

Minutes
The Tennessee Residence Commission
October 26, 2010

A meeting of the Tennessee Residence Commission was held October 26, 2010 at the Office of the First Lady, Tennessee Tower, 27th Floor.

Commission members present were:

Andrea Conte, First Spouse, ex officio

Gwendolyn Sims Davis, Commissioner of General Services, ex officio

Alan Robertson, State Architect, ex officio

Linda Wynn for Sam Elliott, Chair of the Tennessee Historical Commission, ex officio*

Lois Riggins-Ezzell, Executive Director of the Tennessee State Museum, ex officio

Shirley Horowitz, citizen member, term expires July 31, 2011

Jody Folk, citizen member, term expires July 31, 2012

Wayne Riley, citizen member, term expires July 31, 2013

Wade Hill, citizen member, term expires July 31, 2014

*Sam Elliott, like all ex officio members of this commission, is allowed by law to name a designee to serve in their place. Mr. Elliott has named Patrick McIntyre, Executive Director and State Historic Preservation Officer of the Tennessee Historical Commission, as his designee. Unfortunately, Mr. McIntyre was unable to attend on October 26, so Linda Wynn, Assistant Director of State Programs for the Tennessee Historical Commission, attended the first meeting.

Absent from the meeting was:

Phil Bredesen, Governor, ex officio.

Also attending was Seth Stanger.

First Lady Conte welcomed everyone. Introductions were made around the table. First Lady Conte mentioned that copies of the legislation forming the TN Residence Commission (TRC) were in everyone's packets. The legislation was modeled after the TN Capitol Commission. First Lady Conte felt that the Executive Residence suffered by not having institutionalized protection like that provided to the Capitol by the TN Capitol Commission. She gave examples of a governor's son who painted their bedroom black, a governor who installed blue shag carpeting and a governor who had a stair railing put up in response to a fall without consideration of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

First Lady Conte said there is a brief summary of the TN Residence Foundation (TRF) in everyone's packet. The TRF is a 501(c)(3) that was formed during the Governor Sundquist years. First Lady Conte said that it is what they have used to raise money for the Residence. The TRC will not be raising money. The TRC is designed to protect the historic property. First Lady Conte feels it is important that there be coordination and communication in the future between the TRC and the TRF.

First Lady Conte turned the meeting over to Chair Robertson. She remarked that there is no better person to chair the TRC because of the experience and knowledge he gained from working on this project over the last eight years.

Chair Robertson asked the members to turn to the second page of the legislation ("Tennessee Residence Commission Act of 2010" Public Chapter No. 1111, Public Acts, 2010) so that they could review the listed powers and duties of the TRC point by point. Section 4(a)(1) refers to a master plan for restoration and preservation of the Executive Residence and the grounds. Chair Robertson said that a master plan was developed during the end of the restoration process of the Executive Residence. In addition to looking at where a meeting hall might fit, existing structures, vehicle circulation, security and staff workspace, parking and landscaping were examined for future needs.

Chair Robertson spread a map of the grounds on the table to explain the master plan. He said it had been updated to depict the location of Conservation Hall. Chair Robertson first explained the existing structures.

The Executive Residence is in the middle of the ten acre property with Conservation Hall and most of the yard to the south with the driveway and the rose garden to the west. To the east is the pool and pool house, installed during the Alexander administration. Just north of the pool house is the tree house. In the northeast corner of the property is the borefield for the geothermal system that serves both Conservation Hall and the Executive Residence. No building can be put over the borefield, but parking is an option. Along the back of the property to the north are the carriage house, the green house and a couple of sheds. The carriage house is in a dilapidated state. So too are the pool house and the green house.

Review of the existing structures and their fractured layout revealed a need for a master plan and a logical approval process for future requests for changes from First Families. Proposed on the master plan is a new security/maintenance building to the east of the carriage house. Security is currently housed in the carriage house. Storage and workspace for maintenance is spread among the carriage house garages and the two sheds. Staff parking would be another need that would be addressed in the area near the new security/maintenance building.

The intent for the carriage house is to restore/renovate (similar to the process used on the Executive Residence) the carriage house into suites for guests. The parking lot in front of the carriage house would be converted into lawn area. A new greenhouse would also be constructed that would be presentable and placed at the intersection of pathways on the grounds. Another walkway is proposed to the west to connect with the rose garden. There is a possibility of a sculpture garden along the pathways.

