

MUSEUMS FOR SOUTHERN NEVADA

Legislative Commission of the
Legislative Counsel Bureau
State of Nevada

October 16, 1970

BULLETIN NO. 94

MUSEUMS FOR SOUTHERN NEVADA

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LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION

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Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 19—Senator Brown

FILE NUMBER..135..

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION—Directing the legislative commission to appoint a subcommittee to study a system of museums for southern Nevada.

WHEREAS, Many areas of southern Nevada are of historical interest to native Nevadans and to tourists; and

WHEREAS, The Lost City museum has contributed much to the tourist industry and to the culture of southern Nevada; and

WHEREAS, The establishment of other such museums would be of great benefit to the State of Nevada; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate of the State of Nevada, the Assembly concurring, That the legislative commission is hereby directed to appoint a subcommittee to study:

1. The feasibility of establishing a museum, or system of museums, in southern Nevada to include the Lost City museum.

2. The best method of financing such a museum or system of museums.

3. The cost of acquiring private collections for the museums, including those private collections now at the Lost City museum and be it further

Resolved, That the legislative commission is directed to report the results of the subcommittee's study to the 56th session of the legislature.

REPORT OF THE LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE 56TH SESSION OF THE NEVADA LEGISLATURE:

Complying with the mandate of Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 19 of the 55th Session, on June 20, 1969, the legislative commission appointed a subcommittee to study a possible system of museums for southern Nevada. Senator B. Mahlon Brown was designated chairman and Assemblymen Marvin L. White, Bryan K. Hafen and Frank W. Young were named as members. Subsequently the subcommittee chose Elbert B. Edwards, Florence Lee Cahlan and Robert Broadbent as advisors.

The subcommittee's report, accepted by the legislative commission on October 16, 1970, is attached for your examination.

Respectfully submitted,

Legislative Commission
State of Nevada

October 16, 1970

Report of the Legislative Commission's Subcommittee For Study
of Southern Nevada Museums

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 19 of the Fifty-fifth Session of the Nevada Legislature directed the legislative commission to appoint a subcommittee to study a possible system of museums for southern Nevada. The preamble and body of the resolution read:

WHEREAS, Many areas of southern Nevada are of historical interest to native Nevadans and to tourists; and

WHEREAS, The Lost City museum has contributed much to the tourist industry and to the culture of southern Nevada; and

WHEREAS, The establishment of other such museums would be of great benefit to the State of Nevada; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate of the State of Nevada, the Assembly Concurring, That the legislative commission is hereby directed to appoint a subcommittee to study:

1. The feasibility of establishing a museum, or system of museums, in southern Nevada to include the Lost City museum.

2. The best method of financing such a museum or system of museums.

3. The cost of acquiring private collections for the museums, including those private collections now at the Lost City museum and be it further

Resolved, That the legislative commission is directed to report the results of the subcommittee's study to the 56th session of the legislature.

Pursuant to the direction of the resolution the legislative commission on June 20, 1969, appointed a subcommittee consisting of Senators B. Mahlon Brown (chairman) and Marvin L. White, and Assemblymen Bryan K. Hafen and Frank W. Young; and on July 14, 1969, the following-named individuals were selected to assist the subcommittee: Elbert B. Edwards, Florence Lee Cahlan and Robert Broadbent.

The subcommittee held meetings on October 17, 1969, March 13, 1970, April 20, 1970, and October 5, 1970, in Las Vegas, Nevada. The subcommittee also met at the Lost City Museum in Overton, Nevada, on December 5, 1969.

A summary investigation by the subcommittee revealed manifested interest in southern Nevada by various citizen groups for the

establishment and development of museums. Because of the limitations of time and the possible complete and immediate availability to the state of the Lost City Museum and its valuable collection, the subcommittee concentrated its efforts to determine the feasibility of the development of the Lost City Museum as a nucleus for future systems of museums in southern Nevada.

The Lost City Museum in Overton, Nevada, was built in 1933 as a Civilian Conservation Corps project for the purpose of housing and exhibiting the relics of various ancient Indian cultures found in southern Nevada. The collections of the Lost City Museum, stated to be the rarest, largest and most complete of any on the particular area in the state, were and are the property of Mr. R. F. Perkins, one of the original excavators in the Lost City area culture, who has worked in this field for his entire adult life and is the present curator of the museum.

