MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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118TH MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE
LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

MEETING SUMMARY

October 27, 1997

Approved November 20, 1997

CALL TO ORDER

The Chair, Speaker Mitchell, called the Legislative Council to order at 11:14 a.m. in the Council Chambers.

ROLL CALL

Senators:	President Lawrence, Sen. Amero, Sen. Rand, Sen. Kieffer Absent: Sen. Pingree
Representatives:	Speaker Mitchell, Rep. Kontos, Rep. Donnelly, Rep. Saxl, Rep. Campbell
Legislative Officers:	Sally Tubbesing, Executive Director, Legislative Council John Wakefield, Director, Office of Fiscal and Program Review David Boulter, Director, Office of Policy and Legal Analysis Margaret Matheson, Revisor of Statutes Lynn Randall, State Law Librarian Paul Mayotte, Director, Legislative Information Services Joy O'Brien, Secretary of the Senate Joseph Mayo, Clerk of the House Millicent MacFarland, Assistant Clerk of the House Rose Marie Breton, Assistant for Administrative Services, Office of the Executive Director of the Legislative Council

NEW BUSINESS

The Chair, Speaker Mitchell, proceeded directly to **NEW BUSINESS**, Item #6.

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Item #6: Consideration of Requests to Introduce Legislation to the Second Regular Session.

Speaker Mitchell first thanked Margaret Matheson, David Boulter and John Wakefield and their staffs for their work in compiling the information in the Notebooks. She reported that legislators had filed 569 bill requests, compared to 456 two years ago. She reminded Council members that the workload for the Second Regular Session already includes 170 carryover bills, 70 bills that have been filed by departments and independent agencies, and the potential for more than 30 bills from the interim studies that are currently underway.

At the Chair's suggestion, Council members discussed ways to consolidate some of the bill requests, and two options were considered:

Motion: That all of the bill requests that emerged from the work of the informal "Housecleaners" study be consolidated into a single bill. (Motion by Sen. President Lawrence; second by Sen. Rand; approved).

Motion: That all of the "housekeeping" bill requests be defeated. (Motion by Sen. Amero; second by Rep. Campbell; motion failed 5-2).

The Chair, Speaker Mitchell, then asked Ms. Matheson to briefly review the information contained in the notebooks to facilitate members' use of it, and she closed her remarks by reminding those present that a bill requires **6 affirmative votes** to be accepted.

A summary of the Council's action on bill requests was distributed to individual sponsors following the meeting. The information is available on the Legislature's Website; and paper copies may be obtained from the Legislative Information Office.

The Chair, Speaker Mitchell, then returned to the **Agenda.** Lacking a quorum at this point, those members present informally discussed several items on the agenda. A brief summary of the discussion of those items taken up follows. The Council took no formal action on any of these items.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Item #2: Interim Study Commissions: Status Report

The status report revealed that several commissions have not yet convened. Some of those that have begun work have already explored requesting extensions of their reporting deadlines, and discussion focused on **a)** the staffing issues this creates (since OPLA staff will need to turn their attention to joint standing committees by mid-December) and **b)** the fact that the "short session" does not offer much leeway for extensions.

The Chair, Speaker Mitchell indicated that she would set up a Subcommittee of the Council to look at current policies and practices related to establishing interim studies.

REPORTS FROM COUNCIL COMMITTEES

Committee on Legislative Information Technology

Rep. Carleton, Committee Co-Chair, had had to leave by the time the Council took up this item. Paul Mayotte, Director, Legislative Information Services, reviewed with Council members the report that the Committee had prepared with recommendations for equipping committee hearing rooms and offices

with 486 PC's before the start of the Second Regular Session. Rep. Campbell asked whether the printers that would be installed could include a fax capability. The Chair, Speaker Mitchell, stated that it is essential that the needs of the Legislature's committees be addressed.

OLD BUSINESS

Item #1: Executive Orders

Sally Tubbesing drew members' attention to the memo which Dave Boulter and his staff had prepared in response to the Council's request at its September meeting. Council members agreed that they all want to have copies of Executive Orders as they are issued and Rep. Kontos asked that staff develop a process for analyzing them to identify any policy issues of interest to the Council.

NEW BUSINESS

Item #1: Request to Extend November 4th Deadline for Filing Information for Members of China Delegation

Council members agreed to deal with these requests on a case-by-case basis.

Item #2: Oblate House Feasibility Study (at request of Speaker Mitchell)

The Chair, Speaker Mitchell, stated that the State must make a decision about whether it will accept the gift of the Oblate House by Friday, October 31, and noted that a group had been working to explore all the options for use of this facility which had originally been the private residence of the Hill family. She recognized Charles Jacobs, Deputy Commissioner of Financial and Administrative Services, who reported that he had worked with a small group to draft a historical preservation easement to ensure the original house would be protected regardless of its ownership. Mr. Jacobs also stated that, based on preliminary study, it would require an estimated $2.5 million outlay to make the building suitable for public use (compliance with life safety and ADA requirements; parking; etc.) Christine Burke, representing the Augusta Board of Trade, and representatives from the firm of Bunker & Savage were also in attendance, and participated in a discussion of the potential use of space in the building; estimated revenues to be derived from renting out both conference and office space; and the assumptions that had been used to develop these estimates.

Speaker Mitchell indicated that the Governor did not want to accept the gift without the support of the Legislative Council, and stated that the Council and the Governor have an extraordinary opportunity to be "visionary" and acquire a facility that would provide a unique public space and that could meet some of the State's priority functional requirements. Mr. Jacobs responded that, despite its architectural significance, the highest priority is to concentrate existing resources on renovating the State Office Building and, ultimately, some of the buildings on the AMHI Campus. He noted that the State's record for maintaining buildings, particularly preserving historical buildings, is not strong.

The discussion concluded with those members present agreeing to pursue the discussion with the Governor.

ADJOURNMENT

The Council was adjourned at 4:50 p.m.