

MINUTES

CAPITOL COMMISSION MEETING

May 1, 1996

Members Present: Amon Carter Evans, Senator Douglas Henry, Representative John Bragg, Comptroller William Snodgrass, Dr. Robert Corlew, Commissioner Larry Haynes

Others Present: Michael A. Fitts, Georgia Gaye, Lois Riggins-Ezzell, Evadine McMahan, Charles Harrison, Elsie Smith

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Chairman Evans called the meeting to order at 2:10 p.m. Minutes from the February 8, 1996 meeting were approved and seconded.

State Architect Michael A. Fitts stated that the Commission had a request from the Governor's Office for approval of a reception in the Capitol sponsored by Toshiba Corporation. He said it was his understanding that they had agreed to be hosted by the State Museum after learning of the Commission's concern. Comptroller Snodgrass commented that the concern was in regard to a private corporation hosting an event in the Capitol and they did not want to set a precedence. Commissioner Haynes stated that a request had come through their office and an employee, who was unaware of the position of the Commission, inadvertently recommended that the Capitol be used. He said he thought Toshiba was happy with the situation at the State Museum. He said they had also offered Toshiba the 30th floor of the Tennessee Tower, although it is limited to 200 people, and Toshiba elected to accept the State Museum's offer.

Chairman Evans commented that since Comptroller Snodgrass made a statement relative to private functions, it was the Commission's opinion that they would make an exception for the Tennessee Waltz but would not make exception to others, even though they would come along. Comptroller Snodgrass said that they had made an exception for the Tennessee Waltz but it didn't mean they will never make other exceptions, such as requests by the Governor or Legislature. Senator Henry commented that he was thinking the exception was uniquely for the Museum because it raises money for the Tennessee state system, of which the Capitol is a part. He said he thought they did take a categorical position against other functions. Commissioner Haynes said that their concern was spillage. Senator Henry said he would be more comfortable if, at the present time, they don't make exceptions and if someone comes along, they would deal with it as it comes up. Chairman Evans commented that that was the way he recalled it. He said he remembered the State Treasurer saying they would make the exception for one year at a time and that the Waltz approval has been extended. He said that doesn't mean they can't review whatever might be worth considering. Representative Bragg commented that the Supreme Court room wasn't supposed to be used with drinks or food. He said they could have food and drink in the Grand Hall. He said he thought there was a difference in what was done in different areas and it would be well if they had the staff to draft standard guidelines which might be used to short circuit any requests that don't meet the guidelines. He said he doesn't believe they need to vote

on every request that is brought forward. Chairman Evans stated that, outside of the Chambers, use of the Capitol becomes the prerogative of the Capitol Commission. Representative Bragg stated that they need to get the policy clear. He said there had been one or two receptions in the library. Comptroller Snodgrass commented that because they had accepted a request for some other purpose to use the Capitol building, he believed it would be very difficult for the Commission to say that, for instance, the National Governors Conference or meeting of the Speakers or House or Senate, could not use it. Chairman Evans commented that the Governor has a right to have receptions or news conferences in his offices, but he does not have the right to set up a bar in the hallways without the written consent of this Commission, nor serve food in the library. Comptroller Snodgrass said he was in full agreement with what Chairman Evans said, and it should be used only when a request comes to the Commission to make the exception. Chairman Evans said that the Commission should say to the proposed users that the Commission has the right, and want the right, to tell such users within what parameter they need to function. Comptroller Snodgrass said if the Governor sees fit to do it, there is not anything this group can do about it. Commissioner Haynes commented that the Administration is very sensitive to this and he did not think they want to abuse it.

Chairman Evans stated that the Toshiba problem has been resolved and now they have a request from the Chief Justices to use the Supreme Court chambers on July 31, a weekday. He asked why should they make an exception for this. He said, with the knowledge that they are going to tie up the Capitol sometime before and for sometime after the event, he had a problem with even considering the middle of the week. He said they might want to consider a weekend. Senator Henry asked Lois Riggins-Ezzell how many hours did it take to prepare the Capitol for the Tennessee Waltz, and she responded "twenty-four hours". Chairman Evans commented that, if the Toshiba event was under 200 people, having it on the 30th floor of the Tennessee Tower would be a wonderful place with the ability to look down on the Bicentennial mall with all its lighting, etc. He said Ms. Riggins-Ezzell had offered the Museum and he thought the Presidential Gardens outside of the Capitol would be an outstanding location. Dr. Corlew commented that he thought Chairman Evans' three suggestions should be offered. Chairman Evans said that if the Commission agrees, they would be happy to suggest any of the three and offer tours of the Capitol and surrounding grounds. Senator Henry moved that they do that. After the motion was seconded, it passed without objection.

