

# MINUTES

## STATE CAPITOL COMMISSION MEETING

May 11, 2009

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### 1. INTRODUCTIONS

Chairman Dave Goetz called the meeting to order at 11:10 a.m. He welcomed new members and noted that a quorum was present with the following in attendance.

#### Members Present

Commissioner Dave Goetz  
Comptroller Justin Wilson  
Janice Cunningham (designee for Treasurer Lillard)  
Commissioner Jim Fyke  
Judy Danner  
Norman Hill  
Bobby Lovett

#### Members Absent

Secretary of State Tre Hargett  
Senator Paul Stanley  
Representative Ben West  
Commissioner Gwendolyn Davis  
Ray Bell

#### Others Present

Mike Fitts, State Architect  
Georgia Martin, State Architect's Office  
Alan Robertson, State Architect's Office  
Thad Watkins, Department of General Services  
Janie Porter, Attorney General's Office  
Genie Whitesell, Attorney General's Office  
Joy Harris, Treasurer's Office  
Mark Wood, Secretary of State's Office  
Melinda Parton, Comptroller's Office  
Lois Riggins-Ezzell, State Museum  
Jeff Sellers, State Museum  
Jim Hoobler, State Museum  
Tim Schwarz, Department of Finance and Administration  
Representative Gerald McCormick

## 2. ORIENTATION OF NEW MEMBERS

Mike Fitts reported that the Department of General Services, State Museum, Department of Environment and Conservation and State Architect's Office serve as staff to the Capitol Commission. Thad Watkins stated that his office was responsible for handling the numerous requests to the Capitol Commission. He then proceeded to go over the powers and duties of the Commission.

Mr. Fitts explained the purpose and value of the Historic Structures Report and said they really don't have a written policy regarding furnishings. Chairman Goetz mentioned the damage on the exterior steps caused by candle wax. Lois Riggins-Ezzell stated that restrictions were in place to use candle shields when assembling at the Capitol. Comptroller Wilson suggested that Mr. Fitts come up with a recommendation to address the situation for their consideration.

Mr. Watkins asked the Commission whether they wanted to ratify their continuing procedure to receive requests electronically and not meet formally unless one member or the Chairman objected. Judy Danner made a motion to approve receiving notifications electronically as they have been in the past and only meet if there is an emergency or real crisis, or requested by any member or the Chairman. Norman Hill commented that he thought the method of receiving and responding to requests was very helpful and timely, and he appreciated it. Mrs. Danner's motion was properly seconded and passed without objection.

## 3. LOCATION OF BUSTS IN THE CAPITOL

Mr. Fitts informed the Commission that the Legislature had authorized a bust of the first African American legislator, Sampson W. Keeble, be placed in the Capitol. He distributed a diagram of the Capitol showing the location and proposed relocation of the various busts of prominent Tennesseans and discussed staff's rationale for placement. Lois Riggins-Ezzell stated the importance of the placement of the bust is so you can interpret it to the visitor. Jeff Sellers said they were excited with what the Keeble bust brings to the interpretive story. He stated that its proposed location amidst the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Amendments will provide a strong, powerful interpretation of the space and symbolize fulfillment of the voting rights struggles in Tennessee. The recommendation was to locate the Keeble bust in the niche currently occupied by a bust of John Sevier, Tennessee's first Governor, and place the Andrew Jackson bust, currently located in the hallway, into the niche occupied by the bust of President Andrew Johnson, which is proposed to be moved into the Lounge area.

Representative McCormick stated that Representative Hardaway had introduced legislation and, in their discussions, had agreed it would be appropriate to have two Presidents at the entrance of the House Chambers and that James K. Polk and Andrew Johnson, both former members of the Tennessee House of Representatives and former

Presidents of the United States. It was pointed out by Mr. Fitts that these niches were currently occupied by Admiral Farragut, representing the North, and Nathan B. Forrest, representing the South, in the Civil War, and added that these busts would be moved to the niches currently occupied by President Andrew Jackson and Admiral Matthew Fontaine Maury. The Jackson bust is already recommended to be moved into the location amidst the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Amendments and the Admiral Matthew Fontaine Maury bust could be returned to the Museum for interpretive exhibit use.

Representative McCormick said he thought it was proper that the Capitol Commission make the decision and not have this be a political football. Mr. Hill asked if there would be objections to moving the bust of Nathan B. Forrest and if this was, in any way, a degradation by moving it. Comptroller Wilson assured the Commission that there would be no objection. Ms. Riggins-Ezzell stated that it becomes an interpretive issue and that this is a compromise that will please all parties. Mr. Fitts stated that the two existing busts of President Andrew Johnson and Andrew Jackson at the top of the stairs were both done by the same artist, should remain and a new bust of James K. Polk be commissioned to be placed in the niche opposite President Andrew Johnson outside of the House Chambers. It was the further recommendation to locate the bust of John Sevier on a pedestal to be more appropriately placed in the hallway on the First Floor near the Governor's office.

Judy Danner commented that she felt the expense of doing another bust of James K. Polk would not be appropriate given the economic times. Mr. Watkins responded that it would not delay implementation of the plan and that a new bust would not be provided until it was economically feasible. A motion was made, and properly seconded, to adopt the plan for bust placements as recommended by the staff and attached hereto.

#### 4. OLD BUSINESS / NEW BUSINESS

There being no old or new business, the meeting adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

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