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Tractor Test and Power Museum, The Lester F.  
Larsen

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January 1993

## Minutes of Ag Tractor Test and Power Museum January 12th, 1993

Tractor Museum

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January 12, 1993  
Room 224, Chase Hall

## AGENDA

### Tractor Test Museum Committee

- I. Introductions – Maresh
- II. Review of Previous Committee Activities – Maresh
- III. Graduate Student Activity on Planning – Genoways
- IV. Planning Subcommittee – Ellington
- V. History of Tractor Test Activities – Larsen
- VI. Interests of Fred Chase – Chase
- VII. University Foundation – Meyer
- VIII. Next Meeting – Maresh
- IX. Other Items

AGRICULTURAL TRACTOR TEST & POWER MUSEUM  
BIOLOGICAL SYSTEMS ENGINEERING IANR-UNL  
JANUARY 12, 1993 - 10:00 am

In the absences of chairman, Richard Maresh, Dr. Hoffman called the meeting to order with the following present:

Lester Larsen, 1205 N 42nd, Lincoln, NE 68503  
Jim Jonas, RR2, Box 86, Wahoo, NE 68066  
Dale Vanderholm, 207 Ag Hall, UNL  
Glenn J. Hoffman, 223 Chase Hall, UNL  
Bill Splinter, 302 Admin., UNL  
Fred Chase, 0171 Gulf Shore Blvd., North, Naples, FL 33940  
Earl F. Ellington, Animal Science Dept., UNL  
R.W. Kleis, 6520 Sumner, Lincoln, NE 68506  
Kevin Meyer, UN Foundation, Lincoln, NE  
Charlie Fenster, 1545 Beverly Blvd, Gering, NE 69341

Hoffman indicated that Maresh, Genoways, Smith and Somner would not be present.

Each member introduced themselves to the group.

Minutes of the October 10th meeting were read and approved.

Ellington indicated that the committee for developing an outline for a comprehensive plan had not met. The committee was composed of Norman Tooker, Earl Ellington, Bob Kleis and Lester Larson. He indicated they needed more guidance for developing the plan. It was indicated that The "Mission Statement" should be the "guiding factor," which is as follows:

The Agricultural Tractor Test and Power Museum Committee was formed in 1991 to create a museum at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln for education, preservation, and exhibition of the development of power in Nebraska's agriculture. The scope of interest will highlight tractors but also encompass all sources of power, including human, animal, electrical hydraulic, solar, and wind.

Larson reported that they have 42 tractors in their possession at the present time. Part of them are in the Tractor Testing Building and 20 tractors in the Judging Pavillion. Successful Farmer ran a special article on the Tractor Testing. They indicated that the Old Tractor Test Building was a "cherished Shrine of Agriculture" and is housed beneath a rotting roof of a simple structure in Lincoln. Successful Farming donated \$500 in an effort to save the museum. Also made a special "plea" to take time to write a letter to UNL officials to save the old facility. Also to make donations for "saving the Lab". More than \$3000 have been submitted.

Fred Chase indicated that he wanted to be the "burr" to develop the Tractor Testing Museum. His father, L.W. Chase was chairman of Ag Engineering from 1908 to 1923. From 1908 to 1912, he was a

"referee" at Winnepeg, Canada. He was on a team composed of engineers from Iowa and Winnepeg to develop tractor testing. They set up the procedures for tractor testing. Many of the procedures are still used today. Tractor testing at Nebraska began in 1919.

Hoffman indicated Ag Engineering started at the University in 1895 and 1995 would be 100 years. It would be very appropriate to dedicate the Tractor Testing Museum in 1995.

Motion made by Splinter to adopt the "Mission Statement" as written. Seconded by Kleis. Motion carried.

Hoffman--Questioned the statement in the Mission Statement "Create the Museum at UNL" Should it only be at the UNL? Committee should study and make recommendations.

World collection of manuals and books from Montana. Hoffman to contact Vice Chancellor IANR.

Motion made and seconded to have the IANR make the Tractor Testing Museum Committee an "official committee" Motion carried.

Fred Chase: When at Winnepeg, Canada, tractors pulled big plows (10 to 12 bottoms) <sup>W</sup>Case developed a tractor to pull 2 bottom plows. In 1988, his wife passed away. Last summer, he and his daughter met in Lincoln and they visited Lester Larson and the Tractor Testing Lab. His daughter suggested that the building should be preserved and perhaps, they should get involved. Chase indicated there is a need for "legalized organized group", who will take the "ball" and run. Need an "overall" museum. Could be a "power farming group. Need to develop and agreement with the University.

