

MINUTES OF THE CAPITOL COMMISSION MEETING

MAY 11, 1994

PRESENT: Amon Carter Evans, Representative John Bragg, Senator Doug Henry, Comptroller William Snodgrass, Commissioner David Manning, Dr. Robert Corlew, Charles Harrison, Lois Riggins-Ezzell, Jim Hoobler, Charles Warterfield, Jim Evans, Kem Hinton, Seab Tuck, Elsie Chastain Smith, Mark Wood, Jerry Preston, Ed Belbusti, Georgia Gaye, Mike Fitts.

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Chairman Amon Carter Evans called the meeting order at 1:40 p.m. State Architect Michael A. Fitts recognized Jerry Preston who, in turn, introduced members of the design team for the Bicentennial Mall project. Kem Hinton then gave an overview of the entire project including the immediate Capitol grounds, improvements to James Robertson Parkway, the arrival court, the railroad trestle and the Mall improvements. Charles Warterfield was recognized and presented a more detailed review of the Capitol ground improvements. Senator Henry asked if the lower belvedere was at an elevation above the railroad and Mr. Warterfield responded that it was.

Mr. Evans mentioned that the Capitol Towers Building was in the way of the overall project. He stated to Representative Bragg that "something needed to be done" about that building. He asked Mr. Warterfield if he was able to address Senator Henry's concerns regarding water in the Jackson fountains. Mr. Warterfield responded that water elements are designed into the two fountains in Jackson Plaza but not in the belvederes. The Commission discussed the amphitheater and its design. Senator Henry thanked all concerned for the detailed report by the acoustical consultant regarding the amphitheater's design and its comparison to the theater at Epidaurus.

Representative Bragg said he thought the Library & Archives Building should be turned over to the Supreme Court, and the Library & Archives and the State Museum need to be relocated and asked where such buildings could be located. Mr. Hinton responded that they were not asked to designate particular locations in the master plan. He said they would like to lay a foundation for the location of public buildings. He said they were showing areas where there is to be employee parking lots and the area north of Jefferson Street where there is a location for a very dramatic building. He said they have provided, in this design, many opportunities for building future sites. Comptroller Snodgrass asked what would be at the end of the Mall. Mr. Hinton responded that there was an area with a fountain with three stars and columns, a feature which does not block views from Jefferson Street. Comptroller Snodgrass asked, considering money not to be an object, what kind of facility would they place at the end of the Mall and would they possibly put the State Museum there. Mr. Hinton stated that Jefferson Street was going to be a very busy street due to its improvements and if a building were

placed at the end of the present Mall, people driving on Jefferson Street would be looking at the roof of a building due to the difference in elevations.

Kem Hinton then introduced Jim Evans who discussed the trestle design. Mr. Hinton stated that they wanted to have a very prominent arrival area with a light and airy steel trestle with bridges of more classical design at Sixth and Seventh Avenues. Mr. Evans showed the diagram of the existing and future railroad trestle and also an elevation of the trestle. Senator Henry commented that the buildings underneath the trestle were too high. Chairman Evans said there were some of them who did not like the buildings at all. He said there is some feeling that plants will funnel people into the center rather than use the buildings as a block. He said the placement of these buildings is awful. He said they were trying to design something beautiful and have ruined it by putting the buildings into it. He said that it might need to be done, but they need to soften the impact of the buildings under the trestle. Mr. Preston said that it is being shown in its stark form and is out of context without landscaping indicated. Chairman Evans said he thought they did a marvelous job designing the trestle and he understands that they sometimes have to put things where they don't want. Senator Henry asked about putting the buildings outside the area underneath the bridge. Chairman Evans said he thought, with appropriate plantings, they can soften the design. Representative Bragg asked how big the buildings were going to be. Mr. Evans said it would depend on how the project was going to be staffed, etc. Chairman Evans stated that the Capitol was a functionally obsolete building and, at some point in time, the Legislature in the future will want a more modern building and use the Capitol for ceremonial functions. He said the only place they can go is to the Supreme Court and Library and Archives.

Comptroller Snodgrass asked if the State parks would be indicated in the displays. Mr. Hinton responded that they had thought about showcasing recreation areas on the information wall. He then discussed the use of permanent materials such as granite and limestone. Dr. Corlew asked what was the size of the map. Mr. Hinton responded that it would be approximately 200 feet long by 50 feet wide. Senator Henry reminded the designers to make sure they get the counties straight, i.e., which county seat is correct.

After discussion, the Commission approved the Early Design Phase of the Bicentennial Mall as presented.

Chairman Evans mentioned a request for approval of the Governor's use of the Capitol to host a formal State dinner during the meeting of the Southern Governors' Association. He said, just like the Museum, they would be protecting the Capitol in this unique one time occasion, which should be a spectacular event. He said he had no problem with the request with the understanding that they take the same precautions in protection that the Museum takes in their use of the Capitol. Without objection, the Commission approved the request.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 2:30 p.m.