In 1953 the museum building and real property of approximately 3.54 acres was conveyed to the State of Nevada for the purposes only of a state museum and a state park. Although the deed was recorded on April 1, 1953, state statutes were silent concerning the authority of any state agency or officer to accept and operate the building and real property. Notwithstanding this legal deficiency the 1953 legislature appropriated \$9,000 to the superintendent of the then department of buildings and grounds for the operation of the Lost City Museum during the fiscal years 1953-1955. (Chapter 328, Statutes of Nevada 1953, p. 551)

In 1955 the governor was authorized to accept the deed and did so by filing a notice of acceptance in the office of the County Recorder of Clark County (Chapter 332, Statutes of Nevada 1955, pp. 554-555). Since 1955 the legislature has continued to maintain and operate the Lost City Museum by modest appropriations to the department of buildings and grounds and its successor, the buildings and grounds division of the department of administration. Mr. Perkins has continued as curator as an employee of the state. By statutory authority granted in 1961 the chief of the buildings and grounds division, department of administration, with the approval of the legislature, is authorized to accept gifts, devises or bequests of real or personal property for the use of the museum (NRS 381.270). The curator and employees of the Lost City Museum were placed in the unclassified service of the state in 1967 (NRS 381.280).

Although inadequately housed in a museum area of approximately 1,000 square feet (Mr. Perkins has additional archeological materials in storage which cannot be displayed), the Lost City Museum is indeed a tourist attraction and the subject of visitations

by pupil and other groups. Last year the museum attracted in excess of 100,000 visitors, proving the institution's interest and the inadequacies of the present limited parking areas.

The consultant employed by the subcommittee to make an appraisal was Mr. Clay Lockett of Tucson, Arizona. Mr. Lockett is a director of the Museum of Northern Arizona, Flagstaff, Arizona, and has had considerable experience in the acquisition and appraisal of Indian artifacts. On February 23 and 24, 1970, he made an on-the-spot examination of the material located in the Lost City Museum. Mr. Lockett did not make an appraisal of the mineral lapidary collection, since he did not feel qualified. His appraisal of the value of the Indian artifacts was approximately \$70,000. This figure represents approximately two-thirds of the value of Mr. and Mrs. Perkins' collection.

At the subcommittee meeting on April 20, 1970, Mr. and Mrs. Perkins questioned the ability of Mr. Lockett to make the appraisal of the artifacts based upon his emphasis of the commercial value rather than the historic value of the items. The Perkinses filed a report with the subcommittee in which they made their own appraisal of the collection. The value was placed by them at \$158,000. The material on display in the museum was valued at \$97,670 and the material in storage at \$60,340. Their appraisal was approximately 40 percent more than Mr. Lockett's.

In the report that the Perkinses filed with the subcommittee, Mr. Perkins said:

In our past meeting we have discussed this transaction in regards to my future job insurance. Here I would like to present a few requests to be incorporated into any future transactions. Remember that as director of this Museum, I am an unclassified employee, that until now the ownership of the collections has been my security. I feel now if I turn over the collections to the State, I should receive some guarantee of my position as Director in charge of this Museum and its exhibits, as long as I am capable of performing my duties as I have in the past, until the time of my retirement. Also I would wish to reach an agreement that these exhibits would remain at all times in the Lost City Museum, at Overton, Nevada.

While the Perkinses' appraisal of their collection was \$158,000, they indicated at several of our meetings they would accept \$100,000 to be paid over a period of 5 years, interest free. The manner of payment would be subject to what their accountants recommended and further subject to their statement which appears above in this report.

The subcommittee was also informed by Mr. Perkins of the existence of Basketmaker artifacts which were excavated from the Overton area in the 1930's. Some of these artifacts were supposedly taken over by the Federal Government and it was the feeling not only of Mr. Perkins, but the subcommittee, that the proper location of these artifacts should be in the Lost City Museum.

The assistance of Mr. Jac R. Shaw, chief of the buildings and grounds division, department of administration, as well as that of the governor of Nevada, was sought to obtain the return of the artifacts. The governor communicated with the Nevada congressional delegation, who in turn got in touch with the Smithsonian Institute and the Bureau of Reclamation. These endeavors were not successful, since the federal agencies knew nothing about the artifacts; and it was learned that even if they had them in their possession the only way the artifacts could be returned to the state would be on a loan basis.

Richard H. Brooks, Museum director and assistant research professor of anthropology, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, filed a letter with the subcommittee, estimating in his opinion the minimum value of the Perkinses' archaeological collection to be \$160,000.

