invitation for public input, consideration of provincial health orders for the province where the hearing is being held, and a specific focus on a particular theme – e.g. health (including vaccine) impacts, impacts on rights and freedoms, impacts on schools and children, economic impacts.
- Kari suggests that Inquiry hearings need to ignite two things not just one: (1) Interest and participation in the next hearing (2) But also a **parallel process of interest and activity on the key themes outside the hearings** – op eds, social media blitzes, demands for action by supportive interest groups, etc.
- **Location of multiple momentum hearings**: In recognition of regional nature of Canada it was agreed that there should be momentum hearings in Atlantic Canada (Halifax), Quebec (Montreal), Ontario (Toronto), Prairies (Calgary or Edmonton), BC (Victoria).
- Noted the value of a one day “**Kick off hearing**” (Ottawa or Winnipeg) to establish the themes of the regional hearings and to generate interest in the rest of the hearing process.
- Noted the value of a **one day Summation Hearing in Ottawa** after the regional momentum hearings have been completed to summarize the main points made at the regional hearings.
- Thus, in total the plan it was agreed that there would be for seven (7) events: Kick off, 5 regional momentum hearings, Summation hearing in Ottawa.
- Ted suggested that special attention needs to be given to actions to prevent “drop off of interest” after the first two or three hearings. The fact that each hearing will address a particular theme of interest should help to sustain interest.
- Kari suggested that governmental officials should be invited to testify at each hearing and when, as is expected, they refuse, this should increase interest in the hearings (what are they hiding?)
- **Other relevant matters with respect to the hearing process** – raised but needing to be thoroughly discussed/decided at next Support Committee ZOOM include length of each hearing (2 or 3 days?), pre-hearing process (establishment of website, initial announcement, solicitation of citizen demand for Inquiry, solicitation of suggested Commissioners, etc.), financing the hearing process. David also suggests need for schedule/time line for the whole process and Shawn suggests need for a decision as to whether to pay Commissioners, if so how much, and whether or not to make any compensation public.
- Preston/Andrej to prepare a Draft Citizens Inquiry Plan incorporating all of the above - including unanswered questions – for next Support Committee ZOOM.
- [edited out] suggested and others agreed that we need **sub-committees to organize each of the proposed events/hearings. Andrej/Preston to draft Guidelines for the Organization of Citizen Inquiry Hearings to provide guidance to sub-committees**. This draft to be reviewed at the next Support Committee Zoom and Support Committee members to come to the next XOOM with suggestions for chairs/members of proposed sub committees in each city.

9. Scheduling Next Meeting:

- Next meeting set for Wednesday, August 24, 5:30pm EST.