

MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 14, 2011, EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AFTERNOON MEETING

The Executive Committee (“the Committee”) of the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution met on September 14, 2011, beginning at 1:00 p.m. at the Smithsonian Castle in Washington, D.C. In attendance were Board Chair Patricia Q. Stonesifer, Vice Chair Alan G. Spoon, and Committee member Robert P. Kogod. Also present by invitation of the Committee were Secretary G. Wayne Clough, Counselor to the Chief Justice Jeffrey Minear, Chief of Staff to the Secretary Patricia Bartlett, Associate General Counsel Craig Blackwell, Chief of Staff to the Regents John K. Lapiana, General Counsel Judith Leonard, and Director of Communications and External Affairs Evelyn Lieberman.

The meeting followed a morning Committee meeting with Smithsonian Chancellor John G. Roberts Jr., Chief Justice of the United States, to discuss the agenda for the September 19, 2011, Regents’ meeting.

Ms. Stonesifer called the meeting to order and thanked the members for being able to accommodate two meetings that day. She noted the meeting would include two executive sessions, including one with the Secretary to discuss some sensitive personnel matters.

Approval of the August 25, 2011, Meeting Minutes

The Committee approved the August 25, 2011, meeting minutes without modification.

Proposed Housing Purchase in Gamboa for the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute

Ms. Stonesifer began the discussion by noting that both the Executive Committee and the Facilities Committee have been monitoring the proposed acquisition by the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute (STRI) to purchase certain houses in Gamboa, Panama, with the intention to sell them to STRI-affiliated staff (including emeritus staff) and to retain some for visiting scholar accommodations. Ms. Leonard noted that progress had been made toward the purchase from the Government of Panama since the last time the Committee was briefed on the matter in August 2011.

Ms. Leonard said the Panamanian government has completed all the necessary steps it must take to finalize the sale. Final draft purchase and sale agreements have been prepared both for the purchase from Panama and sale to STRI-affiliated staff of the homes. The environmental assessment, however, will not be completed for an additional 10 days. Ms. Leonard stressed that her office’s participation has been to minimize risk to the Smithsonian.

Mr. Blackwell then highlighted for the Committee the key provisions of the transactions. The Committee discussed in detail the eligibility of STRI-affiliated staff to purchase the properties and the best methods to ensure the viability of STRI’s right-of-first-refusal to repurchase the

properties when a staff member is no longer affiliated with STRI. In particular, members were concerned about how STRI would identify emeritus scholars and whether including their presence would weaken the strategic use of the properties to attract new talent and encourage turnover. The Secretary agreed with the Committee that identification of staff eligible to purchase or remain in the housing (particularly emeriti) should rest with both the director of STRI and the Under Secretary for Science.

The Committee approved the following:

VOTED that the Executive Committee recommends that the Board of Regents authorize the Secretary, through the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute (STRI), to purchase certain houses in Gamboa, Panama, from the Government of Panama; to retain some houses for use by STRI; and to resell the remainder of the houses to current STRI staff and research associates under terms preserving the ability to reacquire the houses at a fair price after the buyers are no longer associated with STRI.

Establishment of a United Kingdom Trust Entity

Ms. Stonesifer noted that all members of the Executive Committee are also members of the Advancement Committee and had participated in that committee's consideration of whether to recommend the establishment of a trust entity in the United Kingdom to receive donations on behalf of the Smithsonian. In addition to recapping that discussion, the Secretary also noted that the annual operating costs for the entity would be about \$25,000 to \$30,000.

The Committee supported the recommendation of the Advancement Committee and approved the following motion:

VOTED that the Executive Committee concurs with the Advancement Committee and recommends that the Board of Regents approve the establishment of a trust in the United Kingdom for the benefit of the Smithsonian; that the Smithsonian Director of Advancement and Philanthropic Giving serve as an ex officio, non-voting trustee; and that the appointment of future trustees be approved by the Board of Regents.

Fiscal Years 2012–2015 Goals

The Secretary then presented the draft institutional goals for fiscal years 2012–2015. He noted that the goals are designed to “set the tone” and direction for the Smithsonian, including specific activities (and milestones for those activities), during this period. The Secretary advised the Committee that, although the goals had been “tightened” over the last few days, he will still be asking for staff to better articulate the meaning of “education” and “outreach.”

Mr. Spoon suggested that, in addition to the metrics being developed as part of Smithsonian Redesign, a simple dashboard system (e.g., red, yellow, and green) be used to monitor progress under each of the four-year goals on an annual (mid-course) basis. Ms. Stonesifer added that the Secretary should consider adding a more top-down assessment of the “rich list” of activities in the document and clearly identify when success is achieved. In addition, members suggested

that external measurements of success (e.g., being a leader in articulating the “American Experience”) be developed.

Public Forum

Mrs. Lieberman described the agenda and logistics for the annual public forum, which will be held at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden’s Ring Auditorium. The forum will follow the morning business session of the Regents’ September 19, 2011, meeting. She noted that the topic of the forum will be “Strength in Austerity,” and that the Regents will be encouraged to debate certain related issues before opening the forum to questions from the public.

The Committee expressed its concern that public attendance and participation at the forum is disappointing, and asked Mrs. Lieberman to come back to the Committee in early 2012 with potential alternatives to the current format of the forum, recognizing that the forum was designed to address a real need for more outside transparency.

Executive Session

Ms. Leonard discussed a pending litigation matter with the Committee. All staff, except the Secretary, were then excused to allow for discussion of certain personnel matters.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Patty Stonesifer
Chair