

UNIVERSITY STAFF ADVISORY COUNCIL

June 9, 2009 - Meeting Minutes

Date: June 9, 2009

Time: 8:30 AM

Place: Rand Function Room, Sarratt Student Center

Attendees:

Jean Alley, Stan Amos, Terri Armstrong, Diane Banks, Harriett Boglin, Vickie Cage, Chris Cribbs, Karen Daniel, Mary Ann Dean, Sheri DiGiovanna, Michele Dixon, Daniel Dubois, Kristy Fisher, Jodie Gambill, Phyllis Garner, Robin Guest, Sharone Hall, Shirley Hiltz, Nancy Holcroft, Jason Hunt, Vivienne Irizarry, Faye Johnson, Stacy Johnson, Sue King, Vickie Latham, Jason McGrath, Brenda McKee, Lydia Norfleet, Stacy Nunnally, Chuck Owen, Anne Marie Owens, JoAnn Patterson, Donald Pickert, Kit Potter, Don Pruitt, Dylan Reed, Kathy Rhodes, Andy Richter, Karen Seezen, Brenda Sheldon, Mike Smeltzer, Carol Soren, Olivia Soxyachanh, Dan Steward, JJ Street, Courtney Taylor, Molly Thompson, Carlos Trenary, Nyla Villager, Bryon Walker, Andrea Wall, Katie Watts, Mary Clark Webb, Jimmy Webb, Luci Whatley, Lolita White, Sue Widmer, Cliff Wilson

Regrets:

Becky Atack, Bill Bailey, John Brassil, Alison Bush, Matthew Clement, Mary Clissold, Mindy Craven, Maricia Dillard, Felicia Dotson, Shawn Fagan, Joe Fisher, Keith Franklin, Sterling Frierson, Immanuel Gooding, Stacy Hockett, Andrea Houseman, John Jackson, Nancy Jackson, David Jewell, Brandy Kahlig, Stacey Kendrick, Kristin Koval, Christina Lockhart, Carla Mahlberg, Julie Martin, Cheryl McClure, Kenny Moore, Ronnie Pepper, Sandra Robinson, Guy Shepperd, Ray Stanard, Cindy Steine, Todd Suttles, Phillip Tucker, Michelle Wyatt

Special Guests:

Jane Bruce, Kristi Cooper, Cliff Joyner, Francis Kovac, Anna Krieger, Melanie Lang, Barry McCurry, Stephania McNeal-Goddard, Joi Mindingall, Margie Naylor, Jessica Pryor, Julie Sandine, Sue Ann Scott, Donna Smith, Susanne Smith, Kate Stuart, Mary Pat Teague, Celia Walker, Tara Williams, Melissa Wocher, Mayor Karl Dean

I. Call to Order

President Jason Hunt called the meeting to order and welcomed visitors.

II. Approval of the Minutes from the May 12, 2009 USAC Meeting

A motion to approve was called, seconded and unanimously approved.

III. Committee Reports

Communication:

Co-Chair, Carlos Trennary – We had elections for the new chair and co-chair for the coming year. Carlos will be the chair and Kristin Koval will help in the transition and will also serve as co-chair of the communications committee.

Events:

Chair, Faye Johnson – Nothing to report

Membership:

Chair, Andy Richter – First off we would like to welcome new USAC members, Jean Alley (Group 24) and Lydia Norfleet (Group 16). There is also a group of new USAC members here today who were recently elected and will begin serving in July. Welcome. There is a sign-up sheet on each table for those who would be interested in serving on one of the standing committees. Please put your first and second choice on what committee you have interest to serve on. As membership committee chair, I would personally like to thank everyone for their continued participation this past year. You made it very easy for the membership committee.

Rules and Administration:

Chair, Dan Steward – Nothing to report

Staff Life:

Chair, Daniel Dubois – Three weeks ago the final build was completed and the house dedication was done. Sheila Nixon, who works at VUMC, along with her 10 children wanted to thank the USAC members for their hard work and dedication for making a dream come true. Daniel personally wanted to thank everyone who volunteered and worked diligently to make this Habit for Humanity activity a success. Jason Hunt thanked Daniel Dubois and Karen Daniel personally for their time and effort they both put in on the project.

Medical Center Staff Advisory:

Diane Banks reported on the Sustainability presentation by Andrea George at the MCSAC meeting. She also reported that the Medical Centers gives out grants for projects under \$1,000 which benefit faculty, staff, patients and the Vanderbilt community affiliated projects. They make all their money from their needles and pins craft fair. Some of the previous grants provided stuffed animals to children, journals to Reaching Out program, Bike Safety programs and they also give a portion to the Employee Hardship fund which is matched by the University.

Francis Kovac – Parking and Transportation Services (Medical Center) addressed the USAC members in regards to what mass transit services are available. We currently have 3 van pools and have exceeded 10,000 participants. He also provided some statistics in regard to mass transit. For more information, please visit the website at: www.VMCRideMatch.com.

