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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

January 30, 1976

ADMINISTRATIVELY CONFIDENTIAL

MEMORANDUM FOR:

JIM CANNON

FROM:

JIM CONNOR *JEC*

SUBJECT:

Federal Property  
Council

The President reviewed your memorandum of January 29, 1975 on the above subject and approved the following option:

Option #2 - Continue the Council with fewer members (CEA, CEQ, Congressional Relations, and OMB Chairmanship) and leave only dispute settlement to the Council. Council would be staffed by CSA, Interior and OMB for their respective functions.

Please follow-up with appropriate action.

cc: Dick Cheney  
Robert Linder

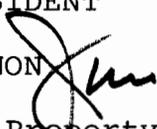
THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN....

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

DECISION

January 29, 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT  
FROM: JIM CANNON   
SUBJECT: Federal Property Council

The issue for your decision is whether the Federal Property Council should be continued, modified, or abolished.

In a related matter, there are thirty-eight surplus properties ready for transfer and these can be announced at the same time as the action to implement your decision on the future of the Federal Property Council.

I. BACKGROUND

The Council was created in 1973 by Executive Order as a successor to the Property Review Board which was created in 1971. The principal functions of the Council and, before it, the Board are:

- Decide disputes among agencies (GSA and the agency presently controlling property) as to whether or not particular pieces of Federal real property should be declared excess and thus available for transfer to a State or local government for park, school, hospital, airport or other use.
- Recommend new and improved policies for managing Federal real property.
- Coordinate announcements and transfer of surplus Federal property which would be used for park purposes -- a function begun in 1971 under the title of the "Legacy of Parks" program which has led to turning over 559 parcels of land.

Members of the Council include the Director of OMB, Chairmen of CEQ and CEA, and others designated by the President. The last designations were made in 1973 and included Anne

Armstrong as Council Chairman, Bill Timmons, Bryce Harlow and Leonard Garment. Of the seven statutory members, only three remain.

Staff for Council has generally been obtained on detail from various agencies -- a practice that causes continuing administrative problems.

The Council seldom met. Most of its work was done by the detailed staff and with most disputes worked out by a "senior review group" of agency representatives created by the Council.

The Executive Order which created the Council also established a requirement for continuing reviews by GSA of Federal property holdings. The reviews identified and reported to the President via the Council the properties GSA believed should be declared excess. This process of declaring excess and transferring Federal real property will continue, whether or not the Council is maintained, modified, or abolished.

Also, the opportunity for White House announcement of property transfers will be retained in any case.

## II. OPTIONS

Option #1. Continue the Council as it has been organized and staffed. Appoint new members from the senior staff to replace members who have left, selecting either Lynn or Marsh as Chairman. Arrange detailed staff.

- . Arguments for this are that (a) a high level Council is needed to demonstrate importance of the function, stimulate agencies to act in turning over property, and resolve disputes among agencies; and (b) it preserves the status of the popular and successful "Legacy of Parks" program.
- . Arguments against are that (a) the most important and visible land transfers have already occurred; and (b) necessary functions can be continued -- and have continued -- without a large Council.

Option #2. Continue the Council but with fewer members, i.e., heads of CEQ, CEA, and White House Congressional Relations, with OMB as Chairman. Assign functions of developing and recommending policy to GSA and coordination of "Legacy of Parks" function to Interior -- thus leaving only the dispute settlement to the Council. Staffing for the Council would be provided by GSA and Interior for their functions and the remainder by OMB.

- . Arguments for this are that (a) keeps pressure on agencies to review and transfer property, maintains high level interest, and maintains mechanisms for resolving disputes; (b) disperses some functions; and (c) directs White House involvement -- may make it easier for members of Congress to get involved in transfer cases in which they have an interest.
- . Arguments against are that it might be viewed as downgrading importance of property transfer by agencies and by others interested in transfers.

Option #3. Abolish the Council. Assign GSA responsibility for developing and recommending improved property disposal policies; assign Interior responsibility for coordinating and publicizing legacy of parks transfers; and assign OMB responsibility for resolving interagency disputes.

- . Arguments for this are that (a) most important land transfers have been made already and the Council is no longer essential to continue the transfer program and get credit for the Administration for popular land transfers, including the "Legacy of Parks" transfers; and (b) speeds up the transfer of property by eliminating Federal Property Council review and approval.
- . The principal argument against it is that the property review and transfer program might not be taken as seriously by agencies and thus would deteriorate without the Council mechanism.

