

Report on ASA Council Action On Location of 2006 ASA Annual Meeting

July 21, 2005

After many months of negotiations the labor situation in San Francisco 2006 remains at an impasse. Despite continued talks, it appears now that there will be no hotel employees contract anytime soon.

When the Committee on the Executive Office and Budget (EOB) met on July 10, a portion of the meeting was devoted to a report and discussion on the continuing labor difficulties in San Francisco and potential impacts on the 2006 ASA Annual Meeting. Based on the recommendation of the EOB, the President, and the President-Elect, a decision was made to request the ASA Council authorize the Executive Office to renegotiate the hotel contacts with San Francisco and move the venue of the 2006 Annual Meeting from San Francisco to Montreal, with Washington, DC as a backup.

Members of Council were provided e-mail notification of this vote, provided background materials on the situation and asked to support this decision so that the San Francisco hotels could be notified before August 1, 2005, sufficient negotiations undertaken with Montreal to permit the Association to announce the new venue and dates before the Philadelphia meeting next month.

Members of Council were asked to approve the following motion:

Motion: To renegotiate the hotel contracts in San Francisco and pursue contracts with hotels and the convention center in Montreal, Canada, as the site for the 2006 Annual Meeting of the Association, with Washington, DC, as the follow-up option.

On July 21st, the Executive Officer reported unanimous approval for the motion to relocate the 2006 Annual Meeting.

Attachment: Email request for Council Action, July 18, 2005

Email July 18, 2005
From: Sally T. Hillsman, ASA Executive Officer
To: ASA Council Members

Members of Council:

I am sending this email at the request of President Duster.

As many of you are aware, the labor situation in San Francisco 2006 remains at an impasse. It appears now that there will be no hotel employees contract before our annual meeting dates in August 2006. Therefore, EOB unanimously recommends that Council approve moving the 2006 meeting from San Francisco to Montreal (or DC as backup).

We need a formal vote of Council in order to finalize this with the San Francisco hotels *before July 31st* and to complete sufficient negotiations with Montreal to announce the new venue and dates before the Philadelphia meeting next month.

Please review the attached memo and motion, and send me your vote by return email immediately. As you know, DC law requires that Council have a unanimous vote if it is taken by email. If we do not have an unanimous vote, we will have an official Council Meeting by Telephone Conference Call this Friday (July 22), at Noon, Eastern Time to discuss this motion and vote. (A vote during a conference call does not need to be unanimous.) Instructions for the call, if needed, are within the attached memo.

Janet and I want to thank you for all your support during this period of difficulty. It has been especially hard on our President-Elect and her 2006 Program Committee.

Sally

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ACTION MEMORANDUM

DATE: July 18, 2005

TO: 2004-2005 ASA Council

FROM: Sally T. Hillsman, Executive Officer and
Janet Aster, Director of Operations and Meeting Services

RE: **Immediate Council Vote Needed on Final Venue for
2006 Annual Meeting**

After detailed discussion by the Committee on the Executive Office and Budget (EOB) at its July 10, 2005 meeting, and after further discussions with President Troy Duster and President-Elect Cynthia Epstein, I am requesting a formal vote of the ASA Council to change the venue for the 2006 Annual Meeting from San Francisco to Montreal, Canada, or (as backup) Washington, DC. This is pursuant to the following EOB motion and to reports from the union and hotels in San Francisco that the July 13, 2005, labor talks produced no agreement.

EOB Motion: After deliberating the financial implications of relocating the 2006 Annual Meeting for the Association as a whole, EOB recommends support of

Executive Office efforts to rescind the contract in San Francisco and to pursue other options for 2006, with a preference for Montreal as the first site option and Washington, DC, as second option. This recommendation is based on the understanding that the ASA will await the outcome of the labor talks scheduled in San Francisco on July 13, 2005, before proceeding with the relocation. Carried unanimously.

Since there has been no resolution of the labor situation in San Francisco, we require a vote of Council on the motion that follows in order for the Executive Office relocate the 2006 meeting. The background to this Council motion follows below.

Proposed Council Motion: To renegotiate the hotel contracts in San Francisco and pursue contracts with hotels and the convention center in Montreal, Canada, as the site for the 2006 Annual Meeting of the Association, with Washington, DC, as the follow-up option.

