

M I N U T E S

SPACE COMMITTEE

October 12, 1983

The meeting of the Space Committee of the Legislative Council was called to order by the Chairperson, Senator Lowell L. Junkins, at 9:21 a.m., Wednesday, October 12, 1983, in Committee Room 22 of the State House, Des Moines, Iowa. Committee members present, in addition to Chairperson Junkins were:

Senator Calvin O. Hultman
Representative John H. Connors

Also present were:

Serge Garrison, Director, Legislative Service Bureau
David Bailey, Legislative Service Bureau
Al Meier, Iowa Bureau of Labor
Walter Johnson, Iowa Bureau of Labor
Mike Maine, UPI
Bill Brewer, WHO
Liz Isaacson, House of Representatives
M. K. Cady, WOI
Robert Lebeo, Fire Marshal's Office
Wilbur R. Johnson, State Fire Marshal
Susan Johnson, Senate Republican Staff
Greg Nichols, Senate Democratic Staff
John Goeldner, Public Information Office
Peter J. Coniglio, Senate Republican Staff
K. Marie Thayer, Secretary of the Senate
Dennis Prouty, Director, Legislative Fiscal Bureau

Chairperson Junkins called upon Mr. Jack Walters, Director of the Department of General Services, for a review of the evaluation of the legislative office areas prepared by the Bureau of Labor, the State Fire Marshal's Office, and the Iowa Civil Rights Commission. Mr. Walters introduced Mr. Ta-yu Yang of the Iowa Civil Rights Commission. Mr. Yang asked the Committee members to imagine themselves as a constituent in a wheelchair trying to visit the legislature. He noted that the first obstacle encountered would be to find a handicapped parking space that was convenient to the State Capitol Building. He noted that many of the committee rooms are not accessible to a person in a wheelchair. He further observed that 20 percent of Iowa's population may be composed of the elderly who may have a problem with the many steps in the Capitol Building and with opening or closing fire doors. He stated that the Commission would support renovation of the Capitol Building which would improve the accessibility of the building to the handicapped.

Mr. Walters introduced Mr. Al Meier, Commissioner of Labor, who stated that he had been asked by the Chief Clerk of the House in 1982 to examine the safety hazards of the House office as though it were a private business. Mr. Meier stated that he recognized the historical aspects of the structure which would prevent certain remodeling changes. He noted that fires now kill more frequently through fumes particularly those of plastics. These fumes would gather in the upper areas of the mezzanine floors and that removal of the mezzanine would improve the safety of the office areas. He stated that his office would support option B-1 of the Capitol Space Study. In response to an inquiry by Chairperson Junkins, he noted that his office would not permit the situation existing in the legislative offices to exist in a private business.

Mr. Walters introduced Mr. Wilbur Johnson, State Fire Marshal. Mr. Johnson stated that there were several fire protection concerns existing in the Capitol Building. He urged that areas used for storage should be equipped with sprinklers. He stated that the double-decking of several areas creates a fire problem and lowers the fire resistant rating of the building. He noted that the storage of trash at the exits is also a hazard.

Chairperson Junkins asked Mr. Meier and Mr. Johnson if, recognizing the historical aspect of the building, they would approve the Capitol Building if it were a private business about to open. Mr. Meier replied that his office would not, particularly with the double-decked floors. Mr. Johnson replied that his office would not and that it would quickly cite any private business with conditions existing in the Capitol Building. He added that the facilities are overcrowded during the legislative session. Representative Lester Menke inquired of Mr. Johnson if prohibiting smoking in the Capitol Building would improve its fire safety. Mr. Johnson replied that smoking is the number one cause of fires in the United States.

Mr. Walters stated that he hopes the Space Committee can convince the Legislative Council to continue progress on this subject. He stated the need to appropriate funds to develop the engineering for option B-1. Senator Hultman stated that he believes the legislature is on shaky grounds of risk management if it does not act. He stated that the legislature should progress with the plan and that it ought not wait until a fatality occurs. Chairperson Junkins noted that there is a recommendation before the Committee and that at this point the recommendation of renovation of the building is not part of that recommendation. Representative Connors stated that he believes the recommendation of renovation of the building should be added and included as part of the report of the Space Committee. Senator Hultman moved that remodeling of the State Capitol to alleviate any fire safety deficiency be considered along with the implementation of option B-1 and that the Director of General Services provide cost estimates for such remodeling. Mr. Meier noted that he would recommend that the legislature train

its employees and members on the fire safety hazards of the building and the means of safe egress from the building. Senator Hultman stated that he would accept Mr. Meier's recommendation as an amendment to his motion. The Hultman motion as amended was adopted by the Space Committee.

The Space Committee adjourned at 9:43 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

DAVID S. BAILEY
Legal Counsel

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