

Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission
Meeting #6, February 11, 2003, 12:30 p.m.
In the Members Room, LJ162, of the Library of Congress
Washington, D.C.

Present were Dr. Jean Bandler, Dr. Darrel Bigham, Dr. Gabor Boritt, Hon. Richard Durbin, Dr. James O. Horton, Harold Holzer, Hon. Ray LaHood, Hon. Tommy Turner, Hon. Frank Williams, and Michael Bishop, executive director, and Jackie Williams, staff of the ALBC. Congressional Staff included Breanna Roe with the Hon. Jim Bunning's office; Mark Palmer and Pat Souders with the Hon. Richard Durbin's office; and Diane Liesman and Joan Mitchell with the Hon. Ray LaHood's office.

Mr. Holzer called the meeting to order at 12:40 p.m. He then asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the September 23, 2002, meeting. The motion was made by Judge Williams and seconded by Judge Turner and Judge Williams. Motion carried. Mr. Holzer announced the passing of the father of Joan Flinspach, a dedicated ALBC Commissioner, and Judge Williams suggested that a letter be sent expressing our condolences as well as our appreciation for her work, energy and inspiration on the Commission. This was accepted unanimously, and Mr. Holzer asked Michael Bishop to draft such a letter.

Director Bishop's report covered the February 10 Advisory Committee's events, the timetable and funding of the year ahead, the ALBC website, the Commission replacement for Rep. Phelps, and the Richmond Lincoln statue. Yesterday's events included the important ALBC Advisory Committee meetings and break-out groups, reception, illuminating performance of "Lincoln Seen and Heard," by Sam Waterston and Harold Holzer, and dinner for advisors in the Great Hall. C-Span covered the performance which will be broadcast on Lincoln's birthday and again on President's Day. Among the compliments, several commented that the event was better than last year's White House event.

With less than a year left to complete our mission to make recommendations for our report, we will need to focus carefully. In terms of funding, our FY02 appropriation is largely intact. Congress has not yet passed the omnibus appropriation legislation which includes the ALBC funding for FY03. Congressman LaHood reported that the bill should come to the House floor within a few days. The legislation will enable hiring and firing staff directly to allow more flexibility. A priority is to hire a development director to begin fund-raising to carry out plans. Presently, Rosemary Cribben is on contract with the Commission to raise money for the catering costs for yesterday's event, as these cannot be covered with appropriated moneys. So far, Ms. Cribben has raised \$17,000, which will cover these costs, and other prospects will continue to be pursued. Mr. Bishop thanked Dr. Horton and Judge Turner for their help in the funding efforts.

Mr. Bishop reported that the ALBC website, lincolnbicentennial.gov, has been revised and improved and that Parade magazine intends to do an article focused on the website; after which, we should receive all the input we can handle.

The Commission will need a replacement for Congressman Phelps, who was defeated in the '02 election. The ALBC legislation requires that this replacement be an elected Member of Congress, appointed by the House Minority Leader. In discussion, Darrel Bigham reported that Rep. Baron Hill of Indiana, whose district includes the Lincoln Boyhood National Memorial, is interested in serving. Rep. LaHood suggested that Dr. Bigham encourage Rep. Hill to contact Leader Pelosi to inform her of his interest.

Mr. Bishop then discussed the statue of Lincoln and Tad for Richmond, Virginia. It will be on the site of an old foundry that supplied the Confederate Army and soon will be turned into a Civil War museum in Richmond. The statue was commissioned by the United States Historical Society (USHS), a not-for-profit organization. Mr. Holzer noted that the non-profit status of this organization is currently under investigation by the Virginia State Attorney General because of complaints by opponents of the statue and controversy that 750 miniatures of the statue will be sold for \$875 to cover the cost of erecting the statue. The principle objection to the statue is ideological, with the commander of the Arkansas Sons of Confederate Veterans calling Lincoln a "notorious war criminal...this Marxist...this monster directly responsible for the killing of 620,000 Americans." Mr. Holzer stated that the USHS has asked the ALBC for support of the statue. Judge Turner asked whether it matters if it's a for-profit or not-for-profit group in weighing the decision whether to issue a statement of endorsement. Dr. Horton suggested that maybe the ALBC could issue a statement of support for the statue but not necessarily the organization. Judge Williams questioned involvement in the middle of the investigation and suggested that the ALBC get input from the NPS before making a decision on endorsement. Senator Durbin opposed endorsing a commercial venture. Mr. Holzer said that the statue would be handed off to the federal government. Dr. Boritt asked Senator Durbin if, should he decide against endorsing, he would explain his reasoning because his opinion was valued by other members. It was agreed that further information should be gathered and that an email would be sent to the Commissioners in the near future to gain their input concerning endorsement/non-endorsement of the project.

