

Index to Minutes of Meeting
The Commission of Fine Arts
18 May 1960

✓ Authorization for appropriations, Limit of Fixed sum limit removed	1
✓ Commission of Fine Arts	
Authorization, limit removed	3
Compliance with its advice by agencies	3
Enlargement of membership and duties	4
Incorporation into another agency	4
Jurisdiction of	3
Fiftieth Anniversary Congratulations	1
George Washington Memorial Parkway System	
Bridges at	
Glen Echo, Md. -design to be restudied	6
Turkey Run and Dead Run, Va. -designs approved as submitted	6
Inner Loop-Southwest Freeway	
Eleventh Street Bridge design approved	5
National Capital Parks	
Central Maintenance Shop	7
Public Law 808-Old Georgetown Act	
Opinion of Corporation Counsel	2
✓ Pumping Station, Sewage	
Design of	4
Shipstead-Luce Act	
Administrative improvements	2
Revision of Boundaries	2
Preliminary submission	
Olmstead Building, 1701 Penn. Avenue	7
✓ Trees, concrete tubs for	
On 15th Street between H and I on experi- mental basis	5

MEMORANDUM MINUTES OF THE
PROCEEDINGS OF THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
WASHINGTON, D.C.
18 May 1960

OPEN SESSION

Public Law 181 61st Congress Establishing the Commission of Fine Arts
was Signed by President Taft on May 17, 1910

The Commission met, pursuant to notice, at 9:30 a.m., with David
E. Finley, Chairman, presiding.

Present were: David E. Finley, Chairman
Felix W. de Weldon
Michael Rapuano
Ralph Walker
Douglas W. Orr

L.R. Wilson, Secretary
Susan E. Bennett, Admin. Asst.
Gilbert E. Halasz, Stenotypist

I. Fiftieth Anniversary of the Commission of Fine Arts

The Chairman then read to the members congratulatory messages received from the Committee of 100, Gilmore D. Clarke former Chairman of the Commission, and the National Downtown Committee upon the occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Commission of Fine Arts and stated he would send them appropriate letters of thanks on behalf of the Commission. He explained that there would be no formal notice of the event taken, beyond meeting on the 17th of May, which is the exact anniversary of the first meeting in 1910. He then reviewed briefly the history of the Commission and noted its many contributions to the development and preservation of the city of Washington.

II. Administration of the Commission

In a brief review by the Chairman, notice was taken of several developments in the administration of the Commission itself. The most important of these subjects have been somewhat expanded and recorded as follows:

a. Limit of Authorization for Appropriations

Amendment was made by the Congress to Section 2 of the enabling legislation (Public Law 181 61st Congress) in 1956 to raise the limit of authorization for appropriations from \$10,000 to \$35,000; and further

amendment this year removed a fixed sum limit, thus authorizing such appropriations as would be necessary to administer this enabling Act. The Chairman stressed however, that this did not mean that the Commission should make plans to embark on any course of action that would require a large staff or expenditures of large sums.

b. The Shipstead-Luce Act

The appointment of a panel of architects was made to assist in the processing of applications for building permits forwarded for review by the District of Columbia Government, in accordance with provisions of the Shipstead Luce Act (Public Law 231-71st Congress). The attendance of a representative of the Department of Licenses and Inspections at meetings of the Shipstead-Luce Panel was also noted. Wider understanding of the significance of this law has been accomplished, and standards for signs, projecting show windows, etc., used in administration of the law have been incorporated into the draft of a proposed new building code, which is scheduled for adoption after public hearings later this year. The Chairman stated that a revision of the boundaries of the Shipstead-Luce Area should be made to meet expanding growth of governmental areas. Attempts have been made to bring this about by both verbal and written request but without result. The members stressed that these efforts should be continued. Acceptance of the Commission's advice has been challenged by several applicants, and commercial interests, especially in the matter of commercial advertising signs, but, in general, the District Commissioners have supported the Commission and have effected reasonable compliance with the Commission's recommendations.