New Business

Diane Banks presented the 2008-2009 USAC awards. The Secretary's Award was presented to Kristy Fisher. She generously agreed to fill the vacancy of secretary last fall after a special election and she has done a wonderful job keeping clear and concise minutes as well as having been an asset to USAC and the Executive Committee. The President's Award was presented to Jason Hunt. Jason has guided the council through a remarkably successful year. Our relatively new committee structure has been strengthened and refined and he ably represented us at the board of trust meeting last fall. For the first time in many years, we have raised monies for the Employee Hardship fund and he was instrumentally in making this a goal to accomplish as President of the USAC. We appreciate the fine-tone that Jason has set for inclusiveness and respect among our members.

The next award is the *Karen L.A. Dolen Spirit Award*. This person embodies Karen Dolen's passion for assisting the Vanderbilt community. Faye Johnson is the recipient of this award. She has been tireless in her efforts on behalf of the council and the University. She organized our first bake sale. She inspired an astounding success and our first gift to the Employee Hardship Fund. Faye consistently answers the council's call for volunteers for University-wide activities. Faye is a model member of the Vanderbilt community. Through her many years of service, she continues to possess the spirit of volunteerism and devotion.

Faye – I cannot thank everyone enough and it is not just me, it is everyone on the council.

Speakers:

Joi Mindgall and Kristi Cooper – Office of Conflict of Interest and Commitment Management

Joi – want to go over some revisions with the Conflict of Interest and Commitment Management that will go into effect July 1, 2009. They handed out the new policy handbook and a flyer. Some of the changes are concerning gifts from vendors and they have also added a section specifically for faculty. For more information regarding all the changes, please visit
<http://www.vanderbilt.edu/compliance>

Featured Speaker:

Karl Dean – Mayor, City of Nashville – Thank you. It is a pleasure to be here today and if it was not for Vanderbilt University, I would not be here. He went through a brief history of his time at Vanderbilt and he is an avid sports fan.

He began with talking about where the City of Nashville is and then will open it up for questions. It is obvious the big thing on people's minds is the economy. This has been a historic year in the sense that we have lost through lower sales tax revenue somewhere between \$27-28 million in revenue so we are going to have to run the government this next fiscal year which begins in July on less money than this year which is unprecedented in the history of Metro. This is happening all over the country but we are in better shape than most. Nashville's economy as a whole is stronger. The fact is it has been a tough year and the decision was made early on that I was not going to ask for additional revenue in forms of a tax increase in property taxes. I made that decision for several reasons. Water rates went up in May and storm water fees will be added in July. We did this because the Water Department had no bonding capacity (no ability to issue bonds to maintain the infrastructure of our water system and we have pipes over 100 years old). We needed to be responsible stewards to take care of that. We need to keep the Cumberland River clean and do that we have to invest in the infrastructure. The council has been supportive in this and so has the citizens of Nashville. The storm water system has not always been the best and Vanderbilt has seen this as well. We have never had this money and this fee will address the storm water system. When we have big rain events like we have had recently, it's kind of scary when polluted water gets into the water system or the river and the EPA is watching cities all over the United States doing this and we made a major step forward by having these storm water fees. In terms of what that means in projects, it is bigger than any stimulus money that we are