The subject of the ALBC's status as a planning commission was raised by Mr. Bishop. Senator Durbin expressed his concern for a larger vision and a need to articulate clearly where we're headed and what we're going to achieve. This is a key question from a PR perspective. Mr. Bishop agreed and noted that the history of other commissions is not very impressive. When the ALBC becomes an implementing commission, we can be active and better able to speak about the projects and ideas. The ALBC has the potential of raising a considerable amount of money; then organizations will turn to the ALBC. Right now, we need to gather talented and creative people together, have high-profile events to attract interest and collect suggestions from our website. Judge Williams reported his discussion with Congressman Souder to both amend the legislation to make the ALBC an implementing commission and, also, to protect the ALBC website, thereby preventing others from misrepresenting the Commission.

Mr. Holzer asked if we are bound to the interim report. Cong. LaHood stated that if a reporting requirement is written into the legislation, we should abide by it cautioning that a failure to do so could be embarrassing, and we need to follow the letter of the law. Mr. Bishop recommended that the Commission stay on track to issue a report by February 2004, even if legislation is

enacted extending the life of the commission. Mr. LaHood and Mr. Durbin discussed the mechanics of legislation to extend the life of the Commission through the implementation, and Mr. LaHood volunteered to follow through on whether this change should go through an authorizing committee or could be taken up by the Legislative Branch Appropriations committees. Judge Williams suggested that other amendments such as the one protecting the Commission's property rights might be added at the same time.

Mr. Holzer recommended structuring a timetable and asked Mr. Bishop to prepare a month-by-month grid of how we arrive at the report. He asked him to then assign the Commissioners parts of the report to write. He said the Commissioners need a schedule telling them how they will arrive at the report. Mr Bishop agreed to do this. He said that the work of the committees should continue to move forward in the meantime and that he will work with the Commissioners on ideas and extending the life of the Commission.

Mr. Bigham summarized his Education Committee report, which was included in the agenda packets provided to the members before the meeting. The Education Committee has been quite active, and he and Dr. Bandler met in January in Washington, D.C., with outside organizations, both federal and NGOs. The Advisory Committee answered a questionnaire sent to them by Dr. Bigham asking the Committee members to suggest and prioritize various projects the ALBC should undertake. Some suggested education activities would be more effectively handled by other Committees, e.g., Senator Simon's suggestion of students to other countries falls under the rubric of the ALBC's International Committee. The Committee wants to give ALBC members the opportunity to review these suggestions and to make recommendations before formal rankings begin. Dr. Bigham recommends that staff write to the organizations that were not present at the meetings in January asking for their input. The Education Committee met that morning and agreed that the staff should forward them ideas about educational activities raised in the Advisory Committee meetings of the 10th. Committee members are to take that list as well as the two appendices to the report for today's meeting and indicate their priorities. That, in turn, will permit the Committee to offer a tentative list of recommendations for the April meeting. The Education Committee hopes to have a set of recommendations for the entire Commission by the end of the summer with a set of bullet statements noting five or six proposals, with alternates, for various audiences, indicating which items can be achieved short-term and which ones long-term. They shall also include a recommended list of appropriate agencies to implement these proposals. Responding to a question from Senator Durbin as to a final date for recommendations, Dr. Bigham said that a list of specific recommendations should be ready in six months.

Senator Durbin suggested, and Cong. LaHood agreed, that a "Dear Colleague" letter to members of Congress would be appropriate to solicit their ideas for appropriate Bicentennial events. This letter would go out between now and the fall. Senator Durbin also thought he would speak to key members before the letter is sent.