Dr. Riley asked if there had been a previous master plan. Chair Robertson said that this was the only plan to his knowledge. First Lady Conte asked if the plan was something that should be approved by the TRC. Chair Robertson said because of the reporting requirements to the State Building Commission, having master plan that had been

approved by the TRC members would be a good thing. Dr. Riley moved approval and Commissioner Davis seconded the motion. The master plan, as presented, was unanimously approved by voice vote.

Additional discussion surrounded the idea of renovating the carriage house for usage by guests. Concern was raised about preventing it from becoming a party house. It was decided that writing usage guidelines for the carriage house would be within the TRC's powers. First Lady Conte mentioned that renovation of the carriage house was estimated to be 600-700,000 dollars in 2004. She said that it has been used as an apartment in the past. It currently has a bunk room for security as well as office space for security and the facility manager Bob Kuhr. First Lady Conte said having guest quarters would be advantageous as a business recruitment tool for governors. Business leaders that are being wooed by the current governor could secretly visit Nashville and stay at the Executive Residence. Ms. Folk mentioned that there are no living quarters on the first floor of the Executive Residence, so visiting families have to stay on the same floor as the First Family.

Chair Robertson moved on to Section 4(a)(2) of the legislation that calls for the establishment of policies for physical alterations to the Executive Residence and related buildings. Chair Robertson envisions a policy that gives some flexibility to First Families to display their own items, furniture, paintings, etc. Chair Robertson did not foresee allowing additional holes in the walls due to the fact that the public first floor of the Executive Residence has plaster walls with cinderblock backing, some of which are also covered with the fabric muslin. Chair Robertson said that the art that is currently on display on the first floor could be rotated out to allow for change in scenery.

Chair Robertson said that there would likely be more flexibility for alterations to the walls on the private second floor, but would still want to be involved. The location of hidden electrical, plumbing, etc. would need to be considered before any penetration of a wall occurred. He said that there have been significant changes to the second floor in the past that were taken out during the restoration to return the second floor to 1930 era furnishings. Chair Robertson said that those alteration policies are not yet written, but need to be by the time the next First Family is ready to move in. Chair Robertson proposed personally writing the first draft for the TRC to review. The building commission would be the ultimate authority on major alterations to the Executive Residence. Ms. Riggins-Ezzell mentioned that there are similar firm policies that govern usage of the Capitol.

Chair Robertson asked Ms. Horowitz to help craft the policies for the acquisition of interior items for the Executive Residence as listed under Section 4(a)(3) of the legislation. Commissioner Davis said that the policies that cover the Capitol are somewhat dated, but could be used as a starting point. First Lady Conte mentioned that the Tennessee Executive Residence Preservation Foundation One (TERPF I) created during the Governor Dunn administration owns many of the older pieces of furniture displayed in the Executive Residence. First Lady Conte said that Ms. Horowitz was able to find a display location for all but two of their items.

Ms. Horowitz said that most of the items currently on display on the first floor of the Executive Residence are old or antique and have been given to the Executive Residence. Very few items, such as some of the lamps, rugs and upholstery, are new. She said that they are a part of the history of the Executive Residence. Ms. Riggins-Ezzell said that the TN State Museum has an acquisition policy and a deaccession policy that can be copied. Under their deaccession policy, items are sent to the board of standards to be disposed of or surplus.

Dr. Riley asked about a rotating collection for the Executive Residence similar to that of the White House Historical Collection. First Lady Conte said that only the two TERPF I items were outside of the Executive Residence and with the museum. First Lady Conte said that she has treated the TN State Museum as the curator. First Lady Conte mentioned that she has turned down displaying some items in the Executive Residence that she and Governor have been given. She pointed to a painting hanging in the conference room that the donor had wanted to hang in the Executive Residence. Ms. Riggins-Ezzell said that the museum could bring those type items into the State Museum collection and find a place for them. She said that they provide the artwork for all of the commissioners' offices, the legislative offices and the capitol offices.

