

Minutes*

Joint Meeting
Senate Committee on Finance and Planning
Subcommittee on Physical Plant and Space Allocation
May 8, 1990

Present: (Finance and Planning) Burton Shapiro (chair), David Berg, Lael Gatewood, Virginia Gray, Cleon Melsa, Tim Wolf

Present: (Physical Plant and Space Allocation) Arthur Erdman (chair), Stan Bonnema, Sue Gerberich, Elizabeth Grundner, Jim Hearn, Tom Johnson, Susan Markham, Ed Ney, Mary Sue Simmons

Guests: Ken Janzen (Regents' Office), Rabun Taylor (Footnote), a Daily reporter, * others

Professor Shapiro opened the meeting by calling for introductions, which were made; he then turned the meeting over to Professor Erdman for the report of the Subcommittee on Physical Plant and Space Allocation.

Review of the Activities of the Subcommittee Professor Erdman distributed copies of the annual report of the Subcommittee and solicited comments about it from Subcommittee members. He briefly reviewed the seven items in the report for the benefit of the Finance and Planning Committee members. A copy of the annual report will appear in the docket of the May Senate meeting.

In response to a question, a copy of the standards which guide custodial services was distributed. Committee members briefly discussed the levels of services provided.

It was agreed that a joint meeting of the parent and subcommittee should be held at least once per year.

Report on Asbestos and Radon Professor Erdman reported that the Subcommittee had been discussing the problems associated with asbestos and radon for some time and had appointed a subcommittee to draft a report, a copy of which was distributed. Professor Erdman asked Professor Johnson to review the contents of the report.

Professor Johnson narrated the contents of the draft report. He explained that students and staff have had concerns about asbestos and radon and the possible health threats; the subcommittee met with individuals from a number of units to assess and report on the situation. The subcommittee, he reported, was not in complete agreement on all elements of its report; major problems include spotty data from the University as well as disputes within the scientific community itself. The report concluded with five

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*Who, at one point, participated in the meeting by interrogating Committee members about asbestos!

recommendations concerning asbestos removal and radon contamination as well as calling for a representative from Environmental Health and Safety to serve ex-officio on the Physical Plant and Space Allocation Subcommittee.

One Committee member inquired why the University was not more active in asbestos removal, why it did not have the equipment to differentiate among more and less threatening forms of asbestos, and what constituted prompt action in removal if an asbestos problem were identified. The report, it was said, calls for identification of individuals who could respond to inquiries; the Department of Environmental Health and Safety is responsible for monitoring specific construction and remodeling projects where the release of asbestos might be possible. In terms of total removal, the University does not have anywhere near the funds required (perhaps \$80,000,000); testing for different types of asbestos is not conducted because there are no clear standards on analyzing airborne asbestos.

An inquiry was also posed why radon testing was not being conducted; one Committee member said some is being done and more is recommended. People will not live forever; there has to be a balancing between the cost of doing something against the benefit gained. Further, it was argued, while radon is a hazard, it is not enough of a hazard for people to get all excited about it. That, it was added, is a minority view on the Subcommittee--but not in the scientific community. Other exposures, another Subcommittee member pointed out, can be of equal or greater threat but they are not addressed in the report.

It was noted that another committee within the University is working on these matters; the report of the subcommittee will be forwarded to that group. It was also suggested that part of the funds received from a settlement on asbestos be used to conduct a more thorough study of the University to establish better baseline data.

It was agreed that a revised copy of the report would be prepared for additional discussion and presentation to the Senate.

Professors Shapiro and Erdman briefly reviewed the space rental discussions which had taken place thus far and noted that it is an issue of considerable concern to the faculty. Professor Shapiro reported that the Faculty Consultative Committee had concluded that the faculty should devote some attention to the development of alternatives and that the Physical Plant and Space Allocation seemed to be the appropriate group to do so.

Professor Erdman then distributed to the two committees a proposal for a "Space Responsibility Model," which included formulae for conduct of space audits (including assessment of quality), cost of space to a unit, relationship of space costs to Academic Priorities, and an administrative structure which would implement and monitor the plan (analogous to the structure in place for financial administration). Professor Erdman explained the formulae and how the plan would work; he commented that the basis of the model was that pay-for-space, money, and Academic Priorities cannot be separated.

Professor Erdman agreed that there are assumptions about the extent to which things can be measured, including, for example, within sections of buildings. Committee members discussed a number of the elements of the proposal, including the fact that units could "lose" under the proposal, that space

should not be linked so directly to Academic Priorities, and that there is little that individual faculty and units can do to regulate heat and energy use, at least in some buildings. Professor Shapiro pointed out that energy is not the only reason for the proposal to adopt a space rental plan.

One Committee member suggested that the plan was itself an argument against charging for space; some others concurred. Another expressed concern that the assumption seems to be that the plan will be adopted and the only question is the best way; should the question not be, it was asked, ought it be adopted at all?

It was agreed that the Physical Plant and Space Allocation Subcommittee should take up the matter in greater depth.

The meeting adjourned at 5:00.

-- Gary Engstrand

University of Minnesota