c. The Old Georgetown Act

The Administration of Public Law 808-81st Congress, which was enacted in 1950, and is commonly called the Old Georgetown Act, met with a temporary setback in November 1958, when the District Commissioners adopted an Opinion of their Corporation Counsel that interpreted the law in a strict sense and eliminated submission of permits for all work but that actually done on Federal Buildings. The Commission has always considered that the Act meant to preserve the atmosphere of Georgetown, in new construction as well as in matters affecting the specific buildings of the Federal Period, and that it would be impossible to do so under the Corporation Counsel's Opinion. The Georgetown Board of Architectural Consultants resigned as a body rather than work under the strict interpretation. After meeting with officials of the Citizens Organizations who wished to seek legislation to strengthen the Act, the Commission requested that it be relieved of future administration of the Act, because the law entirely concerns the use of private property. Believing, however, that the law should continue to be administered until such time as an amendment can be enacted, the members of the Commission suggested that the President be requested to forward the Corporation Counsel's

Opinion to the Attorney General for review. This was done and the Attorney General issued an opinion on 15 January 1960, which fully corresponded with the Commission's views. The District Commissioners subsequently decided they would administer the Law under the Attorney General's interpretation. The Board of Architectural Consultants was invited to return and two members consented to do so. The District Commissioners were invited to nominate the third member, and a member of the Municipal Architect's staff was duly appointed. The Chief of the Permit Branch, also was invited to attend, and cooperation in this matter has been good since that time. The members were still of the opinion that the Commission of Fine Arts should be relieved of the duty when the law is amended, because time consumed by weekly meetings and attendant processing of building applications keeps the staff from projects more important to the Commission's duties. They believe that an independent Board could better carry out the provisions of the Law.

d. The Jurisdiction of the Commission and Compliance with its Advice

The jurisdiction of the Commission of Fine Arts was confined by the wording of enabling legislation and, of the subsequent Executive Orders, to the District of Columbia. However, the Commission has customarily been consulted on many projects throughout the United States and abroad. In recent years, however, with the expansion of the Government and the growth of the National Capital Region beyond the District of Columbia limits, officials are sometimes unaware of the services and traditions of the Commission and fail to consult it for advice. To bring notice of the Commission to all who might need to consult it, and to require justification for non-compliance with advice, a new executive order was sought without success. The Bureau of the Budget, which now handles these matters for the President, did however, finally make special notice, in instructions for preparing budget estimates, that building projects and other applicable projects should be cleared through the Commission before funds would be approved for the contracting agency, and the area affected was widened to embrace the National Capital Region. The members of the Commission were disappointed not to have a new executive order, but decided to try the alternative method in order to determine its effectiveness.

As an advisory agency, the Commission cannot force agencies to consult it or take its advice, but it is unable to fulfill its duties if not consulted. Some of the members of the Congress have come to realize the difficulties experienced by the Commission and resolutions (S.J.Res. 147 and H.J.Res. 544) have been introduced, by Senator Fullbright of Arkansas and Congressman Frank Thompson of New Jersey, which would give Congressional sanction to the jurisdiction of the Commission over the National Capital Region, and which would unite the various executive orders of the Commission into law. While not making compliance with the

Commission's advice mandatory, the proposed legislation made justification of non-compliance with the advice mandatory in reports to the President and Congress. The passage of the proposed legislation by the Congress is uncertain.

e. Enlargement of the Commission

Plans to enlarge the membership and duties of the Commission by specific legislation have been made several times in recent years. To do so would destroy the original purpose for which the Commission was founded with respect to the appearance of the city of Washington. For this reason the Commission has resisted the passage of such legislation, and has supported the establishment of an Advisory Council on the Arts in the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, where methods of fostering the arts can be more readily administered.

f. Incorporation of the Commission Into Another Agency

Recommendations have also been made to incorporation into another department or agency. To make the Commission responsible to a Secretary or Administrator would not permit the Commission to carry on its tradition of disinterested advice. The Commission would be useless as anything but a free and independent agency.

III. SUBMISSIONS

1. District of Columbia Government

a. Department of Sanitary Engineering

Sewage Pumping Station

The members of the Commission conferred with Mr. David Auld, Director of Sanitary Engineering and Mr. Emil Press of the District of Columbia Government regarding the design of the proposed sewage pumping station between the eastern approaches to the Theodore Roosevelt Bridge.

The members noted that the distance from the approach roadways had been definitely fixed, making it possible to study the design in relation to the embankments of these roadways, and to the Inner Loop from which the sewage pumping station was to be entered. The members considered that as little masonry as possible should be exposed, and that the design of the visible parts needed for the entrance to the underground room should be simple and unobtrusive. A suggestion was made to make only one entrance and to make a curving wall in order that its juncture with the embankments could be less abrupt.

