

June 13, 2005

Dear Secretary Snow:

A public meeting of the Citizens Coinage Advisory Committee was held on Tuesday, May 24, 2005, at United States Mint Headquarters in Washington, DC. Attending the meeting were Mitch Sanders (Vice Chairman), Ute Wartenberg (Secretary), Daniel Altshuler (via telephone), Leon Billings, Bill Fivaz, Connie Harriman, Rita Laws, and Ken Thomasma. The meeting was called to order by Vice Chairman Mitch Sanders at 1:00 P.M.

Public Law 108-15 provides that the CCAC shall, among other duties, advise the Secretary of the Treasury “on any theme or design proposals relating to circulating coinage, bullion coinage, congressional and other gold medals.” In fulfillment of that provision, the CCAC heard a presentation regarding themes for proposed 24-karat bullion coins. After a wide-ranging discussion, the committee unanimously voted to recommend liberty, freedom, independence, equality, opportunity, diversity, and democracy as design themes for the 24-karat gold bullion coins.

The committee also reviewed designs for the Benjamin Franklin Tercentenary silver dollar coins. The authorizing legislation (Public Law 108-64) specifies that one coin is to have an obverse image of Franklin as a young man, with a reverse image “related to Benjamin Franklin’s role as a patriot and a statesman.” The other coin is to feature an older image of Franklin on the obverse, and on the reverse “an image related to Benjamin Franklin’s role in developing the early coins and currency of the new country.”

Members were generally unimpressed with the designs for the young Franklin obverse, which were widely considered to be unimaginative and unacceptable. The CCAC’s preferred design was 1-O-9, which shows Franklin flying a kite to investigate the nature of lightning. However, the committee recommends several corrections and modifications to this design. Franklin’s anatomical proportions were a concern, specifically that Franklin’s head is too small and his legs are too large. Members also questioned the location of the key connected to the kite. Finally, it was agreed that the inscription should be changed from “Inventor” to “Scientist,” and that the dates “1706-2006” should be included on the obverse.

For the young Franklin reverse the CCAC preferred the image of the “Join or Die” cartoon on design 1-R-06. The image on design 1-R-06 was considered to be educational, historically significant, and to present a clear message about the country. There was a consensus that the image should be relatively flat so as to make clear that it represents a newspaper cartoon, that the inscriptions surrounding the cartoon should use a typeface appropriate to Franklin’s time, that there should be a line under the image of the snake, and that there should be a reference to the cartoon’s origin.

The designs for the older Franklin obverse were considered much stronger as a group than the designs for the young Franklin obverse. There was a tie at the top of the preference ranking for the older Franklin obverse, between designs 2-O-10 and 2-O-17. Members appreciated the upward-looking perspective on 2-O-10, and liked the use of Franklin’s signature on 2-O-17.

There was a consensus that if 2-O-10 were to be chosen, the lettering should be reduced so that it is not obscured by the image of Franklin.

For the older Franklin reverse the committee recommends design 2-R-04, with some alterations. There was a consensus that while the design as it exists satisfies the legislative mandate to portray Franklin's role in America's early money, the multiple elements make it too busy. Instead, the CCAC recommends that the figure of Franklin should be removed, and only two pieces of money should be shown, specifically the paper currency featuring a leaf and the sundial side of the coin.

The committee also voted 6-1 to recommend the proposed design for the medal portraying former Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neill. It was agreed that Mr. O'Neill's jacket should be portrayed in a more realistic manner, and suggested that the designer's initials on the reverse could be moved to a less prominent position.

Images of the CCAC's recommended designs are attached. Also enclosed are the minutes of the May 24, 2005 meeting, containing details of the committee's deliberations along with images of all designs evaluated.

The next meeting of the Citizens Coinage Advisory Committee will be held on July 28, 2005, in San Francisco, CA in conjunction with the annual meeting of the American Numismatic Association.

Sincerely,

Mitch Sanders
Vice-Chairman