- At its winter 2005 meeting, Council voted to move the 2006 Annual Meeting from New York City to San Francisco and the 2007 from San Francisco to NYC because of the expiration of major labor contracts in New York six weeks before the 2006 meeting dates. This was based upon the assumption that the labor contracts in San Francisco that expired in 2004 would be satisfactorily settled with an expiration date after ASA's San Francisco meeting in 2006.
- In late May, pursuant to Council's instructions, ASA sent a letter to its co-headquarters hotels in San Francisco, the San Francisco Convention and Visitors Bureau, and the Mayor of the City of San Francisco, advising them that ASA would have to relocate its 2006 convention if labor issues in that city were not settled by June 30, 2005.
- As of July 18, 2005, the San Francisco contracts have not been settled, and the union (Unite Here) indicates that major labor unrest is likely in San Francisco during 2006 (i.e., that city is "ground zero" for union action in that year).
- Six to eight other associations whose members, like those of the ASA, will not attend meetings in hotels where there is labor unrest or boycotts have or are planning to move from San Francisco for 2006 or out of the boycotted hotels (e.g., APSA, AAA, AERA).
- President Duster and President-Elect Epstein have had conversations with Unite Here officials but these officials provided no specific recommendations when asked what in particular ASA might do to support labor except not hold its meeting in boycotted hotels.
- Hilton San Francisco and national sales representatives were helpful in switching the New York and San Francisco dates for 2006 and 2007 respectively, and the ASA contract addendum with the Hilton San Francisco includes an escape clause for rescheduling the meeting if the labor dispute has not been settled. However, as a result of the growing publicity that the labor situation is generating in the hospitality industry, matters have moved from the local hotel level to the national corporate level at Hilton. The national corporation is considering whether to invoke penalty clauses in all association contracts where relocation is occurring. In general, extracting penalties from any association in this situation will be an ill-considered move by the hotel corporation and the local San Francisco Hilton is advising against it. Since ASA's contract was based on settlement of labor issues as covered in the addendum, ASA is more powerful, contractually, than most of the other associations.
- If the Hilton Corporate headquarters were to go to the mat and attempt to assess cancellation fees, ASA's vulnerability is approximately \$510,000 until July 31, 2005 and

will increase to over \$1,000,000 if ASA makes a decision after August 1, 2005. ASA would fight the assessment of any cancellation fees.

- For both the health of the 2006 Annual Meeting program and for financial reasons, the ASA must make a final decision about relocating from San Francisco by July 31st and must announce a new location and dates for the 2006 meeting before the 2005 meeting opens in Philadelphia next month.
- Montreal is offering the week (exclusive of weekends) of August 7-13, 2006, complimentary meeting and exhibit space for the entire program at its convention center, and shuttle services to the hotels. While going out of the country at this time creates some concern about visa issues for US attendees without US passports and all US attendee and all ASA staff will require a passport, Montreal is otherwise a desirable location for a convention center venue. AERA met in Montreal in late April and experienced a slight reduction in the number of US attendees but an increase in international registrants. President-Elect Epstein believes Montreal is the most desirable site for her program.
- Washington, DC, is also available and its labor contracts were recently signed with expiration dates in 2007. The city can offer two possible options for housing the Annual Meeting: (1) The Hilton Washington and Marriott Wardman Park hotels have dates open in mid-July; those hotels have also indicated it might be possible to reschedule several other groups to open up dates of August 20-24, 2006. (2) The DC Convention Center has an exhibit hall and sufficient meeting rooms for the entire program available on August 11-14, but ASA would have to use 10-12 smaller hotels for sleeping accommodations because all the major hotel properties in town are already booked. If the available hotels are not near Metro stations, a shuttle service would have to be set up between those hotels and the convention center. The cost of that service, and the \$62,000 exhibit hall rental fee and will have to be covered by raising registration fees or increasing hotel room rates to include a rebate for such costs.
- EOB viewed the Montreal site as most desirable venue for dates, costs and services and recommends this to Council.

As indicated in the cover email, we are asking Council members to vote for the above motion to relocate the 2006 meeting to Montreal or, if necessary, Washington, DC.

Please note: If we do not get a unanimous vote from Council by email as of close of business Thursday July 21, 2005, the ASA Bylaws require us to schedule a conference call as an official Council meeting to discuss and vote on this motion. Just in case, therefore, in order to provide the necessary advance notice for a meeting of Council, we have scheduled Friday July 22, 2005 at Noon Eastern Time for a telephone conference call of Council should it be necessary. We will email you in advance to affirm or cancel this meeting but we anticipate this conference call will be needed.

To join the conference call at Noon on Friday, July 22, please dial toll-free: 866-779-0774; the conference number is *1633612* [and you must enter both *]. Thank you for your efforts to help us resolve this matter quickly.