Dr. Sheilagh T. Brooks, professor of anthropology of the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, filed a letter with the subcommittee which in substance said the Perkinses' archaeological collection was of tremendous value to the university and the people of southern Nevada. Dr. Brooks felt a minimum value of \$160,000 should be placed on the collection.

Inspection of the museum building and attendant grounds by the subcommittee demonstrated inadequacies both in the building and parking facilities. The state planning board was requested by the subcommittee to provide a capital improvement project estimate for construction of an addition to the museum building. The estimate and other pertinent facts concerning the Lost City Museum are attached to this report as Exhibit "A". The total estimated cost is \$128,000.

Forty acres of public land lying adjacent to the museum property (previously controlled by the National Park Service but now by the Bureau of Land Management) may be available to the state without cost pursuant to a federal statute. Acquisition at this time by the state is most desirable for a number of reasons. The original grant to the state of the museum property is conditioned that the property be used only for state museum and state park purposes. Gravel mining is being conducted on a portion of the available federal land which, if continued, will seriously affect the utility of the museum and prevent future expansion for possible

for possible park and recreation purposes. Acquisition of the public land would allow future expansion of the museum parking area so badly needed. The chief of the buildings and grounds division, department of administration, is presently completing an application to the Bureau of Land Management requesting transfer of the 40-acre parcel to the state. Affirmative legislative action in 1971 concerning expansion of the Lost City Museum might very well be the ultimate justification for action by the Bureau of Land Management in transferring the land to state control.

The subcommittee has pursued the possible availability of private foundation funds, the receipt of which might assist in making expansion of the Lost City Museum a reality. The legislative commission has authorized the submission of applications for grants, if proper, by the subcommittee. However, because of the possible accusation that any requested grants were made to influence prospective legislation the subcommittee has deferred exercising any granted authority with respect to private assistance.

The subcommittee recommends:

1. That the chief of the buildings and grounds division, department of administration file an application with the Bureau of Land Management for acquisition, without cost to the State of Nevada, of the 40-acre parcel lying adjacent to the Lost City Museum.
2. That the 56th session of the Nevada legislature enact legislation appropriating \$128,000 to the state planning board for the purpose of enlarging, improving and furnishing the Lost City Museum as specified in the details contained in Exhibit "A". The bill could provide that appropriated moneys would be made available for use by the state planning board only after it was demonstrated that the State of Nevada was the recipient of sufficient funds from private donors with which to acquire the private collection of Mr. R. F. Perkins and had in fact acquired such collection. The bill should also contain the conditions specified by Mr. Perkins that, if the collection is acquired by or on behalf of the state, he be continued in employment as curator of the museum until he qualifies for statutory retirement and that exhibition of the acquired collection would be under the control of the Lost City Museum.
3. That after enactment of the legislation proposed in recommendation "2" the legislative commission, on behalf of the state, make the necessary application or applications to private foundations for grants of money sufficient to acquire the Perkinses' archaeological collection.

4. That supervision of the Lost City Museum be augmented by the statutory creation of a commission of seven individuals, of whom six would be southern Nevada citizens appointed by the governor. The seventh member of the commission should be a member of the board of trustees of the Nevada state museum, who would be designated by that board of trustees. This commission would act as the policymaking body, while the buildings and grounds division, department of administration, would be in charge of the operation and maintenance of the Lost City Museum.
5. Strongly, that any addition to the Lost City Museum should be in the same architectural style as the present facility, which copies the structures built by the Basketmaker tribes. Adequate heating and cooling for the old section as well as the new should be installed for the comfort of visitors and protection of artifacts. It should be noted that the present museum building provides living quarters for the curator and his wife, which makes it unnecessary to have the building and its artifacts guarded. In planning for expansion, such quarters should be included to save salaries of a protective staff, since the Lost City Museum is in a somewhat isolated area where it might be vandalized if left unprotected.
6. That the matter of the federally owned artifacts be pursued by the curator of the Lost City Museum and that additional travel funds be provided for this purpose in the 1971-1973 budget.
7. That the statute creating the commission recommended in "4" above also impose upon such commission the duties of studying and recommending to the legislature from time to time the feasibility of establishing, operating and financing a system of museums in southern Nevada.

Mrs. Jean Ford, a member of the state park advisory commission, attended the meetings of the subcommittee. Her suggestions and help were greatly appreciated by the subcommittee.

