



Minnesota State Capitol Preservation Committee
Art Subcommittee
July 6, 2015 Meeting Summary

Attendees

- Subcommittee: Diane Loeffler, Paul Anderson, David Senjem, Anton Treuer, Bill Green, Peter Hilger, Ted Lentz, Dean Urdahl, Matthew Welch, Gwen Westerman
- Support: Steve Elliott, Brian Szott, Brian Pease, Curt Yoakum, Cathy Klima, Shawntera Hardy, Paul Mandell, Alice Roberts-Davis, Cassandra Rohlik
- Media: Tim Pugmire (MPR), Brian Bakst (AP), Patrick Coolican (StarTribune)

1. Legislative update on fine art preservation

- a. The 2015 legislature appropriated \$3.2 million for fine art restoration.
- b. 49 paintings in the Capitol are being scientifically assessed for restoration; 39 are affixed to walls, 10 are movable.
- c. The fine art assessment full report is due from Conrad Schmidt later this month. It will outline each piece's current condition and the range of cost to restore.
- d. Conservation bids are currently being fielded by the Minnesota Historical Society to perform the restoration. Restoration work will begin at the ceiling of the Rotunda and go downward from there.
- e. Fine art inventory and policies are included in the 3-ring binder provided by the Historical Society at the April 6 meeting.

2. Consensus workshop - Role and Purpose of Art in the Capitol

- a. Diane Loeffler facilitated the workshop.
- b. The objective of the workshop was to establish a consensus vision of the role and purpose of art in the Capitol. This will shape our brainstorming and discussions about ways to achieve that vision, and help us to develop the final vision statement for the public.
- c. **Why do people come to the Capitol?**
 - i. To testify in committee
 - ii. To learn about the state
 - iii. Ask legislators for money
 - iv. Legislative concerns
 - v. "Touch point" experience of government – to feel a part of something bigger
 - vi. Resources/ information
 - vii. Come back- nostalgia
 - viii. Curiosity
 - ix. Interest in the architecture
 - x. Interacting with power- connection to decision making



- xi. Sense of history- personal, Minnesota, development of cities/ St Paul
- xii. To be heard! To be able to express what is important to them
- xiii. Elevate their issue- be part of something, visibility for your concerns
- xiv. Everyone's building- center of MN
- xv. To learn more about MN and how the government works
- xvi. Participate in the Legislative process- this is what democracy looks like
- xvii. FREE admission! People often tour St. Paul Cathedral, Capitol and MN History Center in one trip
- xviii. Place to make a statement- speaking or just showing up!
- xix. History- context for current events
- xx. Center of Government
- xxi. Access (important to new immigrants)
- xxii. Easy to get to, free adventure for tourists
- xxiii. People work there!
- xxiv. Symbol of MN state government
- xxv. Visual presentation of how government works for them

d. What is the role and purpose of art in the Capitol?

Process:

1. All present individually brainstormed 8-10 ideas about the role and purpose of art in the Capitol.
2. Attendees were then divided into four groups to share those ideas. Two groups were subcommittee members and two groups were resource staff (this configuration was done to address possible differences in knowledge and experience about the topic).
3. Each group picked their best ideas and summarized them in brief statements on index cards that were later presented to the full group (with some expanded explanation when needed).
4. The full group discussed the ideas and arranged similar ones into categories of themes.
5. The categories were used as a start for developing the overall statement about the role and purpose of art in the Minnesota Capitol.

Interesting learning: There were no differences between the subcommittee and resource groups (although the "staff" group was able to get their work done faster). The same themes emerged from all groups.

Overall theme: The group agreed on "**Telling Minnesota Stories**" as the overall theme. It is a unifying theme that crosses all the identified categories.



