



Minnesota State Capitol Preservation Committee

Art Subcommittee Meeting

February 5, 2016 Meeting Summary

Attendees

- Subcommittee: Rep. Diane Loeffler (presiding), Sen. David Senjem, Ted Lentz, Matthew Welch, Anton Treuer (PHONE), Rep. Dean Urdahl, Paul Mandell (ex-officio)
- Support: Erin Campbell, Cathy Klima, Brian Pease, Brian Szott, David Kelliher, Sharon Press, Mariah Levison
- Interested public members, the media and others.

1. Call to Order: Rep. Diane Loeffler (presiding)
2. New business
 - a. Introduction of Sen. Cohen, who replaces Sen. Ann Rest. His experience includes previously serving on the National Endowment for the Arts.
3. Learnings from meetings with American Indian tribal leaders (Sen. Senjem, Erin Campbell)
 - a. Sensitivity and accuracy were themes throughout all meetings. The "Father Hennepin at the Falls of St. Anthony" painting received the most commentary. Its religious nature is an issue, and the fact that Father Hennepin was a prisoner during the time depicted in the painting.
 - b. The general view of all the tribal leaders is to remove all paintings depicting Native American, understanding that might not happen.
 - i. Minimally remove "The Treaty of Traverse des Sioux" and "Father Hennepin at the Falls of St. Anthony" from the Governor's Reception Room.
 - ii. Put them in another space with interpretation as an educational opportunity to tell the complete, whole story. Currently history is told from the white person's perspective. They want to tell their stories. Their oral culture hands down stories intergenerationally.
 - iii. Chippewa lean toward Dakota nation and perspectives
 - iv. "This is really, really important to us."
 - c. Admin may want to hold one meeting with all tribal leaders to discuss issues. Still need to meet with Grand Portage, White Earth. The tribal leaders are interested in continuing conversations.
 - d. Other comments about the paintings
 - i. Rep. Urdahl wrote book about Father Hennepin. There are complex, conflicting views and some Native American oral history indicates the "Father Hennepin at the Falls of St. Anthony" painting is correct.



- ii. Catholic Conference stated their views on “Father Hennepin at the Falls of St. Anthony”
- iii. Rep. Loeffler received essays from Montevideo middle school about how art portrays history.

4. Preliminary Recommendations discussion

- a. Confirmed the recommendations agreed by consensus at the Jan 11 meeting.
 - i. Adopt vision statement
 - ii. Approve funding request
 - iii. All art currently in the Capitol shall remain in State ownership and be preserved.
 - iv. Some new policies need to be reviewed in regard to art in the Capitol and that there should be periodic review of those policies.
- b. Areas where we do not have recommendations – controversial art discussion
 - i. The “Father Hennepin at the Falls of St. Anthony” painting was the most concerning and some members believe that the highly objectionable art, the two key works, “Father Hennepin at the Falls of St. Anthony” and “The Treaty of Traverse des Sioux,” should be removed from Governor's Reception Room, yet remain in the Capitol and have further exploration and discussions.
 - ii. Discussion about the purpose of the Governor's Reception Room.
 - 1. It is not a good room for interpretation and not a room to engage difficult times in Minnesota’s history. It is used for State business and brief tour stops and the opportunity to stop and read the interpretation is minimal.
 - 2. Multi-media interpretation would be distracting to business being conducted there.
 - 3. It is not a museum.
 - 4. Questions were raised about the percentage of time the Governor's Reception Room is used for State business.
 - 5. Important work is done the Governor's Reception Room.
 - 6. The art in the room should allow space for multiple perspectives. The art in the room received privilege of placement.
 - iii. Discussion about the paintings in the Governor's Reception Room
 - 1. They keep controversy in the middle of the State’s work
 - 2. Point of compromise raised, to move the “Father Hennepin at the Falls of St. Anthony” to the Minnesota Historical Society and the “The Treaty of Traverse des Sioux” to another part of the Capitol.



3. Some members believe that “Father Hennepin at the Falls of St. Anthony” and “The Treaty of Traverse des Sioux” paintings are a part of the story of Minnesota and should remain where they are.
4. If the paintings are moved, there would be a need for new art that would reflect the style, dignity of the room.
5. Federal government interaction with Dakota is not the full story of Minnesota.

5. Motions and Voting

- a. Anton Treuer moved that “Father Hennepin at the Falls of St. Anthony” be moved out of the Governor’s Reception Room and to Minnesota Historical Society. Gwen Westerman seconded the motion. Failed 3-4.
 - i. Show of hands. Yes votes: Westerman, Treuer, Loeffler. No votes: Urdahl, Hilger, Lentz, Senjem.
- b. Proposal made by Ted Lentz to move “Father Hennepin at the Falls of St. Anthony” and “The Treaty of Traverse des Sioux” out of the Governor’s Reception Room for several years to provide time for more conversation. No further discussion ensued.
- c. Peter Hilger offered an amended version of Anton Treuer’s motion to move “Father Hennepin at the Falls of St. Anthony” out of the Governor’s Reception Room and keep it in the Capitol with appropriate interpretation. Passed 6-1.
 - i. Show of hands. Yes votes: Westerman, Treuer, Lentz, Hilger, Senjem, Loeffler. No vote: Urdahl.
- d. Anton Treuer moved that “The Treaty of Traverse des Sioux” be moved out of the Governor’s Reception Room and placed in another area in the Capitol with appropriate interpretation. Passed 4-2.
 - i. Show of hands. Yes votes: Westerman, Treuer, Senjem, Loeffler. No votes: Urdahl, Hilger. Lentz abstained.
- e. For all of the voting, there was quorum. Bill Green was on the phone, but did not vote per his email about abstaining (he did however speak in favor of the initial motion made by Anton). Commissioner Massman, Justice Anderson, Misa, Matthew were not in attendance.