The Secretary was directed to prepare a letter for the signature of the Chairman to Mr. Auld, such letter to be made a part of the permanent record of the proceedings. EXHIBIT 1

b. Department of Highways and Traffic

(1) Inner Loop/Southwest Freeway/Eleventh Street Overpass

Mr. Burke and Mr. Grady of the District of Columbia Department of Highways and Traffic presented drawings of the proposed Eleventh Street Overpass, Southwest Freeway.

The members of the Commission agreed that the architectural treatment of the structure was satisfactory and they approved it as presented. They stressed, however, that approval of this design did not imply approval of the Inner Loop Freeway System here or in other parts of the city.

The Secretary was directed to prepare a letter for the signature of the Chairman to Brigadier General Welling, Engineer Commissioner for the District of Columbia, such letter to be made a part of the permanent record of the proceedings. EXHIBIT 2

(2) Concrete Enclosures for Trees

Mr. Airis and Mr. Brinkley of the District of Columbia Department of Highways and Traffic presented a plan for installing concrete tubs for small trees or shrubs on an experimental basis on 15th Street between H and I Streets, N.W.

The members of the Commission noted that the proposal followed a similar planting scheme used in New York City and other cities, and were glad to recommend that it be adopted for Washington. It was their opinion, however, that before a final decision was made to extend this scheme, study should be made of the shape and material of the containers to be used in Washington, and to select trees/^{that}would not be too rigid in form. The members of the Commission also hoped that funds would not be diverted from the planting of trees along the streets for the new project.

The Secretary was directed to prepare a letter for the Chairman's signature to Brigadier General Welling, Engineer Commissioner for the District of Columbia, such letter to be made a part of the permanent record of the proceedings. EXHIBIT 3

2. Department of the Interior
National Capital Parks

a. George Washington Memorial Parkway

(1) Glen Echo (Md.) Bridge, Revised Design

Mr. Haussmann, architect with National Capital Parks, conferred with the members of the Commission on revised designs for bridges that were to be a part of the George Washington Memorial Parkway System at Carderock, Cabin John Gardens and Glen Echo, on the Maryland side of the Potomac River.

The same general design was being used for the Carderock and Cabin John Bridges. As revised, it incorporated suggestions made by the members of the Commission at their meeting on April 20, especially as regarded elimination of intermediary piers and the use of a single span. The new design was approved as presented.

The design for the Glen Echo Bridge was the same as that presented at the meeting of the Commission on April 20. Mr. Haussmann stated that he felt the members of the Commission had not fully understood, at that time, the reasons for using round piers as intermediary supports. The members, however, considered that the design of the bridge would be greatly improved by the use of a single span without piers. Mr. Haussmann said that he would resutdy the design in accordance with suggestions.

The Secretary was directed to prepare a letter, for the signature of the Chairman, to Mr. Thompson, Superintendent of National Capital Parks, informing him of the suggestions of the Commission, such letter to be made a part of the permanent record of the proceedings. EXHIBIT 4

(2) Turkey Run Bridge and Dead Run Bridge (Va.)

Mr. Haussmann also presented designs for bridges that were to be part of the George Washington Memorial Parkway System, at Dead Run and Turkey Run, on the Virginia side of the Potomac River.

Both bridges were to cross deep ravines and were to be practically identical in design, consisting of heavy concrete piers and beams supporting steel girders. The members of the Commission considered the design of the piers and beams to be somewhat heavy, but Mr. Haussmann felt that it would be impossible to make any changes in the time remaining before the work was started. Under these circumstances the members approved the design as presented.

The Secretary was directed to prepare a letter for the signature of the Chairman, to Mr. Thompson, Superintendent, National Capital Parks, expressing the hope that in the future, time would be allowed for study and possible changes in designs submitted for review by the Commission of Fine Arts. EXHIBIT 5

b. Central Maintenance Shop, Brentwood, Md.

The members of the Commission conferred with Mr. Hausmann regarding the design proposed for the group of connected buildings to house the Central Maintenance Shops of the National Capital Parks at Brentwood, Md.


The members considered the design satisfactory in general, but recommended that further study was necessary on certain parts of the building, especially the treatment of the stair tower in the higher section of the building, and the detail of a typical bay of the wall. It was recommended that the stair tower be treated without exterior accent and kept as low as possible, in order not to interrupt the roofline. It was also recommended that a drawing be made at larger scale for the treatment of a typical bay, on which the relationship of the various materials in the design could be studied, and the color indicated.

