

# MINUTES

## CAPITOL COMMISSION MEETING

MAY 7, 1999

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### 1. **Welcome and Introductions**

Chairman Henry called the meeting to order at 2:05 p.m. Roll call was taken with the following members in attendance:

#### Capitol Commission members present:

Senator Douglas Henry  
Commissioner John Ferguson  
Comptroller John Morgan  
Secretary of State Riley Darnell  
Treasurer Steve Adams  
Commissioner Larry Haynes  
Ward DeWitt, Jr.  
Alice Algood  
Michele Frazier  
Paula McCord

#### Capitol Commission members absent:

Representative Ben West

#### Others present

Mike Fitts, State Architect  
Georgia Martin, State Architect's Office  
Ken Scalf, Capital Projects Management  
Lois Riggins-Ezzell, State Museum  
Evadine McMahan, State Museum  
Commissioner Milton Hamilton, Department of Environment and Conservation  
Charles Harrison, Comptroller's Office  
Barbara Womack, Urban Journal  
Green A. Uzadi, Meharry Medical College  
Representative Henri E. Brooks  
Raymond A. Winbush, Fisk University  
Lori Ann Bradford, Meharry Medical College

## **2. Approval of the Minutes of the December 15, 1998 Meeting**

The Minutes were approved as mailed.

## **3. Old Business**

Mr. Fitts reported that, after discussions with the Department of Economic and Community Development, they had agreed to display their new tradeshow booth in the Legislative Plaza rather than the Second Floor of the State Capitol. He added that their display was successful.

Mr. Fitts reported meeting with representatives of the Fraternal Order of Police concerning placement of a police memorial. He said that, after discussion and touring the area, they had agreed that the War Memorial Plaza would be a better location.

## **4. Planting and Dedication of Tree in Memory of Senator Tommy Burks**

Mr. Fitts passed out photos of the oak tree planted in memory of Senator Burks. Senator Henry commented that the dedication was a fine occasion with Senator Charlotte Burks in attendance as well as many government officials.

## **5. Placement of a Sculpture by Dr. Michael D.Hill entitled "Across the Beach"**

Senator Henry said that the Capitol building is becoming a full place and asked Mr. Fitts for any suggestions. Mr. Fitts stated that this was the kind of monument more appropriate on the grounds of the Capitol, but their proposal did not recommend an exterior location. He said, outside of being part of the Museum itself, it would not be appropriate outdoors. Senator Henry asked if a location similar to the location of the submarine memorial on the War Memorial Plaza would be more appropriate. Mr. Fitts stated that if they don't accept the wooden base, it could probably fit in a planter bed similar to the submarine memorial. Ms. Algood questioned the commemoration of the Normandy Invasion when there were also many important conflicts in the Pacific arena. She asked at what point would the Commission not accept a memorial for a particular battle because there are many things that deserve recognition. Ms. Riggins-Ezzell stated that the State Museum could accommodate the sculpture in the planter at the entrance of the War Wing Museum or include it as a part of the Museum exhibit. She said there are a lot of materials being donated as people begin to look back on World War II and the Museum has been very open to accepting these things. Ms. Algood suggested that it be left to the discretion of Ms. Riggins-Ezzell. Mr. Ward said that it sounded good to him and that it seemed like a fine thing that Dr. Hill is doing. However, he questioned

whether it had a direct connection to the State of Tennessee. He said, in his opinion, putting the sculpture on the War Memorial Plaza would be more appropriate. Ms. Algood made a motion to recommend to Dr. Hill that the sculpture be given to the State Museum as a part of the Museum collection and that the display of the sculpture be the responsibility of the Museum Director working with Dr. Hill and the State Architect.

