

**Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission Meeting #36
Teleconference, Tuesday, July 21, 2009, 2:30 p.m.**

ATTENDANCE

Commissioners present were Dr. Jean Bandler; Dr. Darrel Bigham; Ms. Joan Flinspach; Mr. Harold Holzer; the Hon. Jesse Jackson, Jr.; Mrs. Lura Lynn Ryan (arrived late); Mrs. Louise Taper; the Hon. Tommy Turner (arrived late) and the Hon. Frank Williams. Mr. Ben Garmisa, a member of Senator Durbin's staff, attended on his behalf. ALBC staff present included: Ms. Eileen Mackevich, Executive Director; Mrs. Jennifer Rosenfeld, Deputy Director (departed at 3:15p.m.); Mr. David Early, Communications Director; Ms. Sharon Cunningham, Accounting; Ms. Courtney Barefoot, Program Associate; Ms. Theresa Caldwell, Town Hall Coordinator; Hasan Aloul, Program Associate; Bryan Jack, Program Associate; and Mr. Suresh Venkitaraman, Administrative Assistant.

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Holzer chaired the meeting and called it to order at 2:34 p.m. Minutes from the April meeting were not considered at this meeting.

FINAL REPORT COMMITTEE

Dr. Bandler recalled that Dr. Bigham was nominated and accepted the chairmanship of the Final Report committee at the April meeting with oversight by Eileen, Harold and Senator Durbin. Ms. Flinspach requested a list of members of this committee for the minutes. Mr. Holzer stated that committee chairs should be members and the co-chairs.

Mr. Holzer asked the Commissioners who reviewed the editor/writer candidacy materials to comment on the skills and experience that best fit our needs. Congressman Jackson requested consideration of a writer with a diverse background. Ms. Mackevich informed Commissioners of her experience in hiring and supervising writer/editors. Ms. Mackevich, on Mr. Holzer's request, reviewed the top three candidates: Dianne Donovan, Herbert Lowe, and Stephenson Swanson. Ms. Mackevich said that she interviewed all three candidates and all would be acceptable. Dr. Bandler noted her preference for Lowe; Dr. Bigham also approved of Lowe, though he was impressed that Donovan prepared an outline for the report. Mr. Holzer said it was unfortunate Donovan could not start right away and said Lowe may be good because he works in DC. Ms. Mackevich clarified that Lowe now lives in Chicago, but frequently comes to DC. The consensus of the reviewers was for Lowe; Dr. Bandler said that it should be the decision of Ms. Mackevich, Dr. Bigham and Mr. Holzer. Mr. Holzer asked that we go into contract with Lowe. Mr. Holzer and Dr. Bigham asked for the opportunity to speak with him. Ms. Mackevich asked for an alternative candidate; Mr. Holzer suggested Donovan and Dr. Bigham agreed.

Dr. Bandler asked about the role of committee chairs serving prior to the reorganization that followed the change in Executive Directors. Since resolution of this question could involve report content, Mr. Holzer advised that these issues be determined after the first meeting with the editor/writer. Dr. Bigham stated that an overview of the history of the ALBC should be provided to the editor/writer. Judge Turner referenced the initial report to Congress as a resource. Dr. Bigham outlined his procedure, which begins with an overview call to the editor/writer, Mr. Holzer, and Ms. Mackevich. Mr. Holzer recommended a second conference call with the editor/writer to discuss the preliminary structure of the report after he/she has had time to review the various historical materials.

Dr. Bandler asked about the inclusion of “might have beens” listed on the agenda. Dr. Bandler also stated that we need to stress themes in the report such as the evolution of the Commission and there should be a section on recommendations to future commissions. Mr. Holzer responded that we should account for programs that were motivated by a grassroots response to the ALBC. Ms. Mackevich stated that Lincoln Stakeholders will be included. Ms. Flinspach added that she would like the report to record more than what was done, but also include whether measurable or not, an assessment of the impact of activities. Dr. Bigham raised the issue of source material. Ms. Mackevich said that the staff is gathering it. The audience of the report will be the Congress and the American people. Chief Justice Williams will provide legal guidance; review lessons learned; and cover the state organizations.

Mr. Holzer raised the issue of a production timetable. The legislation requires the report to be submitted to Congress no later than April 30, 2010. Mr. Garmisa, representing Senator Durbin, urged the wrap-up of the Commission’s work by June 30, 2010 if not earlier. Ms. Flinspach cautioned against writing about events before they occur. She also urged the Commissioners to consider the staff, informing them of the Commission’s end date as soon as possible. The Commission agreed to include the editor/writer on this discussion.

FUTURE MEETINGS

Mr. Holzer brought up the topic of future meetings. Mrs. Taper said that the Los Angeles town hall will be held on the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday, January 18, 2010. She is hosting a dinner at her home on Sunday, January 17 and if needed, our meeting could be held there. Ms. Caldwell noted that she is still working with speakers schedules and that the town hall might be held on Sunday, January 17. Mrs. Taper, Ms. Caldwell and Ms. Mackevich will hold a conference call to finalize the date. Mr. Holzer announced the Urbana, Illinois meeting will be October 25, 2009. A discussion of a meeting in New York at the end of February, 2010 took place. Dr. Bigham noted the need for a meeting to finalize the report. Mr. Holzer stated that to have a report sent to Congress by April 15, that meeting should take place at the end of February. Ms. Mackevich asked Ms. Cunningham to review the meeting budget. Two meetings were budgeted—one in Chicago and one in Los Angeles. The consensus was to apply the funds for the Chicago meeting to the Urbana meeting and to plan the Los Angeles meeting as the final one.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN FOUNDATION

Chief Justice Williams asked that this issue be the subject of a separate teleconference due to the time. He did request that Ms. Mackevich clarify the status of the Foundation vis-à-vis the Library of Congress. Ms. Mackevich stated that she was sorry that the material that was sent to Mr. Holzer in chronological order was confusing. Chief Justice Williams thought the material was current. Each page of the material was dated. Staff does regret the confusion. Any differences that arose between the Foundation and the Library of Congress have been resolved. Mr. Holzer announced that Mr. David Lawrence is the newest board member of the Foundation. He recommended that board members have Lincoln knowledge. Dr. Bandler stated that an advisory board might be part of the structure of the Foundation. Ms. Mackevich asked Ms. Cunningham to review the Foundation’s financials. She noted that the Foundation has raised approximately \$2 million dollars. Dr. Bandler agreed with Chief Justice Williams that another meeting should be held to discuss the Foundation. Dr. Bigham agreed noting that he needed to leave the meeting. Chief Justice Williams also had to leave the call.

FURTHER BUSINESS

Ms. Mackevich asked for clarification of the Commission's ending date. The consensus was June 15, 2010. She will initiate contract discussions with Mr. Lowe as soon as possible.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan L. Flinspach, Secretary