

STATEMENT OF COMMISSIONER BEAN

October 13, 1955

Auditorium Site Rehabilitation Program

The voters did not vote to use the bond money to rehabilitate any area. They voted for an E-R Center with special emphasis on sports, recreation, auto shows, housing shows, spectacular productions, livestock shows, and with large convention meetings, ice shows, etc. as more or less secondary uses.

Theater and Concert Hall

Two major theaters now closed - Oriental - United Artists. It is believed that one of the largest theaters would be happy to become the home of concert and theater activity. Theaters all over the country are suffering financial pains and few, if any, are being constructed on this market.

Parking

Parking lots south of Columbia Street and those south of the Auditorium are far from used to capacity. This can be observed at any time except when a very popular event is at the Auditorium.

People did not vote to establish parking facilities for Portland State and if the E-R parking area was used for that purpose, the space so used would not be available for those attending the E-R Center for which the parking was intended.

Parking lots south of the Auditorium do not lend themselves to efficient use for business parking. They would be too far from the business district to walk to and from and not far enough to justify the use of mass transportation.

Convention Use

At present there is no lack of hotel accommodations for conventions up to 1000 or 1500 delegates and when a new hotel is built the capacity will increase to nearly 3000 for meeting purposes. These conventions will not go to the E-R Center no matter where it is placed. The few large conventions which will need room for around 4000 can be accommodated by the present Auditorium with a limited amount of alteration which can be done by the E-R Commission. The very few large conventions over 4000 will not be sufficient to be determining factors in the selection of the E-R Center at any site.

If the E-R Center is constructed in a suburban area, it has been suggested by one of the principal taxi cab companies that a special rate would be inaugurated.

Civic Center

There has been talk of the E-R Center being developed as a civic center. This was not discussed or intimated during the campaign prior to the vote which authorized the bonds for an E-R Center and not for a civic center.

Taxes

The Auditorium Site would eliminate many blocks of property from the tax rolls and cause the present and future taxes for that area to be loaded on other taxpayers of the city.

E-R Commission

The voters voted to give the E-R Commission over-all authority to select the site, decide the type of operation and to operate the Center. There was no veto power by the Council included in the Charter Amendment. The E-R authority was patterned after the authority of the Dock Commission and was in no way subject to the whims of the City Council.

The E-R Commission has had no intimation that some of the Council members were going to object to the use of the Delta Park area. The members of the Council were ex-officio members of the Mayor's Advisory Committee and many times sat in with the Advisory Committee during their 18 months study of the E-R Center prior to the election. During this time the Delta Park area was before the Advisory Committee at all times and was studied carefully along with an original suggested seventeen sites.

Council Members Adverse Stand on Delta Park

Delta Park and the Vanport area were discussed in the press and in the Mayor's Advisory Committee meetings for approximately 18 months prior to the May 1954 elections and have been discussed publicly continuously since the election, and yet until the selection of the site was announced there has been no adverse opinion expressed by Council members concerning the use of Delta Park in the event it should be selected by the E-R Commission.

ORMOND R. BEAN
Commissioner of Finance
October 7, 1955

I am being asked by many people how I stand on the E-R site selection, and I believe the public has a right to know just how I feel about the matter. Therefore, I am glad to release this statement.

The E-R Commission was established by the voters as an independent body without restrictions or Council Control and the members of the Commission were appointed by Mayor Peterson and approved by the City Council for the purpose of picking the site and operating the facilities, and I will support their choice whether it be the Auditorium, site, the Steele Bridge site, the Oaks site or the Delta Park site.

For the City Council to try and use a veto power, not intended by the Charter amendment, to turn down the E-R Commission choice is the next thing to asking for the resignation of the majority of the E-R Commission, as it would definitely establish the fact that the majority of the City Council does not have confidence in their judgment.

I feel that the Commission should be permitted to make the selection of the site without any interference from the members of the City Council, and I have refrained from any attempt to influence the E-R Commission or its members since that commission was set up. I have been ready at all times to support their selection no matter where it might be. I

will continue to consider it their responsibility to make the selection which they in their judgment believe to be the proper one.

I want to reiterate that as long as the Commission is in effect and retains the powers that the people have voted to give them, I feel that, as a City Commissioner, I should support their decisions as to the selection of the site and the operation of the facility whether it is at the Auditorium, Bridge, Oaks, or Delta Park sites.