Below is a chart of the category of themes developed by the whole group. An action verb was assigned to each category. Order of items does not reflect a priority:

Telling Minnesota Stories to:

Inspire	Connect	Engage	Learn	Include	Celebrate	Show
-Inspire People about MN Values (civic, good govt, etc.) (Audience= workers, elected, visitors) -Inspire Citizens to be active -Share history & imagine the Future - Increase trust in govt. -Inspire citizen engagement	-Create connections with MN -People can see themselves in the art -Shared history -Represent diverse cultures in MN	-People can see themselves in the Art -Challenge Prevailing assumptions -Engage Unifying concepts -spark conversations -spark reflection	- Educational – Mn History & Govt processes -Confronting MN history -Share Relevant/inclusive history with integrity -Shared history -Challenge prevailing assumptions -Showcase for workers, elected officials and visitors	-Create Trust in Government -Relevant and Shared History	- Uniquely Minnesotan (tells a story about state & its people) -MN Values -Understand our geographic space -Geological Stories -Crops/Forests -Rivers and Lakes	-Aesthetics, art appreciation -Create welcoming environment -encourage repeat visits -Unique and special art reflecting the majesty of the capitol -Art frames & elevates the architecture

e. Proposed overall vision statement:

There was limited time to reflect on and polish a vision statement. It was agreed that members should review the above chart and suggest wording for a final statement on the role and purpose of art in the Capitol.

The following were initial efforts to summarize the group’s discussions and consensus:

- i. The role and purpose of Art in the Capitol is to tell Minnesota stories and create an inspiring environment that celebrates the States rich natural resources and human diversity, while revealing our shared history.
- ii. The role and purpose of Art in the Capitol is to tell Minnesota stories that inspire us to experience our shared history and connect us with the States Natural beauty and richness, the contributions of its diverse peoples, and importance of civic engagement in creating a better future.

Members are encouraged to review, comment and/or suggest changes via email before the next meeting. Send comments to cathy.klima@state.mn.us



3. Proposed meeting schedule and topics

- a. Meeting length – a half day length is good for greater MN members, and offers time for members to get to know each other and for relationship building.
- b. August and September will be longer meetings. The length of other meetings will be determined based on the agenda items. The subcommittee agreed to a 10 am - 2:30 pm time slot for meetings.
- c. Greater MN members would be happy to host meetings. Also, they can help secure reasonable accommodations.
- d. Justice Anderson will investigate securing a Judicial Center room with Skype for the August meeting.
- e. The topics proposed for upcoming meetings are appropriate. There is some concern about the timing for developing the initial report for the Capitol Preservation Commission (some would like to move it up, if possible).

4. Updates and other items

- a. Committee members would like questions to think about and would like assignments
- b. Important to engage groups interested in the Capitol art early. Especially with the non-historically accurate portrayals of Native Americans, we should do an early outreach to the Council on Native Americans for their input (Dean Urdahl will mention outreach the council's next meeting as he serves on it).
- c. Are there best practices we can borrow from other state capitols that have gone through this process? (Diane will check legislative library for resources on this)
- d. Other groups for outreach mentioned:
 - i. Native American, Latino, Somali
 - ii. Hearing MN Stories - Scott Russell
 - iii. National Guard
 - iv. Disability groups
- e. Public outreach and input targeted for late fall. Outreach tools: Twitter vs Facebook vs public meetings, surveys, etc. Will discuss further in future.
- f. Develop an expanded calendar - through the 2017 grand opening.
- g. Committee would like a list of time-sensitive items emailed prior to the next meeting.
- h. e-book recommended by Ted Lentz: "The Minnesota Capitol – Official Guide and History (1907)" - a link will be sent via email to all members.



5. **Next meeting: Monday, August 3, 10 am-2:30 pm, room G-6 in the Minnesota Judicial Center, St. Paul**
- a. Adopt overall vision statement (members to comment with suggested wording changes via email prior to this meeting).
 - b. Space issues: Review the walls and format of all public spaces.
 - 1. A group will seek to obtain drawings “from ground up” and understand current proposals by architects prior to the August meeting, so that the full group can start understanding the public spaces.
 - 2. In seeking volunteers to work with co-chairs on this, Ted Lenz volunteered to participate.
 - 3. Will need to understand scope of the spaces in which art can be displayed. What architectural/building elements are already proposed in those spaces that would create opportunities or obstacles?
 - 4. Start discussion re: what priorities do we have re: allocation of space and making sure it can accommodate art?
 - c. Time-sensitive historical paintings issues.
 - 1. Were originally going to have full discussion of historical painting issues and options but one of our two Native American members may not be able to attend.
 - 2. Will explore further and arrange order to accommodate this if that would work.
 - d. Discuss public input process options.