Mr. Jac R. Shaw, chief of the buildings and grounds division, department of administration, has been most faithful in his attendance at the meetings of the subcommittee. His genuine interest and willingness to assist the subcommittee at every turn made the task of the subcommittee much easier. For this we sincerely thank him.

The subcommittee would also like to thank Mr. and Mrs. R. F. "Chick" Perkins. Had they not been so cooperative this report would not have been possible.

The subcommittee expresses its appreciation to its advisors, Elbert B. Edwards, Florence Lee Cahlan and Robert Broadbent. Their stature in Nevada as well as enthusiasm, knowledge, experience and opinions were invaluable to the subcommittee.

Respectfully submitted,

B. Mahlon Brown (Chairman)
Marvin L. White
Bryan K. Hafen
Frank W. Young

October 16, 1970

LOST CITY MUSEUM, OVERTON, CLARK COUNTY, NEVADA

Site visit on September 3, 1970 by Richard Baker and Ralph Eissmann

1. Museum Curator: Mr. R. F. Perkins
2. Entire site is 3.5 acres.
3. Building constructed in 1935 as a C.C.C. Project, contains Museum, Storage Room, Living Quarters with Garage.
4. A 5 ton AC unit was installed in 1969 to cool Museum only.
5. The Museum proper is approximately 1,000 square feet, living quarters consist of kitchen, living room, bedroom, bath, with an estimated floor area of 800 square feet.
6. The building and grounds are owned by the State since 1935, however, the Museum collection is owned by Mr. Perkins.
7. The Museum is on a septic system (1 toilet each for M & W), however, the city is installing a sewer system to be completed in 1971. City water is available and used, power comes from the Moapa Valley Power Co.
8. Mr. Perkins stated expansion requirements as follows:
 - a. Expand Museum generally to East. (Note: present entrance is on West side).
 - b. Museum space should be doubled (+ 1,000 sf.). Many items are stored due to limited space. Also, the need for a storage room 20' x 20' and a workshop of even size was stated, with sinks.
 - c. Public Toilets need be doubled to 2 per sex. (100,000 visitors/year)
 - d. An office is to be included (none exists now).
 - e. The living quarters should have an additional bedroom, as many guests are entertained from colleges and museums.
9. Mr. Perkins' nephew, an architectural student, took a complete physical inventory of the existing facility, and plans should be available shortly. We requested to receive a set.
10. The building is constructed of 16" to 18" adobe brick walls, massive, solid masonry. The roof framing is timber with a flat roof, a 3 foot attic space between ceiling and roof. Some exterior deterioration of adobe brick is primarily on the west side. The floor is made of irregular shaped stone plates quarried at the Valley of Fire.
11. The Museum collection is estimated at \$160,000.00.

12. Cost Projection (1970)

Area	Museum	1,000)	
	Storage	400)	
	Shop	400)	— 2350 sq. ft. x \$30.00 = \$70,000
	Office	100)	
	Toilet	200)	
	Bedroom	250)	

Exterior Development, Paving 15,000

Equipment; Furniture, Display Cases (150' lf) 20,000

Construction Cost = \$85,000.00

A/E Fee = 11.8% - 2.2% (Remodel) = 14% = \$11,900.00
(Group B)

STATE PLANNING BOARD
Capital Improvement Project Estimate
Revised July 1969

Project Title: ADDITION TO LOST CITY MUSEUM, OVERTON

Requesting Agency: _____

Reference 9/14/70
Date

Project Description

Estimated Costs

Item of Work	Original Date <u>9/14/70</u> By <u>REB</u>	Revisions Date _____ By _____
1. Professional Services		
a. Surveys	500	
b. Soils Analysis	1,000	
c. A/E Advance Planning		
d. A/E Design & Supervision	11,900	
e. Structural Plan Checking	450	
f. M/E Plan Checking	450	
g. Misc. Plan Checking ()		
h. Special Consultant Fee		
SUB TOTAL	14,300	
2. Land Acquisition		
SUB TOTAL		
3. Construction Costs		
a. Construction	85,000	
b. Site Development		
c. Contingency - 5%	4,300	
SUB TOTAL	89,300	
4. Inspection and Testing		
a. Job Inspection <u>3</u> @ <u>1,200</u>	3,600	
b. Material Testing	600	
SUB TOTAL	4,200	
5. Miscellaneous		
a. Furnishings	20,000	
b. Advertising	200	
c. Sewer Connection Fee		
d. Building Permit Fee		
e. Bond Legal Fees (1%)		
f. Other		
SUB TOTAL	20,200	
TOTAL	128,000	