Dr. Bandler gave the Mandate Committee report. Dr. Bandler commended Dr. Bigham's hard work as chairman of the Education Committee. The Committee has been in contact by email on mandate issues. On the Lincoln Memorial, they do not feel that a redesign is economically

feasible or aesthetically desirable and recommended, instead, "beefing up" another D.C. site such as the Lincoln Summer White House and assuring adequate transportation. However, conducting some kind of ceremony highlighting both Lincoln and the role of the Memorial with respect to civil rights is wise. On the postage stamp, the group thinks that the 37-cent, the most common denominator stamp, should be used for a Lincoln series. Dr. Bigham suggested including the most widely used airmail stamp. On the penny, Mint staff reported in a January meeting that they are considering a redesign before the Bicentennial. Dr. Bandler recommended that the co-chairs of the ALBC officially inform the Mint that they wish to be involved in the process and that the redesign should be coordinated with the Bicentennial. It could be a special penny that ends in 2009 or one that continues beyond. The redesign would be of the reverse side of the coin (obverse: Lincoln's profile). Senator Durbin raised the idea of the reverse depicting images representing three stages of Lincoln's life. He suggested that these be issued in the years preceding 2009 with the final, new design being issued in 2009. Dr. Boritt endorsed this idea and suggested the series be the Kentucky birthplace, the Indiana Cabin, and the Lincoln Home in Springfield. A different color, as gold tone, was mentioned by Mr. Bishop. It was felt that the lead time for a change was about two years. The co-chairs agreed that a letter requesting the Mint to involve the ALBC in their penny redesign is a good idea, and Senator Durbin and Congressman LaHood also agreed to meet personally with the Mint officials.

A commemorative coin can be a money-raising proposition with the potential of \$2-3 million after costs of minting the coin are recovered. The Mint would authorize a half-million and actually produce about 300,000. Senator Durbin asked if commemorative coin profits should be linked to the Education Committee efforts. Mr. Bishop thought that might be a way to go, possibly for teacher training; or even for a project such as the Soldiers' Home, noting that some there are interested. Senator Durbin suggested creating a trust account for the income so that it would be ongoing. Dr. Bandler said that the recipient would be required to raise matching funds for whatever is raised. Dr. Bigham asked that the Commission not rule out text as well as artwork on the coin. Mr. Holzer suggested depicting the Lincoln/Douglas debates at the various sites on a postage stamp. Senator Durbin said that the \$5 bill might better accommodate text and artwork.

As co-chair with Dr. Horton of the fund-raising group, Dr. Bandler also requested that all members participate in developing a list of supporters. The Committee will send out a form to each member asking for names and addresses of potential donors, special interests, projects, and "hooks." Dr. Horton added that another item of information should be potential partnerships with other individuals or groups on mutual interests. Mr. Bishop agreed that commissioners need to be directly involved in helping to raise money to implement our recommendations.

The proposed Ethics Guidelines, prepared pro bono courtesy of Commissioner Thompson's law firm, Winston and Strawn, were discussed. Some expressed concern that the Guidelines were too legalistic and not easy to understand; others commented that the guidelines were difficult to translate into specific examples and raised questions on particular illustrations as to what constituted a gift or a regular compensation, and what would be a conflict of interest. Others stressed the importance of having ethics guidelines and noted that guidelines could not cover every instance but, rather, serve as a standard on which to measure specific cases. Dr. Bigham moved

and Dr. Bandler seconded a motion to approve the proposed guidelines. Some members felt that more time was needed to study and understand these guidelines, that perhaps the drafters should come to explain them, and maybe the matter should be postponed. Most felt that there had been ample time to consider the guidelines and that amendments could be added in April if necessary. It was noted that these rules were far less cumbersome than the Congressional rules and additional legal explanations would not clarify all concerns. Chairman Holzer then called for a vote, and the motion passed without opposition.

Discussion of a proposed motto was postponed because of the late hour. Mr. Bishop turned to the subject of further meetings. Judge Turner invited the Commission to Hodgenville, Kentucky for the April meeting. Those present agreed to consider the dates April 24, 25, and 26 (Thursday, Friday & Saturday) for the meeting in Kentucky. It was also suggested that there be a meeting in late July at Hildene, Robert Lincoln's home in Vermont, and a meeting in September or October in Indiana.

Judge Williams made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded and unanimously passed. The meeting was adjourned at 2:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jacqueline Williams

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