

Members

Sen. James Merritt, Chairperson
Sen. David Ford
Sen. Allie Craycraft
Sen. James Lewis
Rep. Terry Goodin, Vice-Chairperson
Rep. Robert Bischoff
Rep. Phyllis Pond
Rep. William Ruppel



STATE FAIR ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Legislative Services Agency
200 West Washington Street, Suite 301
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204-2789
Tel: (317) 233-0696 Fax: (317) 232-2554

LSA Staff:

Susan Montgomery, Attorney for the Committee
Bernadette Bartlett, Fiscal Analyst for the Committee

Authority: IC 15-1-1.5-4

MEETING MINUTES¹

Meeting Date: August 11, 2004
Meeting Time: 11:00 A.M.
Meeting Place: Board Room of the Administration Building, Indiana State Fairgrounds, 1202 E. 38th Street
Meeting City: Indianapolis, Indiana
Meeting Number: 1

Members Present: Sen. James Merritt, Chairperson; Sen. David Ford; Sen. Allie Craycraft; Sen. James Lewis; Rep. Robert Bischoff; Rep. Phyllis Pond; Rep. William Ruppel.

Members Absent: Rep. Terry Goodin, Vice-Chairperson.

Chairperson Merritt called the meeting to order at 11:13 a.m. The members of the Committee introduced themselves.

1. Preliminary Report of the 2004 Indiana State Fair

Mr. William Stinson, Executive Director for the Indiana State Fair Commission, happily announced that this opening day of the fair was extremely crowded, undoubtedly due to the mild weather, the dedication of the 4-H Exhibit Hall, and High School Band Day. Two of the four 4-H buildings have been renovated; the Fair has spent the winter and spring

¹ Exhibits and other materials referenced in these minutes can be inspected and copied in the Legislative Information Center in Room 230 of the State House in Indianapolis, Indiana. Requests for copies may be mailed to the Legislative Information Center, Legislative Services Agency, 200 West Washington Street, Indianapolis, IN 46204-2789. A fee of \$0.15 per page and mailing costs will be charged for copies. These minutes are also available on the Internet at the General Assembly homepage. The URL address of the General Assembly homepage is <http://www.ai.org/legislative/>. No fee is charged for viewing, downloading, or printing minutes from the Internet.

marketing the ceremony to 4-H groups. The large crowd shows the importance of the buildings to the 4-H program. Mr. Stinson was hopeful that although many schools may start their fall semesters during the fair dates, the families will attend during evening hours.

Mr. Stinson took the opportunity from the Fair to thank the members of the Committee and the General Assembly for the tools the Fair has been given and the fights that have been fought for it. He introduced Bart Bauer, a Governor's Fellow for this year.

In response to questions from Representatives Pond and Bischoff, Mr. Stinson stated that revenue for the Fair from riverboat admission fees is capped at about \$6,200,000, and that revenue also is received from the statewide property tax that is levied for the Fair. The revenue from the Fairgrounds is between \$17,000,000 and \$18,000,000 dollars a year, with the revenue forecast for the Fair between \$7,000,000 and \$8,000,000 dollars. Further proceeds of close to \$300,000 a year come from satellite facility wagering.

Further responding to Representative Pond, Mr. Stinson stated that if there is more revenue this year, the plans may be to renovate a third 4-H building, most likely the Girls' Dorm. That project might be finished in time for the 2006 Fair, which is the 150th anniversary of the first Fair. Representative Pond cautioned that the agricultural and 4-H foundation for the Fair should not be lost in the commercial aspect.

A discussion then ensued regarding transportation to the Fair. Mr. Stinson estimated that between 18,000 to 20,000 people ride the Fair Train based in Fishers. There are "Park and Ride" programs from Glendale Mall and the Major Taylor Velodrome. The Fair has leased a parking lot at Fall Creek Parkway and Keystone Avenue and a church lot this year, and owns land north of the Indiana School for the Deaf where vehicles are parked. Representative Pond suggested that more "Park and Ride" venues be provided at the far outskirts of Indianapolis. Representative Ruppel questioned if the Fair has bought properties as they go up for sale to the west of the Fairgrounds; Mr. Stinson stated that it was difficult to buy them up one lot at a time. Mr. Stinson commented that the challenge of providing parking is a good thing, because it means attendance is high. Chairperson Merritt congratulated Mr. Stinson and the Fair staff on what appears to be another successful year.

2. Report from the Center for Agricultural Science and Heritage (The Barn)

Ms. Betsy Jones, Executive Director of the Center for Agricultural Science and Heritage, furnished the Committee with a folder containing information regarding The Barn (Exhibit A). The Barn is collaboratively sponsoring an art initiative of "plein air painting" documenting Indiana life and agricultural land. During the Fair, there will be an exhibit at The Barn of the folk art of rug hooking. In the folder is a representation of the new logo for The Barn, and a depiction of the planned layout of the Barn property. Ms. Jones noted and stated her appreciation for the state appropriation of \$600,000 in late 2003 and \$150,000 in early 2004 from the General Assembly as shown on the financial statement in the folder.

Ms. Jones related that The Barn was the recipient of equipment for distance learning, and it is beginning a program for agricultural education that may reach around the world. In response to a question from Senator Merritt, Ms. Jones told the Committee that the rental of the facility is booming, and seems to be a nice mix of agricultural organization and local community usage. The Farmers' Market, held on Saturdays at The Barn, is in its second and more successful year. There are about 15 vendors each week; they come from varying locations in the state, and patron attendance is about 400 persons a week. Ms. Jones spoke about a grant received from the Indiana Commissioner of Agriculture's office for a project for the Barn to become a statewide resource for market producers. Senator

Ford cautioned that the planned schematic given to the Committee showed the parking provided for the Market appeared to be too distant.

Ms. Jones introduced Cress Hizer, a member of The Barn's Board of Trustees, and former Senator Richard Thompson who were in attendance.

In response to Senator Merritt, Mr. Stinson stated that the date of 2006 was realistic for completion of the 4-H complex renovation project. Although another dormitory would be remodeled, separate architectural plans would have to be drawn up for it specifically.

Representative Ruppel reminded the Committee that since the 2005 Session sets a budget, the Committee members will have to act as advocates for the Fair. He believes that the Fair has worthwhile projects for the citizens of Indiana.

The date for the second meeting of the Indiana State Fair Advisory Committee was set for Friday, October 8, 2004, at 11:00 a.m. at the Center for Agricultural Science and Heritage (The Barn), 1201 E. 38th Street, Indianapolis, Indiana.

Chairperson Merritt adjourned the meeting at 11:57 a.m.