

MINUTES

Dwight D. Eisenhower Memorial Commission

March 25, 2010

U.S. Capitol - Room S-128 — Washington, D.C.

{APPROVED BY THE COMMISSIONERS JULY 12, 2011}

Commissioners in Attendance:

Rocco C. Siciliano, Chairman
Representative Leonard Boswell
Representative Dennis Moore
Representative Jerry Moran
Senator Jack Reed
Senator Pat Roberts
Representative Mac Thornberry
D. David Eisenhower
Alfred Geduldig
Susan Banes Harris

Congressional Staff in Attendance:

Marie Blanco (Senator Inouye)
Brian Smith (Senator Bennett)
Ross Maradian (Rep. Boswell)
Howard Bauleke (Rep. Moore)
Brian Perkins (Rep. Moran)
Adrienne Healey (Senator Reed)
Joel Leftwich (Senator Roberts)
Michael Seeds (Rep. Thornberry)

Gehry Partners, LLP:

Frank Gehry
Meaghan Lloyd
John Bowers
Brian Zamora

AECOM:

Joe Brown
Alan Harwood

National Park Service:

Peter May, Associate Regional Director for
Lands, Resources and Planning

General Services Administration, NCR, PBS (GSA):

Leonard Weiser, Property Development Division

National Archives and Records Administration:

Karl Weissenbach, Director, Dwight D. Eisenhower Library

Dwight D. Eisenhower Memorial Commission (EMC):

Carl Reddel

Dan Feil

Joyce Jacobson

Emily Nye

Annemarie Spadafore

Richard Striner

Pepsie Michel

Andrew Demetriou, Esq., Special Counsel

Others in Attendance:

Anne Eisenhower, Granddaughter of Dwight Eisenhower

Prof. Louis Galambos, Johns Hopkins University

Chairman Siciliano called the meeting to order at 11:35 a.m., welcoming Commissioners, staff, and guests. Chairman Siciliano noted the presence of a quorum, while regretting the absence of Senator Inouye. Senator Inouye met with the Chairman prior to the meeting and viewed the models. Senator Inouye asked that the Chairman express his wishes concerning the business of the Commission. By unanimous vote, the Commission's meeting minutes for March 31, 2009 were approved.

Chairman Siciliano welcomed architect Frank Gehry, the memorial's designer, and informed the Commissioners that they faced a momentous decision: the choice of a preferred design scheme from the three alternatives developed by Mr. Gehry. Chairman Siciliano noted that one of these design schemes keeps open the segment of Maryland Avenue that bisects the memorial site. The Chairman noted that this scheme had been developed at the request of GSA, since approval for the street closure remains pending.

Mr. Siciliano also noted that the scheme preferred by both the architect and the EMC staff was scheme number three, represented by the largest architectural models on display in the meeting room.

Mr. Siciliano observed that the preference of the architect and EMC staff bears no relation to the cost of this particular scheme, though it is the most expensive; cost estimates for each of the three alternative schemes were placed within the informational folders for each Commissioner. Mr. Siciliano stated that he hoped the Commission might be able to choose one of these schemes and

move ahead with its development, adding that Senators Daniel K. Inouye and Robert Bennett, though not now present at the meeting, had previewed the schemes prior to the meeting and stated their preference. Senator Reed joined Senators Inouye and Bennett in supporting the preferred design alternative.

Senator Roberts stated that he was extremely impressed by scheme number three, the preferred scheme of the architect and the EMC staff. Calling this scheme a wonderful concept, Senator Roberts moved that the following resolution be adopted by the Dwight D. Eisenhower Memorial Commission:

WHEREAS, the Dwight D. Eisenhower Memorial Commission was authorized under Public Law No. 106-79 (October 25, 1999), amended by Public Law No. 107-117 (January 10, 2002) and constituted by the President of the United States to plan and build an appropriate permanent memorial to Dwight D. Eisenhower in Washington, D.C.;

WHEREAS, to further its mission, the Commission selected, on March 31, 2009, Gehry Partners, LLP of Los Angeles, California as the first choice design team;

WHEREAS, the Commission's Executive Director and Executive Architect were directed to manage the development of three (3) alternative design concepts by Gehry Partners, LLP of Los Angeles, California through the General Services Administration's Design Excellence Program;

WHEREAS, the Commission has reviewed the alternative design concepts as well as a "no action" alternative, and has given consideration to their impact upon the environment and upon historic resources, having been briefed by the Executive Director and the Executive Architect; and

WHEREAS, it is necessary for the Commission to select from the three alternative design concepts submitted by Gehry Partners, LLP of Los Angeles and the "no action" alternative, one (1) preferred design concept for the Eisenhower Memorial;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT, the Commission selects at this time the design concept number three as the preferred design concept.