The Secretary was directed to prepare a letter for the Chairman's signature to the Superintendent, National Capital Parks, such letter being made a part of the permanent record of the proceedings. EXHIBIT 6

3. Preliminary Shipstead-Luce Submission

Olmstead Building, 17th and Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.

Mr. Koubek, the architect of the proposed Olmstead Building, presented revised designs which had been worked out after a conference with the Shipstead-Luce Panel of architects. He described the new design for the building as giving the idea of a stone wall pierced by a series of octagonal openings. He said that the quantity of glass in the new design was almost the same as in the plans which the Commission had disapproved at the preceding meeting, but the new form of the wall openings, with intervening facing of pink Tennessee marble, or Italian travertine, would heighten the effect of being a masonry wall. He supported his statements with a rendering of the building showing these features. The top floor was treated as a kind of pergola enclosing a roof terrace, behind which the executive offices of the International Bank were to be located. The first floor was set back 12 1/2 feet, and the upper floors 4 1/2 feet from the property lines on both Pennsylvania Avenue and 17th Street, N.W., thus widening the sidewalks and providing an arcade effect. White marble plating beds and water jets were features of the arcades. A recess extending the full height of the building, and abutting on the neighboring buildings, on both Pennsylvania Avenue and 17th Street was intended to give the Olmstead Building the illusion of being a freestanding structure. The members of the Commission considered the revised design a great improvement over the one previously presented. They recommended that the building be approved in general, subject to submission of working drawings, where details could be more clearly shown.


L. R. Wilson
Secretary



MEETING OF THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
May 18, 1960
9:15 AM
ORDER OF BUSINESS

- 9:15 a.m. 1. CONVENE, ROOM 7000, INTERIOR DEPARTMENT BUILDING
- 9:30 a.m. 2. Public Law 121 61st Congress Establishing the Commission of Fine Arts was signed by President Taft on May 17, 1910
- 9:45 a.m. 3. DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA GOVERNMENT
DEPARTMENT OF SANITARY ENGINEERING
(Mr. David V. Auld, Director of Sanitary Engineering)
Mr. Press
Sewage Pumping Station
- 10:15 a.m. 4. DEPARTMENT OF HIGHWAYS AND TRAFFIC
(Mr. Burke and Mr. Grady - D.C. Department of Highways and Traffic)
Theodore Roosevelt Bridge, Approach Roads
Inner Loop/Southwest Freeway/Eleventh Street Overpass
- 11:15 a.m. 5. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR *ENCLOSURES FOR TREE (MR. T. FAIRBANKS, DEP. OF INT. AFFS. DEPT. OF HIGHWAYS + TRAFFIC)*
NATIONAL CAPITAL PARKS
(Mr. W.M. Hausmann, Chief, Architectural Branch, NCP)
a. George Washington Memorial Parkway
(1) Glen Echo (Md.) Bridge (revised design)
(2) Turkey Run Bridge (Va.)
(3) Dead Run Bridge (Va.)
b. Central Maintenance Shops, Brantwood, Md.
- 12:15 p.m. 6. PRELIMINARY SHU STEAD-LUCE SUBMISSION
Olmstead Building, 17th and Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
(Mr. Vlastimil Kouckek, architect)

THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS

ESTABLISHED BY CONGRESS MAY 17, 1912

DAVID E. FINLEY, Chairman

DOUGLAS W. ORR

WILLIAM G. PERRY

RALPH WALKER

MICHAEL RAPUANO

FELIX W. de WELDON

PETER HURD

LINTON R. WILSON, Secretary

25 May 1960

INTERIOR DEPARTMENT BUILDING
WASHINGTON

Dear Mr. Auld:

At their meeting on May 13, the members of the Commission of Fine Arts were glad to confer with you and Mr. Emil Press regarding the design of the proposed Sewage Pumping Station between the eastern approaches to the Theodore Roosevelt Bridge. The members were particularly glad to see the sketches at an early stage of the design.

Now that the distance from the approach roadways has definitely been fixed, it will be possible to study the design in relation to the embankments of these roadways, and to the Inner Loop from which the pumping station is entered. The members considered that as little masonry as possible should be exposed, and that the design of the visible parts needed for the entrance to the underground room should be simple and unobtrusive. A suggestion was made to make only one entrance and to make a curving wall in order that its juncture with the embankments should be more harmonious.