CONNECTEN

Representative Bragg brought up a request that was a project of Commissioner Walters. He said she is planning to connect every school in Tennessee with fiber optics and the day is September 26. He said it was a tremendous project that was going to be important to the State of Tennessee. Elsie Smith said she would get precise information as to what Commissioner Walters wanted to do. Chairman Evans asked Ms. Smith if she would convey the policy that they do not normally approve Capitol use for such purposes but, they will cooperate in finding a place that might be suitable and, if she persists, they can bring it back to the Commission and talk about it.

TENNESSEE WALTZ

Lois Riggins-Ezzell presented a request for use of the Capitol for the Tennessee Waltz. She said it is the same letter request that they have honored the last four years to benefit the acquisitions for the future generations of Tennessee. Dr. Corlew stated that his has been a well-executed event without any problems. Senator Henry stated that, in light of the fact that the furnishings of the Capitol are part of the Museum and the purpose of this function is to raise money for the Museum to make purchases that will be used to enhance the Capitol Building, he moved approval. Commissioner Haynes commented that this event was well-planned with a lot of discipline. The motion was seconded and passed without objection.

MARY MILLER BOOK

Elsie Smith brought up a request concerning author Mary Miller who is writing a book. The publisher stated she needed permission to use a photo of the Capitol for her book. Chairman Evans stated that he recommended approval with the note "You may print this with the permission of the Capitol Commission". Chairman Evans suggestion was passed without objection.

FOOTBALL COMMERCIAL

Elsie Smith presented a request for approval to do a Monday Night Football commercial in the Governor's office. Comptroller Snodgrass said they should ask the Governor's office. Representative Bragg said that it should be taken up with the Film Commission. Commissioner Haynes said he recommended it as long as the Governor approves it. Lois Riggins-Ezzell stated that they always have a concern about these type requests because of the bright lights and booms in the area of paintings. Representative Bragg said he thought they need to go talk to the Film Commission first. Chairman Evans told the staff to direct them to apply to the Film Commission with a copy to the Governor's office. Commissioner Haynes stated that they had directed this request to Marsha Blackburn. Elsie Smith stated they had already signed a contract for use of the Plaza and other areas but they didn't make mention of the Capitol at that time. Chairman Evans stated that, from his standpoint, he thought they really have a problem. He said he has serious reservations about anything inside the Capitol, especially during a work day. Commissioner Haynes asked that Elsie Smith be allowed to negotiate with Marsha Blackburn about terms and conditions so she could circulate them to the Commission with such restriction of policy of this Commission. He said Elsie will get back to the members via FAX.

RESOLUTION

State Architect Michael A. Fitts stated that, at the Capitol Commission meeting on February 8, 1996, Chairman Evans established a subcommittee to look into the issue of whether or not the Capitol Commission should extend its jurisdiction to include the Bicentennial Mall. Mr. Fitts read a draft of a proposed resolution as follows:

RESOLUTION

A RESOLUTION to define the contiguous grounds of the State Capitol.

WHEREAS, the State Capitol Commission was established in 1986 to formulate and develop a plenary master plan and program for adaptive restoration and preservation of the State Capitol including the building and contiguous grounds; and

WHEREAS, the State of Tennessee has developed a Bicentennial Mall to the north of the Capitol and the design is an extension of the existing Capitol grounds.

NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved by the Senate of the 99th General Assembly, the House of Representatives concurring, that the grounds contiguous to the State Capitol include those grounds included in the Bicentennial Mall.

Representative Bragg moved that the resolution be introduced in the next session. Comptroller Snodgrass said it was his suggestion that the Commission assume that responsibility until such time that the legislature has an opportunity to act. Senator Henry stated that the Mall has been turned over the Department of Environment and Conservation as a State park. He said they could adopt this resolution and then bring it up at the next session of the legislature. After discussion, the resolution was adopted without objection. Senator Henry asked Mike Fitts to remind him of this action before the legislature convenes.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 2:50 p.m.

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