This motion was seconded by Representative Boswell.

Chairman Siciliano called for discussion and invited Mr. Gehry to share his views with the Commission.

Mr. Gehry stated that it was a great honor to be given this design commission, that he had lived through the Eisenhower presidency but was not aware at the time of the full dimensions of Eisenhower's greatness. Mr. Gehry observed that he does not usually enter design competitions, that he commenced a process of self-education in regard to Eisenhower, that he was deeply moved when he discovered how ignorant many people were in regard to Ike's greatness while he was still alive, and that the Eisenhower Memorial demanded the most dignified possible representation of Eisenhower and the themes of his public service.

Mr. Gehry stated that a visit to the memorial site convinced him that this design challenge would be difficult and unusual. He informed the Commission of his early conclusion that relief images in stone would be appropriate as a design element and he commented on the relative merits of bronze versus stone as sculptural materials. He stated that the sculpted reliefs would be twice human scale. He observed that the overall park or garden atmosphere that he wishes to create in this public square requires a feeling of intimacy in which to contemplate the sculpture as well as the Eisenhower quotations to be carved into lintels. He noted the importance of the oak trees that he contemplates transplanting from Abilene, Kansas. He explained his preference for the inclusion of large backdrop tapestries depicting scenes from Eisenhower's life, observing that tapestries have been used to tell stories through the ages. He shared information in regard to his inquiries to determine the most durable material for the tapestries as well as his preliminary conclusion that stainless steel wire would lend itself to this use, adding that pro bono research is being donated by the J. Paul Getty Center in Los Angeles; stainless steel samples will be subjected there to scientific tests to determine their age-resilience in the DC region.

Mr. Gehry discussed a number of details in relation to the tapestries. He stated that the largest of them, at the southern border of Eisenhower Square, will be separated from the Department of Education Building behind it by the distance of the width of a normal city street and that the translucent character of the tapestry will mitigate its effect upon the views of people who are working in the building. Mr. Gehry stated that he anticipates creating a

reflecting pool at the base of this tapestry, with trickling water to mask the noise of traffic.

Mr. Gehry stated that the imagery to be included in the tapestries will be determined in consultation with the Commission and the Eisenhower family, but that the model of the preferred scheme employs an image from V-E Day on the large tapestry at the southern border of the memorial as a demonstration of the possibilities. Turning to the issues concerning two smaller tapestries to be created on the northern border of the memorial (facing Independence Avenue), Mr. Gehry stated that these two smaller tapestries will create a proscenium effect that is intended to frame the central grove. He stated further that these particular tapestries, whose shape may be subject to change and refinement, will be hung within a colonnade of free-standing limestone columns. The visual rhythm of the colonnade will be slightly altered by the removal of one column in order to preserve the viewscape of the U.S. Capitol. Mr. Gehry stated that a Park Service Ranger contact station, bookstore, and restrooms will be integrated into the structures within the grove that contain the sculpted reliefs.

Mr. Gehry concluded with comments on the other two schemes (schemes one and two), which are depicted in smaller models and do not contain tapestries.

Chairman Siciliano asked the Commissioners if they had any questions or comments.

Mr. Geduldig asked whether the Commissioners would be voting on the particular images to be used in the design, and Chairman Siciliano replied that the Commissioners were not being asked to vote on such details at this time. Mr. Geduldig stated that in his opinion the architect's preferred scheme is magnificent, but that he had concerns about the use of a D-Day image, which would seem to make Eisenhower's military service in World War II seem paramount, whereas many different memories of Eisenhower's public service are relevant.

Mr. Gehry replied that this particular image — actually an image from V-E Day — had been selected merely for the purpose of providing an example of possible imagery in the design competition. Mr. Gehry added that an actor and director named Robert Wilson had been retained by the firm to help select images for presentation to the Commission and the Eisenhower family at a later date.

