

MINUTES OF THE CAPITOL COMMISSION MEETING

MARCH 10, 1994

Present: Amon Carter Evans, Representative John Bragg, Senator Doug Henry, Comptroller William Snodgrass, Treasurer Steve Adams, Commissioner William Whitson, Charles Harrison, Lois Riggins-Ezzell, Jim Hoobler, Charles Warterfield, Joe Hodgson, Jerry Preston, Sandra Fulton, Ed Belbusti, Georgia Gaye, Mike Fitts.

Chairman Amon Carter Evans called the meeting order at 3:05 p.m. The Minutes of the meeting held on July 23, 1993 were approved. Upon reviewing the second item on the agenda, he said he wasn't sure what was meant by the "North Capitol Grounds", but said he wanted to discuss all of it.

Mike Fitts called on Jerry Preston who said he would give an overview of the Bicentennial Mall master plan which most of the members had already seen at some point. He said they wanted to re-orient the Commission back to the master plan and then close with the consultants for the Capitol grounds. He then proceeded with a slide presentation of the Bicentennial Mall. Mr. Preston gave an overview of the Capitol Hill improvements and the proposed Bicentennial Mall which includes an arrival plaza, a river walk, a railroad bridge, an amphitheater, and a Court of Three Stars along with Farmers Market improvements.

Senator Henry asked if the State has any plans for the north side of Jefferson Street. Mr. Preston responded that the State has not made any purchase of land in that area and the present design does not include any plans for that area. Representative Bragg asked if any music was planned for the river area. Mr. Preston responded that, other than the carillons, none was planned.

Chairman Evans asked who was doing the design of the trestle and Mr. Preston responded that the firm of Nathan-Evans-Taylor of Memphis with the structural engineering firm of Stan Lindsay & Associates. Chairman Evans asked if there were any close ups of the bridge. He said that it was not in his domain as far as the Capitol Commission is concerned, but he was a member of the Bicentennial Commission. He said he had heard that the presentation was not what it should be. Mr. Preston said he would get a rendering of the trestle.

Representative Bragg asked if there would be music put to the fountains and Mr. Preston responded that they would look into it. Senator Henry asked about the seating for the amphitheater, whether or not they would be constructed of concrete similar to the amphitheater at Epidaurus. He said if they were proceeding on the basis of productions of fine music and actor spoken words, they should pay attention to acoustics. Mr. Preston responded that it would be vacant more than it would be used and they wanted it to be park-like, with the use of more grass. Senator Henry asked if the grass would affect the acoustics and Mr. Preston responded that they were trying to design a comfortable exterior space, but not of the quality of sound to which Senator Henry was referring. Senator Henry stated that he thought they would put acoustics very high in their design. Mr. Preston stated that it was hard to get good acoustics in

an open area unless you went to the expense of something as elaborate as Wolf Trap. Senator Henry said that he didn't want to belabor the point but, Epidauros had been standing for 2,000 years. Mr. Preston stated that one doesn't calculate the seats in acoustical design but one does calculate people. He said one of the reasons for the current location of the amphitheater was to use the Capitol as the backdrop for any performance. Senator Henry said that he applauded what they were doing but asked, if the State was going to spend money to build an amphitheater, and were not going to use top acoustics, could they add acoustics later. Mr. Preston said "yes" and that he thought they were doing what Senator Henry said. He said that, as they move ahead, they will have the flexibility to address acoustics. Senator Henry asked Mr. Fitts to look into the acoustics issue.

Mr. Preston produced a rendering of the proposed railroad bridge/trestle. Chairman Evans asked if the buildings were going to be abutting the trestle. Mr. Preston responded that they would be tucked underneath the bridge. Chairman Evans said that it bothered him that they put an obstruction where there ought to be a clear space. He said it was not for those on the Capitol Commission to say what should be done. Mr. Preston said what they were trying to accomplish was not to have a building at all. He said they were trying to create a place in the design where you don't have a building, but that you need to have a visitors place, restrooms, etc. Chairman Evans said there ought to be some place else to locate these facilities.