## **6. Proposed Guidelines by Tuck-Hinton Architects for Future Markers and Monuments**

Mr. Fitts stated that he had talked with Kem Hinton of Tuck-Hinton Architects, the designer of the Bicentennial Mall, regarding proposed guidelines for future markers and monuments. He said it is something needed and that it would be working in concert with the Commission. Mr. Fitts added that it could be a good guideline to help the Commission in the future. Senator Henry asked if they should make a comprehensive recommendation. Mr. Fitts said he thought he would check with Tuck-Hinton to see how much of Capitol Hill would be involved. Treasurer Adams said he thought the proposal was fine, but had reservations about the cost quoted by Tuck-Hinton, although he wasn't sure what the cost should be. He said he thought the guidelines were needed with the understanding that the Commission would review and approve all final documents. He said he wasn't sure what Tuck-Hinton wanted to do, but he would like to see it before they pay him. Senator Henry made a motion to approve that Kem Hinton will give a price to include all the grounds that the Capitol Commission deals with and subject to State Architect's approval. Ms. Frazier asked if there was a policy for getting other proposals or for considering other firms. Treasurer Adams responded that the Mall was designed by Tuck-Hinton, among others, and he thought Mr. Hinton should be involved. He added that Mr. Hinton was proposing the standard hourly rate and it would be a not-to-exceed amount. Senator Henry agreed with Ms. Frazier and said he thought Mr. Hinton was a legitimate sole source because of his particular expertise and experience. Mr. DeWitt asked why the Commission would request Tuck-Hinton to do more guidelines if there already is a policy in place. Mr. Fitts responded that there exists a policy for *use* of the Capitol, but there does not exist any policy for the placement, appropriateness, sizing, massing, etc. of monuments, markers, artifacts, etc. placed on the Capitol grounds. He said this study could provide a tool for the Commission to rely upon to keep a semblance of order on the Capitol. Ms. Algood asked if the guidelines were going to suggest the appropriateness of memorials, or lay out the grounds saying you can put a memorial here, etc. Mr. Fitts responded that it would address general appropriateness. He stated that with the Mall, you have thematic presentations, and it would help to address those kinds of issues. He added that it would be more of a tool for the Commission's use rather than dictating what needed to be done and how. After discussion, the Commission recommended that a project be approved to develop guidelines for future markers, monuments, artifacts, etc. for both the Bicentennial Mall and the Capitol grounds and that Tuck-Hinton Architects

be selected as the designer at a not-to-exceed cost of \$16,900.00 in accordance with their proposal dated March 2, 1999. The Commission stated that if the proposal did not include the Capitol grounds in the same manner as the Bicentennial Mall, Mr. Fitts was to negotiate with the designers any additional cost and the matter brought back before the Commission for their approval.

## **7. Proposed Procedures for Use of the Capitol**

The Commission discussed the proposed guideline. After discussion, the Commission deferred action on the item and asked Treasurer Adams, Commissioner Haynes, Ward DeWitt and Elsie Smith to consult on the matter and come back to the Commission with their recommendations.

## **8. Tennessee State Museum's "A Tennessee Waltz"**

The State Museum's request for approval to host "A Tennessee Waltz" in the State Capitol on March 18, 2000 was approved as requested.

## **9. Proposed Marker Honoring Africans Who Died in the Middle Passage**

Treasurer Adams asked Dr. Winbush to give the significance of the Middle Passage. Dr. Winbush stated that there would be monuments dropped in the Atlantic and other places worldwide. He said he thought Tennessee's involvement was their participation in the slave trade and thought it would be very appropriate for the Commission to commemorate this as it had the Jewish holocaust. He said he would urge this body to commemorate as a way of healing race relations. Ms. Algood stated that there seemed to be an attitude that these people were taken by the slavers and wasn't there a reason that many of these people were taken in battle and brought to be sold. Dr. Winbush responded that they were taken in a variety of ways. Ms. Algood said she thought that it diminishes the bravery and fortitude of Africans that so few people could take so many tribes if it is not recognized that they were taken in battle. Mr. DeWitt addressed his concerns regarding the event having a Tennessee connection. He said he was troubled by the thought of putting markers, etc. on the Capitol grounds that don't have a Tennessee connection. He said that particular events to be memorialized have no more connection to Tennessee than many other things and he believed that monuments should have a definite Tennessee connection. Dr. Winbush stated that the vast majority of black Tennesseans are the direct descendents of slaves. Representative Brooks was recognized. She stated that she thought it was disrespectful of the 17% black population in Tennessee not to make the connection and it was like denying they exist. She said they didn't have a ticket to Ellis Island. Ms. Frazier expressed her opinion that the Tennessee population, as a whole, should recognize it

all. Secretary of State Darnell stated that it would be difficult to deny that there is a connection and said this was a terrible thing in our history and is a real black mark on us. But, he said, all of that doesn't matter because the Legislature has decided that there will be a tree and appropriate plaque to commemorate the Middle Passage with language describing the events. He further stated, in light of the Holocaust memorial, that he didn't feel like this would be breaking new ground, and thought it would be appropriate to erect a similar plaque, with language submitted to the State Architect's Office. Senator Henry stated that the Capitol Commission is a statutory commission. Commissioner Ferguson wanted to clarify that the location was the same as what was before them and was told it was. The motion was made to approve the planting of the commemorative tree and the placement of a suitable marker and plaque to be coordinated with the State Architect. The vote was taken with the majority voting "aye" and members DeWitt and Algood abstaining. Ms. Algood commented that she was for celebrating the contribution that the African-Americans have made to the country, but that she is sticky when it comes to history.

#### **10. Other Business**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:05 p.m.

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