

**Minutes of the Council Committee on the Convention Center
Thursday, August 13, 1987
3 p.m.
Convention Center Project Office, Metro**

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Ragsdale at 3 p.m.

Those present were: Councilor Mike Ragsdale, Councilor David Knowles; Presiding Officer Waker; Councilor George Van Bergen; Councilor Larry Cooper; Councilor Jim Gardner; Rena Cusma, Executive Officer; Ray Phelps, F&A Director; Tuck Wilson, Project Director, Neil McFarland, Staff; Kim Duncan, Staff.

Minutes from the Committee meetings of July 2, July 23 and August 6 were approved without objection.

The Committee went into Executive Session at 3:10 p.m. to discuss Portland Development Commission property acquisition issues on the Convention Center Site. Also present at the Executive Session were PDC staff Dorothy Lyon and Spence Benfield, and PDC attorneys Greg Mau and Henry Lorenzen.

At 3:40 p.m. the Committee came out of Executive Session.

Councilor Knowles moved that the Committee recommend to the full Metro Council a settlement price on the Cortemanche property at the Convention Center site of \$1.9 million, good for twenty days and reduced to \$1.6 million after 20 days. There were no objections to the motion.

At 3:48 the Committee returned to Executive Session to discuss additional PDC property acquisition issues.

At 4:15 p.m. the Committee came out of Executive Session.

Councilor Van Bergen moved to condemn the Portland Tower property. There was no objection to the motion.

III. The Committee next discussed the regional exposition-recreation commission ordinance that will be forwarded to the Council on August 27, 1987. Wilson explained the Executive Officer's recommended amendments to the CTS proposal.

Councilor Waker stated that the CTS proposal, the Executive Officer's amendments and the Kirkpatrick/Van Bergen proposals should all be discussed by the Council. They would receive first reading, set for

August 27, 1987. Action would be deferred pending a special Council subcommittee recommendation to the Council.

Chair Ragsdale indicated that the E-R commission issue would not appear again before the Convention Center Committee because of the special council committee change.

Councilor Waker stated that, despite pressure for a rapid decision, it is the Council's prerogative to set its own schedule.

IV. The GPCVA marketing contract was discussed by the Committee. The contract is scheduled before the full Council on August 27, 1987. Karen Whitman, GPCVA Board President, informed the Committee that the search for a new Executive Director had been narrowed to three outstanding candidates.

Tuck Wilson gave a background report on the marketing contract. He explained that the Laventhol-Horwath report, entitled "Marketing Program Analysis and Recommendations, Oregon Convention Center" led to the request for GPCVA to draft an interim marketing plan.

Ed Truax, GPCVA Marketing Director, then described the approach, methodology, and objectives of promoting the Portland metropolitan area and enhancing its tourism returns. GPCVA serves as the link between visitors and the travel industry, he explained.

Truax distributed a marketing proposal book to the Committee and reviewed its contents. He explained a new convention center was always behind on its marketing/booking efforts because standard practice is to book conventions five years in advance. It takes only three years to construct a center. That means that new facilities start out two years behind the curve.

He explained the target market base and described how leads were generated and sales closed. He said that the Convention Center facility will increase by 1000 the prospective leads for Portland. Of the 12,000 annual major conventions in the U.S., 3100 require a facility the size of the Oregon Convention Center. 20%, or 600, will meet in the western states. 33%, or 200, will actively consider Portland. GPCVA expects to make 65 bid presentations annually and to book 33%, or 21, events. It will take five years to reach this level. GPCVA is currently tracking 20 active leads for Portland. 40% of the leads are from organizations headquartered in Washington DC.

He also discussed marketing strategies appropriate to different audiences. The three major markets for recruitment are: the decision makers on site selection; the influencers - like travel writers, business editors, convention attendees; and the Trade Show audiences. GPCVA has produced a new trade show booth promoting

the Portland metropolitan region. He showed the Committee a model of the booth and invited the group to attend Portland Showcase to see it fully displayed.

He talked about advertising efforts via executive airlifts, direct mail and media advertisements.

Councilor Van Bergen asked who the signators to the contract will be. The answer was that the contract would be signed by GPCVA and Metro.

Councilor Cooper asked how many rooms exist in the metropolitan area. He stated that the Portland area may have insufficient room space which could jeopardize convention business.

Chris Stone, GPCVA sales manager, answered that there are 11,000-12,000 rooms in the Portland metropolitan area, including Beaverton and Vancouver. In the Downtown-Lloyd Center area there are 2500-3000 committable rooms. He explained that hotels commit to conventions a proportional number of their rooms but always maintain space to service other travelers. The room space availability can serve 6,000 or more persons. That level meets Portland's current market needs.

Councilor Cooper stated that the numbers had been difficult to derive and that he maintained a healthy skepticism about them. He said he found that the initial marketing plans had been poor but that today's presentation had changed his mind for the positive and that he was supportive of the GPCVA program. He hoped that the contract would not become politicized.

Chair Ragsdale called for questions. He said that the contract would be on the August 27 full council agenda. He further stated that he and Executive Officer Cusma were on the GPCVA Executive Director selection committee as ex-officio members.

V. Telecommunications contract progress was reviewed by Wilson. He stated that a fourth interview would be held next week and that a final recommendation would be forthcoming.

VI. The Water works discussion was deferred until the next committee meeting.

VII. Councilor Ragsdale summarized the first meeting of the Oregon Tourism Alliance held August 9, 1987, and stated that he had offered Metro staff help to the Alliance in its organizational efforts.

The meeting adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

Submitted by:
Kim Skerritt Duncan