Ms. Riggins-Ezzell said that the policy should be written down. She said that it can be written liberally enough to allow some discretionary opportunity to the First Family. Ms. Riggins-Ezzell said that there is currently an in-house curatorial committee consisting of herself, Jim Hoobler and Dan Justice who pick out options that they feel fall within the parameters of collectable art that is of appropriate quality for the Executive Residence. The First Family then picks from those options.

Ms. Horowitz asked if the policy could be written in a way to specify where the artwork comes from to avoid the possibility of a bad donation. Ms. Riggins-Ezzell said that they have borrowed many of the current works in the Executive Residence from other museums and institutions in Tennessee. She said the written policy should say "of museum quality" and "approved by a curatorial committee." Chair Robertson said that the point is that the State Museum should be involved in the artwork on the first floor. Ms. Riggins-Ezzell said that they always have been involved. She said that the works from the other museums are loaned to the TN State Museum so that they are covered by their blanket art rider on their art insurance policy.

Commissioner Davis said that she would work with the chair to look at the Capitol Commission and pull that information together.

Ms. Riggins-Ezzell said that there are plenty of options within the TN State Museum's collection of 6000 works of art, but it is very nice to be able to also draw from the other museums in the state. She said that the other museums loved it. First Lady Conte said that people from across the state have been in the Executive Residence and they recognize the art from their local museums.

With regard to Section 4(a)(4) of the legislation, Chair Robertson said that the private

quarters should also be covered by a policy to ensure that they are properly maintained.

Section 4(a)(5) of the legislation refers to policies governing the maintenance of the Executive Residence. Chair Robertson said that General Services has been involved in that for years. He said their cleaning responsibilities now are different than they were before the renovation because both the Executive Residence and Conservation Hall are LEED certified projects. The current staff have received “green cleaning” training. Bob Kuhr and Bob Johnson are two of the General Services maintenance staff working at the residence. Chair Robertson said that Mr. Kuhr has been through several previous administrations. Chair Robertson said he did not know if the current staff would be changed or supplemented, but he feels that Mr. Kuhr is an asset because he has received the training and been through the renovation and construction projects. Chair Robertson feels that Mr. Kuhr brings continuity to the maintenance at the Executive Residence. Commissioner Davis agreed.

Chair Robertson said that there are several existing maintenance contracts for the Executive Residence and Conservation Hall that can be utilized. He said that the Executive Residence has an annual budget through General Services to cover maintenance. Dr. Riley asked if there would be an increase in staff since the next First Family will likely be living in and using the Executive Residence more than the current First Family. Commissioner Davis said that they had examined the issue and that there is some money and some unfilled positions in the department that might be utilized to increase the staff based on need, but she does not anticipate a tremendous increase.

Chair Robertson suggested forming a small committee to review any proposed alterations to the Executive Residence. He said that this committee, along with a committee that governed the use of the Executive Residence and Conservation Hall could function similarly to how the Capitol Commission reviews requests. Chair Robertson said that General Services (Thad Watkins and Cheryl Rudy) receives the requests for use of the State Capitol and filters those requests out to the members of the Capitol Commission by email. Commissioner Davis says that it is very difficult to get everyone together, but they can usually generate a vote on a request in about a day. When an unusual request arises or a presentation is necessary, then the Capitol Commission meets in person to review the request.

Chair Robertson recommended that there be a point of contact who forwards the requests on to the committee. He proposed that the committee would be able to make the determination based on the appropriate policies contained in the owner’s manual that the TRC will produce. Unusual requests could come to the full commission for interpretation.

Commissioner Davis recommended that the contact person be a General Services person. She recommended Thad Watkins be the contact person since there would be some interpretation necessary of laws and policies. Chair Robertson asked if Mr. Watkins was a lawyer. Commissioner Davis said that he is an attorney who has been with the state for 25 years. Commissioner Davis said that the interpretation process is what is Mr. Watkins

does now for the Capitol Commission. Ms. Riggins-Ezzell said having a lawyer as the contact person would remove the personal connection out of the request process. She said that it helps having a legal counsel when you have to decline a request.

Ms. Riggins-Ezzell said that Mr. Watkins could assist the TRC because the legislation states that General Services will provide staff assistance. Chair Robertson asked if there was a motion to have General Services serve on the alterations committee and the use committee. Ms. Folk made the motion and Dr. Riley seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved by voice vote.