The next meeting of the Commission of Fine Arts will be held on June 15, when time will be reserved to discuss the pumping station, if your plans will be far enough advanced at that time.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

David E. Finley
Chairman

Mr. David Auld
Director of Sanitary Engineering
District of Columbia Government
Washington 4, D. C.

25 May 1960

Dear General Welling:

At their meeting on May 18, the members of the Commission of Fine Arts conferred with Mr. Burke and Mr. Grady of the Department of Highways, who presented drawings for the Eleventh Street Overpass, Southwest Freeway.

The members of the Commission agreed that the architectural treatment of the structure was satisfactory and they approved it as presented. Approval of this design does not imply approval of the Inner Loop Freeway System here or in any other part of the city.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

David E. Finley
Chairman

Brigadier General A.C. Welling
Engineer Commissioner for the
District of Columbia
District Building
Washington 4, D.C.

EXHIBIT 2

...

...

...

...

...

...

...

25 May 1960

Dear General Welling:

At the meeting of the Commission of Fine Arts on May 12, Mr. Aicis and Mr. Brinkley presented a plan for installing concrete tubs for small trees or shrubs, on an experimental basis on 15th Street between H and I Streets, N.W.

The members of the Commission noted that the proposal followed a similar planting scheme used in New York City and other cities, and were glad to recommend that it be adopted for Washington. It was their opinion, however, that before a final decision is made to extend this scheme, study should be made of the shape and material of the containers to be used in Washington, and to select trees that would not be too rigid in form. The members of the Commission also hoped that funds would not be diverted from the planting of trees along the streets for the new project.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

David E. Finley
Chairman

Brigadier General A.C. Welling
Engineer Commissioner for the
District of Columbia
District Building
Washington 4, D. C.

EXHIBIT 3



3 June 1960

Dear Mr. Thompson:

At their meeting on May 15, the members of the Commission conferred with Mr. William Hausmann on revised designs for bridges that are to be a part of the George Washington Memorial Parkway System at Carderock, Cabin John Gardens and Glen Echo, on the Maryland side of the Potomac River.

The same general design is being used for the Carderock and Cabin John Bridges. As revised, it is incorporating suggestions made by the members of the Commission at their meeting on April 20, especially as regards the elimination of intermediary piers and the use of a single span. The new design was approved.

Mr. Hausmann brought back the same design for the Glen Echo Bridge that he presented at the meeting on April 20, because he felt the members of the Commission had not fully understood the reasons for using the round piers as intermediary supports. The members, however, considered that the design of the bridge would be greatly improved by the use of a single span without piers, and Mr. Hausmann said he would restudy it in accordance with the suggestion.

The next meeting of the Commission will be held on June 15 and time will be reserved to review the design, if you desire.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

David E. Finley
Chairman

Honorable Harry Thompson
Superintendent
National Capital Parks
Department of the Interior
Washington 25, D. C.

EXHIBIT 4

Dear Sir,

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 15th inst. in relation to the proposed extension of the term of the lease of the land situated in the town of ...

The Board has considered the matter and has decided to grant the extension of the term of the lease for a period of ...

The Board has also decided to grant the extension of the term of the lease for a period of ...

The Board has also decided to grant the extension of the term of the lease for a period of ...

Very respectfully,
Your obedient servant,

...

...

...

1950

Dear Mr. [Name]

As you are aware, on May 15, the [Committee] has [action] [subject] [details] [location] [time]

Both [subject] and [subject] have [action] [details] [location] [time] [action] [details] [location] [time]

Very truly yours,

[Signature]

[Text]

[Text]



3 June 1960

Dear Mr. Thompson:

At their meeting on May 18, the members of the Commission of Fine Arts conferred with Mr. William Massman regarding the design proposed for the group of connected buildings to house the Central Maintenance Shop of the National Capital Parks at Shadywood, Maryland.

The members considered the design satisfactory in general, but recommended that further study was necessary on certain parts of the building, especially the treatment of the stair tower in the higher section of the building, and the detail of a typical bay of the wall. It was recommended that the stair tower be treated without exterior accent and kept as low as possible, in order not to interrupt the roof line. It was also recommended that a drawing be made at larger scale for the treatment of a typical bay, on which the relationship of the various materials in the design could be studied, and the color indicated.

The next meeting of the Commission will be held on June 15, when we shall be glad to continue the discussion if your revised plans are ready.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

WALTER D. PAULSON
Chairman

EXHIBIT 6