Joe Hodgson was introduced and he presented the proposal for the immediate grounds around the Capitol. He said they were proposing to remove the cars from the north drive and narrow it by four to five feet. He said they also were introducing a little variation by changing the arrival sequence to the front door of the Capitol. Treasurer Adams asked if it was going to be a two-way drive and Mr. Hodgson responded "no", it would be one-way around the Capitol but two-way on the north driveway, as it is now.

Chairman Evans asked if there had been any discussion of removing or lowering the granite wall. Mr. Hodgson responded that they did not propose to do so in this project because the wall hides the cars and it wasn't possible to eliminate the cars. Chairman Evans said it was practical but not possible. Mr. Hodgson said they propose to do some renovation of the stones to the Jackson Plaza. He talked about the belvideres and the terracing of the steep slopes, which are almost vertical. Senator Henry asked about the foot traffic across James Robertson Parkway and could there be tunnels or bridges. Mr. Hodgson responded that they were working on improved crosswalk design which they felt was more attractive than bridges, although not as safe.

Chairman Evans asked about the answering bell to the carillon. He asked if that had been presented before to this Commission and Mr. Preston responded that it was in the master plan that had been previously presented. Chairman Evans said that they need to take a look at the design and operation of the bell on the Capitol slope. Mr. Preston said it would be automated and respond to the carillons.

Mr. Hodgson discussed the belvideres and the terraces that would provide for next generation plants and flowers. Charles Warterfield was introduced and stated that there was very little of John Mesick's Historic Structures Report that could be replicated in the current plan. He recommended the restoration. He said there has been such

drastic modifications to the Capitol grounds over time that it is not possible to duplicate the original grounds. He said that what they have finalized is to restore as much of the walkways as possible and that the stroll gardens would be restored as much as they could.

Chairman Evans asked if there was anything they could do to the entrance of the tunnel. He said the facade looks like an entrance to a bomb shelter. Jim Hoobler suggested that they place pots on top and let ivy hang down to cover it. Chairman Evans stated that Charles Warterfield needs to be innovative, that something needs to be done. Senator Henry asked if they proposed to utilize any Tennessee stone. Mr. Warterfield responded that there is not an appropriate quarry in Tennessee. He said they would like to relocate the Polks Tomb about sixty feet, to design something of significant profile but not to be obtrusive of the view.

Senator Henry asked about having fountains in the belvideres and was told none were planned. Mr. Hoobler asked if the two fountains on the Jackson Plaza were to be restored and Chairman Evans asked if they were going to take the planters out. Mr. Warterfield responded it is in the Historic Structures Report, as an alternate. Chairman Evans, in discussing the water features, stated that this was an adaptive restoration and water can be put anywhere. Mr. Preston stated that the water features could be put in as an alternate if money was available. Mr. Hoobler mentioned that the slope might be an interesting place for a cascade. Mr. Hodgson said they had two objectives: first, they wanted to correct the paving stone to make it safe, and, second, to reuse the fountains as an alternate if there was enough money in the budget. Chairman Evans said that if there is not enough funds, the two chairmen on the finance committees were present and they might find the funds. Representative Bragg responded that they would put the request right behind the art center in Shelbyville.

Senator Henry asked about the material proposed for the steps. Mr. Warterfield responded that the historic features would be granite, and granite would be used for some of the steps going down. However, he said, the long walkway down the hill will be concrete with limestone cheekwalls. Mr. Hodgson said all the important places will have quality materials; only the connectors will be concrete.

Treasurer Adams asked if there was irrigation system planned and Mr. Hodgson responded "yes" and that they will resod the steep areas. He added that they appreciate the comments and are trying to use quality materials. Senator Henry asked if a softer surface would be more comfortable on the walkways. Mr. Warterfield responded that they have considered that but they have not found any materials that would be both attractive and durable. Mr. Hodgson stated that, because of the slopes, they would be concerned about erosion with gravel-like surfaces.

