

MINUTES

CAPITOL COMMISSION MEETING July 17, 2003

1. Welcome

Chairman Douglas Henry called the meeting to order at 2:38 p.m. He noted that a quorum was present with the following members in attendance:

Members Present

Senator Douglas Henry
Representative Ben West
Secretary of State Riley Darnell
Comptroller John Morgan
Treasurer Steve Adams
Commissioner Betsy Child
Howard Herndon
Ed Jones (proxy for
Commissioner Davis)
Jerry Adams (proxy for
Commissioner Goetz)

Members Absent

Michele Frazier
Paula McCord
Norman Hill

Others Present

Mike Fitts
Georgia Martin
Thad Watkins
Ken Scalf
Jack Brown
Lee Brown
Sarah Lowe
Jim Thompson
Jim Hoobler
Karen Hale
Maxine Roberts
Rossetta Davis

2. Minutes

Minutes from the meeting held on April 11, 2002 were approved as mailed.

3. Old Business

There was no old business to discuss.

4. New Business

- **Overview of Security Enhancements in the State Capitol**

Jim Thompson, Fowlkes & Associates Architects, presented an overview of the proposed security enhancements for the State Capitol. Senator Henry asked about the

appearance of the cameras and was told they would be small and recessed in the ceiling. Mr. Thompson discussed the proposed installation of the new bronze glass doors in the tunnel, approximately 20 feet back into the tunnel. He said the doors should remain open during the day and only closed after hours. Treasurer Adams asked if they were going to open the bronze doors at the street entrance. Mr. Fitts responded that everyone wants that to happen, but it would involve another security station at the bottom of the escalators. Deputy Commissioner Jones said that, at rush hour, it is hard for the existing guard station to catch everyone, especially if the tunnel entrance was open. Senator Henry asked what it would cost to set up another guard station. He said that he thought the consensus of the Commission was to have Mike Fitts make arrangements such that the doors of the tunnel could be reopened. Mr. Fitts said he would take the wishes of the Capitol Commission and convey them to the State Building Commission. Secretary of State Darnell said that the State Building Commission is already aware of this issue and has expressed their desires. Senator Henry asked if a proposal could be ready for the August SBC meeting to allow the tunnel door to be open. A motion was made and approved for Mr. Fitts to take all necessary steps to have the doors reopened. Comptroller Morgan suggested that the vestibule at the tunnel entrance be considered as a location for security just inside the bronze doors. He said, since persons in the Legislative Plaza are already screened or are employees, and the same being true for the Capitol, that there is no need to have security in the tunnel other than to screen people coming off the street into the tunnel. He added that it would aid in the bottleneck that occurs in the tunnel now during Session. Mr. Fitts agreed that the vestibule might work. The Commission then directed Mr. Fitts to develop a proposal and plan of how the tunnel doors could be opened to the public. The Commission then discussed the proposed cameras and their monitoring, card reader system, duress button and other miscellaneous security improvements. After discussion, the Commission accepted the report.

- **Proposed maintenance improvements in the Capitol Chambers**

Mr. Fitts began a discussion of the proposed maintenance improvements in the House and Senate Chambers. He stated that they were going to change the lights, clean the stone walls and replace the carpet. He said he was recommending to the two Speakers that the carpet be upgraded to the same level of historic carpets installed in the Adaptive Use Restoration project in the 1980's. After discussion, the Commission recommended that the carpet to be installed be of the quality and historic reference as recommended by Mr. Fitts and such action be communicated to the two Speakers. Mr. Fitts noted that the cost of draperies was so high that the Speakers would not recommend including that work at this time. He said the installation of wood blinds in the Chambers was under consideration. He said he believed that the installation of wood blinds would give longer life to the draperies and provide more adequate lighting control to the room. A motion was made to recommend proceeding with the wood blinds. It was properly seconded, and unanimously approved by the Commission.