Mr. Demetriou advised that the Commission decision contemplated by the resolution is a choice among three different general proposed visions for the memorial's design — the proposal with Maryland Avenue remaining open, a proposal of similar scale with Maryland Avenue closed, and the architect's preferred and more architecturally intense proposal involving the woven metal tapestries. The Commission will be providing guidance for the development of detailed plans within the context of a single design and not endorsing the particular design elements reflected in the models, which will be revised by the architect in consultation with the Commission and the Eisenhower family, as well as subject to the approvals required for ultimate construction of the memorial.

Representative Moran inquired about the timing and nature of subsequent decisions and votes by the Commission. Chairman Siciliano replied that some months will elapse before the design has progressed to the point where the next Commission meeting will be necessary. Representative Moran asked whether the Commission will vote on the final design. Chairman Siciliano replied in the affirmative.

Mr. Feil observed that the preliminary design concept selected by the Commission will be presented to the staffs of appropriate federal design review agencies in order to receive their reactions and input. This process will begin in Fall 2010 and continue through June 2011.

Representative Moran stated that he was pleased with the selection of the Gehry firm and impressed by all three of the schemes presented, though he believed that the architect's preferred scheme was the best. He also commended Mr. Gehry for his planned trip to Abilene, Kansas.

Representative Thornberry asked members of the Eisenhower family to share comments.

Commissioner Eisenhower introduced his sister Anne. The Commissioner stated that he liked the use of the V-E Day image insofar as it represents a transitional point in the two careers — military and civilian — of his grandfather. He stated that the architect's preferred scheme is a very striking design and that he has enjoyed participating in consultations with Mr. Gehry. He stated that he likes the free-standing columns in Gehry's design, as they seem to symbolize the upward emergence of the United States to world power in the mid-twentieth century. He also stated that he is in favor of the architect's preferred scheme.

Representative Boswell stated that he agrees with the sentiments expressed by his colleague Representative Moran, that he cannot compliment Mr. Gehry enough in regard to the quality of his work thus far, and that the architect's preferred scheme expresses themes of which the nation will be proud.

Ms. Harris stated that she is favorably impressed by the tapestry idea, by the use of greenery, including a garden with elements transported from the Midwest, the use of water, and the concept of an educational electronic component of the memorial.

Mr. Geduldig stated that he views the design work to date as a very good beginning.

Anne Eisenhower stated that the actual images chosen for inclusion in the memorial will be very important, and that the architect's concept, as embodied in his preferred scheme, is wonderful.

Chairman Siciliano called for a vote; the resolution in favor of the architect's preferred scheme — scheme number three — passed unanimously.

Chairman Siciliano announced that a news conference after the Commission meeting had been called for 1 p.m.

Turning to the subject of funding, Chairman Siciliano stated that he hopes for maximum federal support, that precedent exists for 100 percent federal funding of presidential memorials in the case of the Lincoln, Jefferson, and Theodore Roosevelt Memorials, and that federal funding had encompassed 89 percent of the cost of the Franklin D. Roosevelt Memorial and 65 percent of the cost of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. The chairman stated that the design phase of the Eisenhower Memorial's development will last two years, and that fundraising efforts must begin soon, since the Commission must have all the funding in hand before construction can begin. Chairman Siciliano stated that it had been the Commission's historic intention to seek 100 percent federal funding, though planning for private-sector fundraising is already under way.

Senator Roberts stated that the Eisenhower Memorial presents an opportunity to educate a new generation, that he personally identifies himself as an "Eisenhower Republican" in the spirit of getting things done, and that he is optimistic that federal lawmakers will find ways to

supply federal funding on a scale commensurate with the importance of the Eisenhower Memorial.

Anne Eisenhower asked whether studies in regard to private-sector fundraising had been performed. Chairman Siciliano replied in the affirmative, citing the feasibility study conducted by The Webster Group. The Chairman noted the difficulty of fundraising efforts in the present economic conditions, especially since many of Eisenhower's contemporaries are gone.

Senator Roberts stated that many people still appreciate Eisenhower's leadership legacy all over the world, and that an international dimension for the fundraising effort is advisable.

Executive Director Reddel shared several specific observations, including the fact that Mr. Gehry had personally signed each copy of the design statement that had been placed in the Commissioners' folders, and that a visit to the memorial site will demonstrate the extent to which the view of the United States Capitol dome is extremely prominent, a view to be framed by the columns of Mr. Gehry's design.

The meeting adjourned at 12:20 p.m.

(Prepared by Dr. Richard Striner)

APPROVED BY THE COMMISSIONERS JULY 12, 2011