Mr. Preston discussed the project costs. He said that, because of the time constraints, this project cost will be driven up. He said they don't want to leave any false impressions. Treasurer Adams asked if he was discussing cost over run or project short fall. Senator Henry asked if they could get some figures for the cost of water features. Mr. Hodgson responded that the Jackson Plaza fountains would cost about \$15,000 apiece. Chairman Evans asked about the entire cost of the projects and Mr. Preston responded that it would cost \$28 million for the five projects which did not

include land purchases. Chairman Evans stated that they were looking at a bicentennial for this state and that it seemed to him that the emphasis should be placed on the beginning rather than the actual birthday. He said he thought that it was rather insignificant in the overall picture and he thought they should pay attention to the State's heritage. He said it seemed to him that the priorities are wrong when they start doing things in the Mall area and not doing things in the Capitol area. Mr. Warterfield said that details for the fountains in the Jackson Plaza have already been done.

Senator Henry said the Department of Finance and Administration came to the Legislature for funds and asked Mr. Preston where did they get their money. Mr. Preston said that \$5 million was funded last year, \$2 million package this year and \$9.5 million came from capital savings. Senator Henry asked about the availability of funding for the Capitol grounds and Mr. Preston responded that it was available. Senator Henry asked how much would all the water features cost on the Capitol grounds including the belvideres. Mr. Hodgson responded that it would cost about \$100,000. Senator Henry asked if "ice tea" money could be used for the water features. Mr. Preston said that they were about \$250,000 over budget without the water or alternates. Senator Henry stated that he thought the Chairman had made a good point in that the Capitol grounds should be the central focus. Chairman Evans said it is the Capitol for all the state and they need to receive some priorities. He said that as far as the House and Senate chamber restoration, it is up to them to decide when they want them restored, but they could do something about the restoration of the grounds. He said he would like to suggest that the Commission be in favor of reestablishing the emphasis of the adaptive restoration to center on the seat of government where the emphasis needs to be for the future. He said he would like to have a motion to go on record as being in favor of that.

Mr. Preston stated that what would affect the cost would be the materials. He said he was not sure the project is undoable with the water features. He said he thought if they understand the parameters of the materials and although they may have to make some decisions on the alternates, they should have the project within reasonable scope of the Building Commission and Capitol Commission. Chairman Evans said he understood that they want him to let it alone until they can look at it. He said that if it were up to him, he would be glad to let them have all the granite from the existing walls to use on the hill.

Treasurer Adams said that, at some point in time, he wanted to get a better idea about the use of the materials. He said his preference was to use materials that are first-class. Mr. Preston stated that he thought that is what they have tried to accomplish. Mr. Hodgson stated that everything that is vertical will be stone. Chairman Evans stated that the Capitol Commission's options are limited at the bottom of the Hill but it seems to him that in this overall project that what they were suggesting is not undoable. He said they ought to be about to accomplish it and they ought to be able to accomplish it in style. He asked Mr. Preston if it would help him to get a resolution. He said that if he would take it from them as a body, they would like for him to put his emphasis for this overall project on the State's most significant landmark, the Capitol.

Representative Bragg discussed the East Wing construction I Washington where artisans were brought in and the project not necessarily given to the low bidders. He

said he thought they should include the water elements and dancing waters. He said that they should put it all together and let them look at it and see what they have to bite off. He said he wanted everyone to be proud. Mr. Preston said that he thought everyone shared that opinion. Mr. Bragg said they needed to get a handle on the extent of the materials and what is "appropriate" quality. He asked both Mr. Warterfield and Mr. Hodgson if the materials were appropriate and they responded "yes".

Senator Henry asked if concrete was more comfortable than granite, and aside from the cost, will concrete last as long and can it be made to look attractive and asked if marble would be appropriate. Mr. Warterfield responded that a good finish can be obtained on concrete, with texture, etc.. Mr. Hodgson responded that marble might be used as an accent.

Senator Henry asked if it would be helpful to have some formal expression from the Capitol Commission. Mr. Preston responded that they were on a very fast schedule. He said it was a question of procedure. He said if they want an opportunity to have more information, then they need to try to get back with them very quickly. He said they were shooting to go out for bids in about six weeks. Chairman Evans said, as lay people, they can come any time and any time they are ready to present something to them, they are ready to come back. Treasurer Adams said he wanted more information before they were ready to go. He said it doesn't cost much to communicate. Mr. Preston said they could get back to them in no longer than a month. They suggested scheduling the next meeting around the State Building Commission meeting next month.

The meeting adjourned.