

Recessed Meeting of
LOS ANGELES MEMORIAL COLISEUM
COMMISSION

3911 South Figueroa Street,
Los Angeles, California,
Tuesday, January 14, 1958.
3:00 o'clock p. m.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mr. Burton W. Chace, Chairman
*Mr. Warren M. Dorn
Mr. J. Howard Edgerton
Mr. Kenneth Hahn
Mr. Vierling Kersey
Mr. Frode B. Kilstofte
Mr. Donald P. Loker
Mr. G. William Shea
Mr. Jim Smith

ALSO PRESENT:

Mr. Douglas DeCoster, Counsel
Mr. William H. Nicholas, General Manager
Mrs. Leone Kamplain, Assistant Secretary

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*Late arrival

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have a recessed meeting at three o'clock tomorrow afternoon so that we can wind this thing up within this twenty-four hours.

But I would like to yield to Mr. Walter O'Malley to speak to the Commission.

PRESIDENT CHACE: Now, I think the Commission members, Mr. Hahn, would be interested in knowing any proposal that has been submitted to the Committee. If you would prefer to have Mr. O'Malley present that to the Commission as a whole --

SUPERVISOR HAHN: I think, since Mr. O'Malley is here representing the Los Angeles Dodgers, I think it would be fitting.

PRESIDENT CHACE: All right.

Mr. O'Malley.

MR. WALTER O'MALLEY: Mr. Chace, gentlemen:

First I would like to say that my earlier talks with Mr. Smith and Mr. Nicholas were very interesting. They were patient. They were lenient with me. I think towards the end they had a feeling that I was negotiating under some difficulties. There were reasons at that time which I do not think we have to go into, that perhaps the scene of activity should perhaps change to Pasadena. But as far as Mr. Smith and Mr. Nicholas were concerned, I have stated publicly to the press that they were wonderful men. They

were very sincere and deliberate, and they gave me every cooperation, and we could not ask for anything more, and any inferential criticism of the Coliseum or its members does not have my support.

One of the things that bothered us very much about the possibility of playing major league baseball in the Coliseum had to do with what appeared to be a gigantic construction undertaking. You will note from this plan here, one of the plans that was publicized, that a huge section of the side of the Coliseum would have to be physically removed. On the removal of that section, a vertical or curtain wall would have to be constructed to hold the earth and the material under the Coliseum. They would have to give it lateral support. That one cut alone, or one that we ourselves suggested, but which was on the other side, would have run into almost \$200,000, because in removing it, we would have to pay for that amount of work, and then, of course, on the termination of the lease, we would have to restore the premises to the original condition.

In addition to that, we would have to arrange to put seats back in that cut on the occasions when you had events that would require your full capacity, your football games and other events. We could not see our way clear to undertaking the expenses of either of the two plans.

It now develops, however, and it was as recent as

three o'clock this morning, I call this the "three o'clock plan," that a rather ingenious suggestion has been made that is highly acceptable to us, and we would hope that it might receive favorable attention from the Coliseum Commission members.

This plan, while it locates the diamond on the west end of the Coliseum, does not actually remove any of the physical properties of the Coliseum. We play within the perimeter of the Coliseum. This is made possible by erecting a screen on the north side of the Coliseum, a screen that would be removable. It would be so designed, in other words, that it could be put up and taken down again when an event would be held, if the screen were to be in the way or an obstruction.

This plan also contemplates the erecting of temporary box seats on the east end, rather, on the west end of the Coliseum. These seats could be so constructed in sections that they could be removed overnight for another event when the seats would otherwise be an obstruction.

The plan in no way involves the running track, which now exists in the Coliseum.

In the outfield, we would erect a temporary fence, perhaps six feet high, a fence that can be taken up overnight in order to open up the entire premises for use.

We hope that when we have the privilege of meeting

with the football people that this plan will be quite acceptable to them. Actually, we have studied very carefully the schedule of conflicts, and we find the schedule limited to the following:

April 26 and May 3, two track meets are scheduled in the Coliseum. Perhaps these dates could be changed, or in a spirit of cooperation, the colleges might change the dates, or transfer the location of the events.

On May 4, traditionally you permit the Cardinal to have the use of the Coliseum for Mary's Hour. I understand that is a very well attended event, and it is traditionally held on the first Sunday of May when tribute is paid to Mary. I spoke to the Cardinal, and found he was most gracious, and willing to transfer that date to the following Sunday, if that date would be agreeable to the Coliseum. He has shown pleasant interest in the prospects of having major league baseball in Los Angeles, and he did want to offer to cooperate.

On June 7, there is a Scout-a-Rama date. I wonder if that event could possibly be transferred to Wrigley Field? I have no idea whether the event attracts the full capacity of the Coliseum, but I offer as a suggestion that if it could be transferred to Wrigley Field, that particular conflict could then be removed.