Chair Robertson asked if anyone else was willing to serve on the alterations committee. Ms. Folk, Ms. Horowitz and Mr. Hill volunteered. Chair Robertson asked if Mr. Hill would instead serve on the grounds committee. Chair Robertson said that having a neighbor on that committee might be more positively received by the Oak Hill neighborhood. Chair Robertson asked for a motion to accept Ms. Folk and Ms. Horowitz on the alterations committee. Dr. Riley made the motion and Commissioner Davis seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved by voice vote.

Dr. Riley asked about what type of requests are made for use of Conservation Hall and the Executive Residence. First Lady Conte said that they have had requests for weddings but they have not done any weddings. The Disability Coalition, the monthly First Lady's Series, Books from Birth, Teacher of the Year and Vanderbilt have all held events at Conservation Hall. She said that people running for office have wanted to use it as a fundraiser spot. If the Governor wants to do a fundraiser for a candidate, then they would have to pay the full rental fee. First Lady Conte said non-political events hosted by the Governor or the First Lady are generally considered to be fine to do.

As an example of why political events are more difficult, First Lady Conte told of when Elizabeth Edwards had a small event at the Executive Residence. At the time, Ms. Edwards' husband was running for president. First Lady Conte said that they received many calls afterward saying that "you should not be doing that," and "she needs to pay for everything." When the callers were informed that Ms. Edwards had paid for everything, the caller would say something like "did they pay for the toilet paper?" First Lady Conte said that you just have to be careful.

With regard to the policies for use of the Conservation Hall and the Executive Residence, First Lady Conte said that she would prefer collaboration between TRC, TRF and the Office of the First Lady. She said that the Office of the First Lady would be the ones asking for many of the events. First Lady Conte said that most of the TRC members would not have direct experience with events at Conservation Hall. She said that the Office of the First Lady has a year of experience with events at Conservation Hall and thought that the usage policies provided in everyone's packet were pretty well spelled out. She said that a grey area that she could see was "if changes need to happen, how do we do that?"

Chair Robertson said that the solution might be to have the (incoming) First Lady to

serve on, and possibly, chair that (usage) committee.

Chair Robertson then asked the members to refer to the Standards of Conduct and Conflict of Interest policy in their packets. Chair Robertson said that Section 3(d) of the legislation requires the TRC to adopt a policy related to conflict of interest and a policy of ethical considerations within its first six months of existence. Chair Robertson proposed that the members review and sign the Standards of Conduct and Conflict of Interest policy. He said that the members could sign them now or later. First Lady Conte said that the policies were modeled after the policies of the TRF and they could be altered if the members thought it was necessary. Chair Robertson said he would collect the signed forms and keep them on file.

Dr. Riley requested a tour of the Executive Residence and Conservation Hall. Interested TRC members will coordinate with Seth Stanger in the Office of the First Lady.

Chair Robertson said that he would report to the State Building Commission that the master plan had been approved. In response to a question about frequency of meetings of the TRC, Chair Robertson said that it is not stipulated in the legislation. First Lady Conte said that the TRF meets quarterly. Chair Robertson said that he would not want to meet more often than quarterly.

In an attempt to have policies written in time for the next First Family, Chair Robertson said that the TRC should meet again before January 15, 2011. Dr. Riley suggested inviting the incoming First Lady to the next meeting. The next meeting of the TRC was tentatively scheduled for November 16, 2010 at 10:00 AM on the 27th Floor of the Tennessee Tower. Chair Robertson said that the 2011 meeting dates could be set at the next meeting.

Chair Robertson said that Georgia Martin in his office will handle scheduling and minute taking of future meetings as she has for the Capitol Commission.

First Lady Conte mentioned the two fabric sample books for the Executive Residence. She thought it would be valuable to the TRC as it moves forward. Ms. Riggins-Ezzell asked if they would be archived with the museum. First Lady Conte said she was unsure, but did want them saved. She said that it was something that we did not have when we were thinking of doing something inside (the Executive Residence). She said that Ms. Folk had done lots of research about what was in the house in 1930, but very little was available. Ms. Horowitz said she would take the books and complete the information on the renovations.

The meeting adjourned.