

Minutes*

Senate Committee on Finance and Planning
Tuesday, October 21, 1997
3:15 - 5:00
Room 238 Morrill Hall

Present: Fred Morrison (chair), Jean Bauer, JoAnne Jackson, Gerald Klement, Leonard Kuhi, J. P. Maier, Jane Phillips, James VanAlstine

Regrets: Catherine French, Stephen Gudeman, Charles Speaks

Absent: Cynthia Gillette, Robert Kvavik, Richard Pfitzenreuter, Peter Robinson, Joby Sebastian, Shenoa Simpson

Guests: Associate Vice President Clinton Hewitt, Associate Vice President Eric Kruse

[In these minutes: South Mall, Enterprise projects, work of the Facilities Management Subcommittee]

1. Miscellany

Professor Morrison convened the meeting at 3:25 and drew the attention of Committee members to two items.

He distributed copies of a draft letter to President Yudof from the Committee about the food service expressing concerns that it had raised and invited comments. The two major points were that the length of the proposed contract (10 years) may lessen the University's leverage with Aramark and that use of net funds, if any, should be reviewed with the Committee.

It was pointed out that the administration had committed to spending any net funds on students, and that additional review by this Committee would violate that agreement. Professor Morrison responded that that commitment itself had been made without consultation.

It was voted unanimously to send the letter to the President.

Professor Morrison also distributed copies of a letter from the President about the operating costs of the new and renovated facilities planned in the capital request. The President had originally thought operating costs might decrease; subsequent analysis suggests such costs could increase anywhere from \$4 to \$10 million annually, and the money would have to be found in the operating budget.

2. The South Mall

Professor Morrison next turned to Senior Vice President Jackson and Associate Vice President

*These minutes reflect discussion and debate at a meeting of a committee of the University of Minnesota Senate or Twin Cities Campus Assembly; none of the comments, conclusions, or actions reported in these minutes represent the views of, nor are they binding on, the Senate or Assembly, the Administration, or the Board of Regents.

Hewitt for a review of the South Mall projects.

Mr. Hewitt used a map of the campus to explain what was being contemplated. The effort would be made, after the East River Road parking ramp was torn down, to link the Mall with the river, as envisioned in Cass Gilbert's original plan and as endorsed in the campus master plan. The idea is to retain Coffman Union but to go through it, and to build housing on each corner of the south side of the union. The University will issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) to see if the private sector would be interested in a partnership and to learn what options might be considered.

Mr. Hewitt discussed the relationship between housing and parking, the attractiveness of putting housing on the river, and the goal of animating the area. Ms. Jackson reported that the University has been approached by private developers who want to build housing contiguous to the University, and the University wishes to explore the options. The housing, Mr. Hewitt told the Committee, would probably be apartment-style, rather than dormitories, which is what students prefer and which would give the University more flexibility in use.

Committee members discussed a number of points about the plan with Mr. Hewitt and Ms. Jackson.

- The number of housing units that would be built, and the question of whether it was the best use of the land south of the union.
- How to integrate parking into new housing facilities, and the relative cost of underground versus ramp or surface parking versus the aesthetics of underground parking, the unattractiveness of adding ramps in that area, and how the additional cost of underground parking would be paid.
- Whether it was necessary to replace all 1775 parking spaces in the East River Road ramp, or necessary to replace them all at that site (rather than moving some of them to other locations, perhaps by adding levels to other existing ramps), and the need to balance distance and convenience in providing parking to University faculty, staff, and students. One Committee member maintained that parking at the University, compared to other institutions, was very good, and that if some parking had to be moved farther away, so be it. Ms. Jackson said a ramp built on the periphery would be less objectionable, but people object to walking, so a combination of skyways and tunnels would be considered. Mr. Hewitt noted that the campus master plan calls for a de-emphasis on cars, and pointed out that the University could pave every green space on the campus and still not have enough parking to meet demand. (He recalled one proposal he had received to build a 5,000-car ramp on the Mall, to make the University the most convenient and friendly for its users.) Ms. Jackson said there would not be a loss of spaces, but that no commitment could be made about convenience. There was also a concern that students could be priced out of new parking constructed on the South Mall.
- The need for "severe" renovation to Coffman to open the Mall to the river, the need to connect the campus with the green spaces on the river, and the possibility of working with the Minneapolis Park Board (which has expressed support for the general idea, and the possibility of a boat dock on the river flats).

- Committee members emphasized again opposition to removing the upper deck from the Washington Avenue bridge; Ms. Jackson said removing it was not in any current plans and that it was doubtful anyone sitting around the table would still be at the University when the issue ever does arise. One Committee member commented that it was "one of the silliest ideas I've ever heard."
- Whether demolition of JOML and construction of a new building was related to these plans (it will be, but the South Mall projects would be completed within two years, while the new building would take four or more years, so they are on a different schedule).
- The possibility of allowing use of different building standards, because there is a general view that University standards increase the costs of construction by a factor of two. Lower standards would not necessarily mean cheap; present University standards call for a 50-year life for buildings, while different standards might call for a 30-year life; this might be acceptable to the University, because it would provide for the possibility of changing the use of the land. (For example, the University might decide it no longer wished to have housing south of the union in 20 or 30 years.)

Ms. Jackson and Mr. Hewitt agreed to return to the Committee, following discussion of these ideas with the Board of Regents, before final principles were accepted and decisions were made.

3. Enterprise Systems

Ms. Jackson distributed a memo from herself, Dr. Bruininks, and Dr. Cerra to the Enterprise Project Team which announced the next steps in the enterprise projects. She told the Committee that replacement of the financial system has been postponed and that CUFS will be maintained, that the projects will be implemented over a six-year period and will be implemented in priority order (with the student and human resource systems having the highest priority), that Mr. Cawley will be the project manager responsible for keeping projects on schedule and within budget, and that they will look at financial strategies and decide what they MUST spend, rather than spend as much as they can. One option is to spend some of the reserves; President Yudof has indicated he does not wish the 1.4% assessment against units to continue next year. Ms. Jackson said that the financial strategies and project budgets would be known within a few weeks.

Concern was expressed that systems would be implemented when they are not ready, with insufficient training, and with too many bells and whistles, in an attempt to save money. The original intention, to have all these systems in place by the year 2000, would come close to replicating what was done with CUFS: getting systems up and running with no assurance that they would work. The revised proposal is an improvement.

Ms. Jackson promised that the financial plans for the systems would be brought back to the Committee.

4. Report from the Facilities Management Subcommittee

Professor Morrison asked Ms. Phillips to report for the Facilities Management Subcommittee; a

written report had been distributed by email to Committee members prior to the meeting.

Ms. Phillips said the point was simply that if the Subcommittee is to support this Committee, it needs direction on what it should do. It has received no feedback from the Committee on its efforts, and the Subcommittee does not wish to meet if its activities do not matter.

It was noted that the charge to the Subcommittee had been changed last year to include oversight of support services generally, although that change has never been memorialized in the charge.

Professor Morrison suggested that the Committee should identify issues it wished the Subcommittee to take up and provide answers to.

It was agreed, following brief discussion, that the Subcommittee would be asked to take up (1) parking and transportation and (2) classroom renewal, and that this Committee would keep those items off its agenda until the Subcommittee made reports. Ms. Jackson noted that parking and transportation is a big issue, and said she would welcome any committee taking it on. Things cannot continue to go the way they are; parking funds are not to be used for other purposes, but transportation must be supported, and those who pay for parking must know that.

Professor Morrison then adjourned the meeting at 4:50.

-- Gary Engstrand

University of Minnesota