going to get from the government. We will see benefits in our day to day lives for years to come by investing in the infrastructure. I also decided that when you are in a deepest recession since the great depression it is the wrong time to take more money out of the private sector. Everybody is feeling the recession. Everyone has had to made decisions on how to manage and tighten the belt and government must do the same. We asked departments to propose budgets that all represented cuts. We want to preserve the priorities that are important for our city-public education, public safety and economic development. The schools under the budget that was proposed which the council will be voting on in the next couple of weeks will get exactly what they ask for and the schools need that number and even more. In terms of public safety- I am leaving here and going to the Police Academy on Tucker Road to welcome the sixth recruitment class since I have been mayor. The Fire Department and Police Department will receive cuts of less than 2% and these cuts will not affect any front-line personnel. When I took office, we were about 100 or more officers short of being a fully-staff police department and after the first time in 5 years, we will be a fully-staffed police department. I am committed to continue to maintain that and do more. I spent 16 years of my professional career as a public defender and I do know if you don't pay attention to public safety and the quality of life issues, people will start thinking your city is not safe, whether it is true or not. Once you get that reputation, it is hard to come back. In 1998, we had the highest number of homicides in the history of Nashville which was 112. The last couple of years we have averaged 70-75. It is quite a reduction but still an obscene number. There are countries in Europe that are not even close to that. I give Chief Serpas and the Police Department ton of credit for reaching 5, 10, and 30 year lows but they are just statistics. If you live in a neighborhood where you don't think it is safe to go out at night, wondering if you will be hit by a stray bullet or if your teenager will be assaulted then it is not right. In terms of other departments, most are facing cuts from 5 to 10% and my office is no exception-with cuts of 10%. No facilities will close and there may be some reduction in hours, less than expected for libraries and parks. If you compare what we have had to do with Atlanta, Philadelphia, Seattle, or San Francisco, we came out a lot better. We have travel reductions, by reducing the fleet and we have suspended for this year-longevity pay (bonus). We are not doing any incremental raises for this year. We are still accessing the stimulus money and trying to get all the money we can. We have applied for 120 new officers under the COPS program and in the long-term we will need them. For the first two years, they will be free but then we will have to pay for them. Other things going on are the MTA bus program. I try to ride the bus once or twice a week. Vanderbilt University, State of Tennessee and now Metro pays for employees who ride the bus going to work and coming home. We are working hard with the legislature and the surrounding counties for a law to have a regional transit authority with the ability to have a dedicated source of funding to have true regional transportation. As a state and a region, we missed out on stimulus money because we are not position for mass transit (light rail). We are still working on the next step as well as enhance mass transit in Nashville. We will have our first Rapid Bus on Gallatin Road this year and by the end of the year we will hopefully have another one. For Nashville's future and I really believe this, what will set us apart from the region and other cities we have to be a city where young people decide they want to live in Nashville because of the quality of life and they do not need a car to go everywhere. We need to get ourselves position there and we are a lot more interesting than Charlotte and Austin and we have to catch up with them with light rail. The economic development we are working on is the Convention Center and we made another step forward last week when the council authorized money to buy the land to build. The next one will be the big one-the money to build. The fact of the matter is that the convention

center will be paid for through fees and taxes that we charge to visitors. Our current convention center which has been an outstanding success and all the bonds to build and improve the convention center has been paid for by the revenues collected from the hotel/motel tax. Right now, with the current convention center, we are only able to compete for less than 20% of the downtown convention business and with the new one we will compete for about 80%. We are Music City-a unique city where people want to come and cannot be compared to other major cities like Minneapolis, Dallas, and Indianapolis. They want to go to the Frist Museum, Waterfront, Ryman, Sommet Center and the honky-tonks and this will create lots of jobs.

We have a capital project going forward with schools. We are removing portals and building new classrooms. We have money for new police precincts in Madison and Antioch. The reason for that is we need to expand our police department and building one in Madison and Antioch because the city is growing and this will help the whole city. Building a new precinct in Madison the area covered by the North and West Precinct gets smaller and building one in Antioch will decrease the area covered by the Hermitage and Central Precinct gets smaller which will enhance the coverage for the entire city. The fact is the southeastern part of our county has been neglected. It is the fastest growing part of our county with the least resources and they need a precinct there. Another project that has been gaining some attention is the 28th Avenue connector which would have an effect on all of you. This would be a road and bridge that would go by HCA that would unite our city and would be an economic boom for Charlotte/North Nashville/Jefferson Street.

We are in a unique time. For five consecutive years under “No Child Left Behind,” our school system has failed to meet the standards. It is not to say we do not have a good school system. We have two schools in Nashville that are in the top 25 high schools in America – Hume Fogg and MLK. We have elementary schools that have incredible parental support. We have problems in some middle schools and some that are shining. We have some high schools that starting to do well but known that are consistent to the standards established by the federal government. Our city is the only major city in the state of Tennessee to meet those standards and it is unacceptable. We will know in the next month or two if we failed for the sixth time. If we do, we are already in Restructuring 1 which is the next to the last severe sanction in the “No Child Left Behind.” That means that the state of Tennessee has a lot to say about how our schools are run. If we go into Restructuring 2, something more fundamental may happen. I am convinced of by looking at other school systems, we are an urban system. There are many exciting things going on out there and we need to embrace. I am hopeful we can get there but we have made a lot of head way. For the long-term future of this city, we need to get our education right by being bold and making initiatives-going outside the box. We can definitely can. We have a lot more challenges but we get it.

Several questions were asked from USAC members regarding guns in parks; guns in restaurants and bars; what can we do as USAC members to become a premier city; how can we get more parks in the city in regard to the quality of life in Nashville; Maytown Center and the last large green space area; development of activities for children and families; cleanliness of areas-lots more trash around neighborhoods; and underground utilities.

The USAC presented Mayor Dean with a token of appreciation. Jason thanked Mayor Dean for speaking today and the other speakers. At this time, Jason thanked everyone for their support through the past year. He introduced the new officers: President-Diane Banks; President-Elect/Vice President-Daniel Dubois; Secretary-Sheri DiGiovanna; Treasurer-JoAnn Patterson. Jason then officially passed his gavel to the new USAC President, Diane Banks.

VI. Closing Statement / Dismissal

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned by Diane Banks.