Kevin Meyer-University Foundation--need support and priority from the University Administration. The project needs to "on going". Fund raising--small donations are general support. Need major donors. Need to have a long range plan. More difficult to raise funds for capital construction. Easier to raise funds for scholarships, special programs, etc.

Fenster--Need a good plan, then challenge individuals to meet the goals and preserve the heritage. Has worked with other groups, such as "Living History Farms at Des Moines" and "Old Threshers at Mt Pleasanton, IA.

Chase--When he went to work, there was 10-12 large "corporate" companies, which could be good donors. Today, there is only one. Less than 2% of population in agriculture. Need an aggressive organization with a well written plan. Money will have to come from the "private sector".

Jonas--Tractor dealerships have been a poor source of obtaining funds. Have contacted over 200 dealers. May have received \$200

from them. Retired farmers have been the best source.

Vanderholm--does the committee want to support the preservation of the Tractor Testing Building? 2nd--where will the old tractors be housed?

Jonas--Are constructing a pole shed to house tractors, which will be 50 x 100 feet in size. Have received complete furnishings for a 1920 drug store. Future plans are for a complete old town, an old farm and an area for living history. The committee would be willing to work with the University. University has exhibited tractors at Camp Thresher's events. Have purchased 70 acres of land to the west. Now have 78 acres. Larry Snyder has donated \$75,000.

Chase -Tractor Testing Building needs to be restored to 1930 conditions. Would be the "focal point" for fund raising.

Testing equipment could be replaced as it was being used in 1930. A library of the tractor testing literature could be established. Display a few of the tractors tested. Motion made by Splinter to preserve the Tractor Testing Building. Seconded by Fenster. Motion carried.

Chase--Who is the person or persons to "lead and be committed". Need a committee of 1-3 people.

As soon as "University Blessings" have been given. Letterheads need to be printed.

Vanderholm-suggested re-organization of committee and officers. Suggested, it be done at the next meeting.

John Skold, Executive Secretary of State Fair. Gave a brief report of the Antique Farm Equipment Commission. Indicated that the State Fair has lost the new equipment displays to Husker Harvest Days. Are placing major emphasis on antique tractors and equipment. Will have some living history at State Fair.

Vanderholm reported that the Tractor Testing Building is only on the ASAE register. Fenster to check with Nancy Haney, who is on the board for designating State Historical Land Marks.

Hoffman suggested that after the committee meets, we need to have another meeting. At that time would be a re-organize and review committee report.

Meeting adjourned at 11.45 am.

Acting Secretary,  
Charlie Fenster

PRELIMINARY OUTLINE

Remarks to Tractor Test Museum Committee

Lincoln, Nebr., January 12, 1993

- I Introduction
- A Pasat connections with Ag Eng. Dept. and Tractor Test Program
  - B Deb's interest and visits in 1988 and 1992
- II Present interest--Preservation of Tractor Test Building and early test equipment as monument to early days of the modern power farming industry.
- III Steps to carry out "A"
- A Form organization (which I find in existence in this committee)
  - B Personell
    - 1 Members of this committee
    - 2 Curator--Lester Larson
  - C Plan of action--to be discussed later
- IV Organization
- A Formalize existing committee. If necessary set up a non-profit corporation. In any case become a legal entity
  - B Learn University policy regarding independent groups operating on University property
  - C Establish written relationship with University, probably thru the Ag. Eng. Dept.
  - D If corporation not necessary have a written agreement with the University (could be in the form of a charter) establishing:
    - 1 Objectives (this would be preliminary to a plan)
    - 2 Relations with the University
    - 3 Relations with the Foundation
- ~~this~~

V Action

- A Carry out IV as necessary
- B Determine possible future location of space in addition to tractor test museum. Old Horse Barn has been suggested
- C Make:
  - 1 One year plan
  - 2 Five year plan
- D RAISE MONEY
  - 1 Explore public sources
  - 2 Develop relations with Foundation
  - 3 Appoint sub-committee (3-5 members) to supervise money raising activities
  - 4 Develop list of potential sources
    - a Corporate or other organizations
    - b Groups of individuals such as Ag Eng Alumni, Farm or industry trade paper subscribers, etc.
  - 5 Evaluate strengths such as: Tractor Test Program is exclusive, University association is unusual, might have support of professional societies, etc.
  - 6 Anticipate handicaps
    - a Timing--Many corporate sponsors have gone out of existence----Economy move as regards public funds---economic conditions, etc.
  - 7 Prepare direct mail appeal campaigns for both corporate and individual potential donors
  - 8 Prepare colorful mailing piece to be used as envelope stuffer
  - 9 Plan on personal contact with large potential givers
  - 10 Continual follow up on all of above