We have a serious one on July 4th. This is your

traditional American Legion Fireworks Day. I have only had an opportunity to speak briefly to Mr. Myers, and I am sure that neither he nor I would want that one date to be the sole cause for negotiations breaking down. By locating the field as shown in this diagram, it opens up the other end of the field for several days before for the installation of the equipment, and I believe it would be possible to police that area at the Dodgers' expense, so that the installations would be protected. The Dodgers, I am sure, could secure permission from the National League and the Commissioner of Baseball to play the traditional 4th of July doubleheader earlier in the day. We would, for example, offer to play it starting at eleven o'clock in the morning, so that we would be out of the premises, and have the premises cleaned in sufficient time for the great number of people who would come to enjoy the fireworks show of the American Legion. Actually, for that particular event, I doubt if Mr. Myers would require us to remove that one fence, but, actually, he would lose no seats, but he would gain some seats because the temporary seats that we would put in at the west end would increase his manifest. I hope that that problem could be solved, and our relations with the American Legion over the years has been excellent, and I am sure that that can be worked out.

On August 22, you have your very important Charity

Football Game scheduled, sponsored by the Times. The Times, Mr. Chandler and Mr. Zimmerman have very graciously consented to change the date of that event, if we can otherwise work out a program, and I am most appreciative to them for that.

We come now to the last conflict, August 24, the Sheriff's Rodeo. I had the pleasure of meeting the Sheriff at Fred Haney's dinner the other night, and he seemed to be one of the finest and most popular men in town. And, while I didn't have the indelicacy to suggest this to him at that time, I am wondering if he could not possibly postpone his rodeo for one week, which would then come at a time when we would be on the road, and he could go in there and tear up the turf, or do whatever they do in a rodeo, and give us enough chance to get it back in shape.

Now, the whole design of this new plan was to try and cooperate with the very real and understanding objections that the football people have raised. We respect their point of view. We are trying to meet their objections.

We suggest that, inasmuch as we have no conflicts with them on the list I have just read, and that is the latest list that was made available to me, that we would then have ample time at the close of the baseball season to restore the sod in the crescent or segment behind the infield which would be skinned for baseball; that we would then have time in this community where grass grows rapidly to take sod

where it previously would have been laid out in a bed in preparation for being removed to this area, that we could do that, and they would then have the football field in the same condition, and in the same location as they have traditionally always enjoyed it.

Another thought which I did not volunteer, although I must say, frankly, it occurred to me, but Mr. Smith, in asking some questions, did raise the point. If for those games that would be played before the end of September -- and I believe that those are the games that are not as well attended as the games later in the season -- if for those games the football field could be simply marked up twenty or thirty yards to the peristyle end, then, of course, we would have no problem at all, and then, at the end of the baseball season, while the field was marked up there, it is simply a question of putting the goal posts back where they were originally, because in the football field, you simply lay out your parallel white lines and your goal posts.

I believe that that is a problem that could be solved by practical application of known stadium operation methods.

If anyone has doubt as to the feasibility of re-sodding, I would like to point out that, traditionally each year before the World Series is played in a ball park, the infield is resodded for the World Series. So that it will

not look ragged and scuffed and cut up. A good baseball operator puts in a beautiful new velvet carpet of new grass. So, if we can do it, and have been doing it for years for baseball, I believe that we could do that for football without serious objection.

The plan then, as I have outlined it, and which is shown on this three a.m. edition would provide that there would be no serious physical changes to the Coliseum, no changing in the seat manifest for any of the events that would be played, plus, however, the addition of seats that would be helpful for the fourth of July fireworks show, but which would be removed for other events.

Now, in addition to that, we would be required to step up the lighting to bring it up to major league specifications, particularly around the infield.

The Coliseum lighting plan is presently a very fine one, and it will not need too much in the way of supplemental light to give us the intensity that we should have. And we could erect as temporary structures banks of lights back beyond the seats around the infield, those lights and structures we would remove at the end of the tenancy.

In Wrigley Field the Dodgers would be limited to a present capacity of 19,000 seats. That pretty much coincides with the tickets we have already sold for the season. I think it would mean that we would have a capacity house every

day we played there on the basis of advance sales. On the other hand, it would be most unfortunate to anybody who has not already had the money in hand, and the foresight to order tickets, it would just mean that that person could not see major league baseball. But more important than that perhaps from a community level is the fact that we are very strong for a youth program, which we call our knothole program.

We have in the past admitted each year over 300,000 youngsters with adult supervisors from Sunday schools, schools, youth programs, police athletic leagues, YMHA, YMCA, CYO, and all that, and we feel that when you can occupy youngsters in those numbers for the number of hours that would be involved, you have made a total contribution to the youth work in a community of respectable proportions.

We find that in the past Sunday school teachers have found that attendance at Sunday school picked up a little bit if the youngster knew that if his attendance was regular he would be invited to go with a group to a game on a certain date.

We have had school teachers and principals tell us that discipline in the school had improved once they let it be known that only children with white records could go, and children with bad marks for discipline problems could not go to the ball game.