- **Discussion of a request for Purple Heart Memorial to be located on Capitol Grounds**

Mr. Fitts stated that he had met with the group requesting the placement of a Purple Heart Memorial on the Bicentennial Mall. In accordance with the "Capitol Hill and Bicentennial Mall Guidelines", he said he believed that such monument would be more appropriately located on the War Memorial Plaza. He stated that former Representative Ralph Yelton was on the committee and he is very interested in ensuring the quality of their proposal. Secretary of State Darnell made a motion to approve the placement of a Purple Heart Memorial on the War Memorial Plaza with the design and location to be approved by the State Architect. Representative Ben West seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved by the Commission.

- **Discussion of a request for use of the Capitol by Jack Brown as a place for daily/weekly prayer**

Jack Brown was recognized and stated that they were an informal group looking for a place in the State Capitol to pray "for our leaders, the needs of the State of Tennessee and for the United States" to be used on a frequent basis. Secretary of State Darnell said that the request specified a certain area and added that, if they could find a space, the group would likely get pre-empted because of other events being held. He commented that the Capitol was so small and the one conference room stays booked. Mr. Brown said that they don't expect a big sign saying "prayer room", but they do expect frequent, usage, spread broadly throughout the community. Senator Henry asked Mr. Fitts what has been the usage for this type of thing, and Mr. Fitts responded that it has usually been for one time events. Secretary of State Darnell stated that, if the group reserved the use of a room and an official State need arose, they would probably get bumped. Mr. Brown said they could be flexible. Senator Henry asked about the number or volume of people they expected and was told around 5-7 people. Senator Henry suggested that some space in the War Memorial Building that was not being used might be appropriate. He said he would ask Mr. Fitts to try to find some suitable place in the Capitol Complex.

- **Request by People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) to set up a display at the State Capitol**

Thad Watkins, attorney for General Services, said this request was for a non-specific public display. He said that, in consultation with the Attorney General's office, the display on the steps can be regulated only to the extent that it not interfere with the egress and ingress of the Capitol. He added that the Capitol Commission has designated the paved areas for distribution of literature. He said the PETA display has visited 60 cities since February and he could find no account where they had been denied. Senator Henry said he had one apprehension and that was he hated to see the school children be exposed to it. Howard Herndon commented that, according to the request, they intend to stop people. Secretary of State Darnell said he didn't expect to see a lawsuit and suggested they be allowed to set up their

display and be done with it. Mr. Fitts said if they want to set up on the steps and stop people, they would impede traffic to the Capitol. Treasurer Adams asked if anyone politically motivated could be denied. He commented that PETA would be better off to set up on Charlotte Avenue since there is more foot traffic. Secretary of State Darnell said they need to be treated like any other group who wants to speak, and the less made of it, the better. Treasurer Adams asked, if the Capitol Commission doesn't have the right to deny them, and PETA can do whatever they want to, why was it being brought before them. Mr. Watkins commented that these issues had been carefully researched by PETA. After discussion, Treasurer Adams moved that PETA be allowed to put their display up on the East steps of the Capitol and they be restricted to distributing literature on the paved areas. Secretary of State Darnell seconded the motion and asked if they would be required to carry liability insurance and be consistent with other such requests. The motion passed without objection.

- **Request by the Tennessee Museum Foundation to hold their annual fundraiser at the Capitol**

Howard Herndon read the request from the Tennessee State Museum Foundation to use the State Capitol from March 26-28, 2004 for the Tennessee Waltz, the Foundation's annual fundraiser. Secretary of State Darnell moved to approve. Treasurer Adams seconded the motion, and the request was unanimously approved by the Commission.

- **Discussion of signage lighting of the Tennessee Tower**

Mr. Fitts stated that the Commissioner of General Services was in the process of devising guidelines for the usage of message lighting on the exterior of the Tennessee Tower. He asked if, once the guidelines were set, would the Commission be willing to be a steward for the consideration of requests for variances to the guidelines. Secretary of State Darnell made a motion to volunteer their services, and Comptroller Morgan seconded the motion. Treasurer Adams asked what rights and abilities did they have. Comptroller Morgan commented that he thought that it would depend on the policy. Deputy Commissioner Jones commented on the effort it takes by their Department to display messages and said that the blinds were 40 years old and many didn't work. After discussion, the motion passed without objection.

There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 4:10 p.m.