

LOS ANGELES COUNTY
ECONOMY AND EFFICIENCY COMMISSION

ROOM 163, HALL OF ADMINISTRATION / 500 WEST TEMPLE / LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012 / 974-1491

George E. Bodle, Chairperson
Dr. Carolyn L. Ellner, Vice Chairperson
Lauro J. Neri, Vice Chairperson
Gloria Starr, Vice Chairperson
Dr. Curtis Ventriss, Vice Chairperson

Susan Berk
John D. Byork
Margaret Paterson Carr
Anne S. Collins
Dr. Mario Di Giovanni
Milton G. Gordon
Mary Jane Kidd
Thomas F. Kranz
Dr. Richard G. Lillard
Abraham M. Lurie
Robert Ruchti, II
Dr. Warren H. Schmidt
Wally Thor
Bryan Walker

Commission Staff
John Campbell
Martha Ohanesian

MINUTES

FULL COMMISSION MEETING

November 5, 1980

Members Present:

George Bodle
Susan Berk
John Byork
Anne Collins
Mario Di Giovanni
Carolyn Ellner
Milton Gordon
William Hoppock
Tom Kranz
Richard Lillard
Abe Lurie
Larry Neri
Gloria Starr
Wally Thor
Peter Tweedt
Curtis Ventriss
Bryan Walker

Members Excused:

Muriel Bodek
Mary Jane Kidd
Connie Worden

Members Absent:

Robert Ruchti

Guests:

Betty Sandford (League of Women Voters)
Jan Marugg (Monrovia Chamber of Commerce)

George Bodle called the meeting to order at 9:34 a.m.

Attendance

On motion by Carolyn Ellner, seconded by Gloria Starr, the commission unanimously excused the following absences: Muriel Bodek, Mary Jane Kidd, Connie Worden.

Minutes

The minutes for September were approved as submitted.

Introductions and Announcements

George Bodle announced that Supervisor Edelman has nominated Carolyn Ellner for reappointment to the commission. John Campbell introduced Midori Tabata, a CORO intern assigned to our commission for six weeks, who will undertake a research task for the Incentives and Disincentives Task Force.

John Campbell announced that the County Commission on the Status of Women and Transportation Commission had asked our commission to contact them and establish lines of communication. Gloria Starr volunteered to work with the Commission on the Status of Women. Carolyn Ellner volunteered to work with the Transportation Commission; Peter Tweedt, as a member of the Transportation Commission, will help.

Discussion of Commission Work Program

The commission discussed the status of its past work and its current program.

Most commission recommendations have been adopted and have led to significant improvement in the efficiency of County operations. Even when recommendations are not explicitly adopted, the commission's work to document problems has had its effect: the County has changed its methods to address the problems, but not necessarily in the same way we recommended. Finally, several past recommendations have now become more timely than they were, because of the increased financial pressure on State and local government.

The commission's current work, like its past work, is based on its central mission, to make recommendations for improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness of local government systems. John Campbell pointed out that efforts to improve those attributes of local government, based on a systems approach, will necessarily lead to four basic areas of analysis. They are the four the Executive Committee recommended in September as top priority. They are:

1. Executive Organization of the County - to what extent, if any, is improvement contingent upon the presence or absence of a central executive other than the Board of Supervisors.
2. Structure of Intergovernmental Systems - the extent to which the organization of service delivery systems into cities, counties and special districts, together with the financial dominance of State and Federal agencies, is an obstacle to improvement.
3. Internal Management and Administration - the feasibility and desirability of changing internal systems to improve productivity and performance, within the framework of the current political structure.
4. Management Tools - the extent to which the presence or absence of such managerial tools as management audits, program budgets, and, currently, contracts with private firms, can effect improvement.

In each case, the basic issue is one of necessary, rather than sufficient condition for change. Any approach to governmental operations based on efficiency considerations will conclude with the need for change in one of those four areas before any other improvements can be made within reasonable costs, regardless of the subject area (schools, toxic waste, noise, etc.). Thus, the discussion centered on to what extent our approach should change to accommodate public policy and quality of life issues rather than organizations and administrative efficiency.

Discussion followed on the need for additional staff to assist in producing information and analysis. One alternative would be to add permanent research staff, another to obtain financing for specialized, as needed help when a particular expertise in some subject area becomes necessary.

By general consent of those present, as suggested by Peter Tweedt, the commission concluded that its first priority will be to establish an agenda and work plan for the next year. Once the agenda is set and all are agreed, the commission will approach each Supervisor to discuss it and the alternative means to accomplish it.

John Campbell suggested that the Commission ask the Foundation for Effective Government to finance a study of the commission, its effectiveness, its organization, staffing and financing, and its long range planning. On motion by Wally Thor, seconded by Carolyn Ellner, and carried the commission adopted the suggestion.

TASK FORCE REPORTS

Incentives/Disincentives

Susan Berk reported that the Civil Service rules changes hearing is scheduled for November 18 before the Board of Supervisors. Commissioners were asked to be present at the meeting.

Members of the task force met with the representatives from USC who are working with us on our study of the Assessor's Dept. The meeting was very productive. The project itself was clarified, as well as the background for the kinds of research necessary.

Government Structure

Curtis Ventriss reported that he talked on this subject at the Regional Conference on Public Administration, at the Independent Cities Conference in Santa Barbara and he has been asked to speak to the cities of Monrovia and Hermosa Beach as well as to the League of Women Voters of Pasadena.

John Byork reported that Curtis' talk at the Independent Cities Conference was very well received and that questions were raised as to how this could be implemented.

Community Relations

George Bodle has talked to Anthony Day, Editor of the Editorial Section of the Los Angeles Times and they are planning to meet sometime next week. They are very much interested in what we are doing. Wally Thor will contact the Editorial Board of the Herald Examiner.

John Campbell suggested that the commissioners get together in small groups between now and the next meeting in December to work out what it is they would like to do. Room 163 is available for meetings.

The commissioners commended Mario Di Giovanni for his distinguished alumni award from New York University.

Meeting adjourned at 11:15 a.m.