



**Minnesota State Capitol Preservation Subcommittee
Art Subcommittee
October 12, 2015 Meeting Summary**

Attendees

- Subcommittee: Rep. Diane Loeffler (presiding), Hon. Paul Anderson, Sen. David Senjem, William Green, Peter Hilger (by phone), Ted Lentz, Gwen Westerman, David Kelliher on behalf of Steve Elliott (ex-officio), Paul Mandell (ex-officio)
- Support: Erin Campbell, Cathy Klima, Brian Pease, Brian Szott, Erin Campbell, Curt Yoakum, Matt Massman, Alice Roberts-Davis, Kathy Morgan,
- Interested Parties: Scott Russel (Healing Minnesota Stories – St. Paul Interfaith Network), Sue Gens (Minnesota State Arts Board), Rep. John Purcell, and media.

1. **Review of September 14, 2015 meeting summary** – Approved by the subcommittee.

2. **Discussion of Dakota and other Native Americans in current Capitol Art**

- a. Gwen Westerman summarized her background as a nationally recognized author of a book on Minnesota's Dakota, a humanities professor, an artist and teacher of the Dakota language. She led a discussion on Dakota and other Native Americans in existing Capitol Art by having the subcommittee focus on the paintings that depict Native Americans as how visitors would see them, and in particular as how Native Americans would see them – without context or descriptions. And to imagine they are seeing themselves or relatives in the paintings.
- b. It was noted that at the previous subcommittee meeting we learned how the Civil War paintings commissioned for the Capitol in the early 1900s were heavily researched:
 - Down to the details of the uniforms.
 - Even having Civil War veterans return to a battle site to show the artists their positions during a battle.We also learned that visitors to the new Capitol were likely thrilled to recognize their family members in the paintings. In contrast, Ms. Westerman noted that many of the Dakota in several paintings are not painted in detail. The clothes they are depicted as wearing are not known to have ever been worn by Dakota in Minnesota - they are often from western U.S. tribes.
- c. There is a sketch drawn by a person present at the signing of the Treaty of Traverse des Sioux that was the basis for an 1885 version of the painting of the event. It contrasts significantly with the 1905 version in the Governor's office in many ways. Also, it is little known that there is a version of the Treaty translated into to the Dakota language and its contents are very different from the English version.
- d. One of Ms. Westerman's main points was that people are exposed to only the titles of the paintings and the elements shown within the paintings. Most visitors have no prior knowledge of the history surrounding the paintings and cannot fill in the blanks. Thus, the subcommittee must consider the broader issue of "what do people take away from their experience?" How do these paintings reflect Minnesota's stories? She also stressed that it is important to have a discussion rather than a debate about these paintings.



- e. The specific paintings discussed were:
 - i. ["Father Hennepin at the Falls of St. Anthony" \(1905\)](#), by Stephen A. Douglas Volk
 - ii. ["The Treaty of Traverse des Sioux" \(1885\)](#), by Frank Mayer (stored in Minnesota Historical Society)
 - iii. ["The Treaty of Traverse des Sioux" \(1905\)](#), by David Francis Millet (hanging in State Capitol)
 - iv. ["Attack on New Ulm" \(1904\)](#), by Anton Gag
 - v. ["Eighth Minnesota at the Battle of Ta-Ha-Kouty \(Killdeer Mountain\)" \(1910\)](#), by Carl L. Boeckmann
 - vi. ["Discoverers and Civilizers Led to the Source of the Mississippi" \(1905\)](#), by Edwin H. Blashfield

3. **Alternative approaches to Native American art in the Capitol**

- a. Facilitator Mariah Levison had the subcommittee brainstorm alternative approaches. Alternatives were written on paper and posted on the wall. Some were combined together. There wasn't time for much discussion. Then each member had five dots to place on their preferences. They could place all 5 on one or spread them amongst the alternatives.
- b. The alternatives listed and the dot totals were as follows:
 - i. Provide better signage and explanation in current locations. Use diverse tour guides. Provide useful handouts. Raise questions for discussion. – 17
 - ii. Dedicate space to tell Native American stories – 10
 - iii. Use current art and new art together to demonstrate changes. Include permanent art and significant space for temporary exhibits – 9
 - iv. Balance inaccuracies with accurate art; interpret correctly which art is inaccurate - 5
 - v. Relocate some paintings within the Capitol to allow other stories to be displayed more prominently or to enable better explanation - 5
 - vi. Remove art that is insensitive, which creates space for other stories – 5
 - vii. Move some off-site to make room for additional MN Stories – 4
 - viii. Identify the Native American stories and themes we should be telling at Capitol and tell more of these stories. 4
 - ix. Create new interpretive pieces for the "Father Hennepin at the Falls of St. Anthony" and "The Treaty of Traverse des Sioux" paintings – 2
 - x. Leave as is - 1
 - xi. Remove inaccurate art, which creates space for other stories – 0

4. **Report and proposal for funding basic arts infrastructure**

- a. Rep. Loeffler reported on the workgroup she was asked to convene on preparing a proposal to address the basic infrastructure needed to support art. Funding proposals for the additional \$2 million designated by the Legislature for additional Capitol related investments are due October 15.



- b. Rep. Loeffler thanked the volunteers who contributed much time to identifying core needs and researching alternatives and cost ranges. The workgroup benefitted greatly by the following who volunteered at or after the last meeting: Peter Hilger, Ted Lentz, Matthew Welch, and the Minneapolis Institute of Arts exhibit designer, Michael Laphorn.
 - i. New spaces for public use should be able to securely and effectively display art at the building's reopening or retained as functional space for future art additions. A basic infrastructure to accommodate art is needed now. It will be dramatically less expensive to add the infrastructure now, rather than as a disruptive and expensive remodeling effort in the future.
 - ii. A draft proposal for basic art infrastructure funding was presented to the subcommittee.
 - iii. Due to the extremely tight turnaround to create the document, the details and amounts requested were not able to be verified with Admin or JE Dunn Construction. Minnesota Historical Society did not participate either in the draft proposal discussion. Once funding is received a variety of experts will be involved in exploring the options and defining the deliverables.
- c. The elements outlined in the proposal include:
 - i. UV protective coating of the large skylights in the Public Gallery (still need a definitive answer on whether this has been funded in the regular budget)
 - ii. Art hanging and display systems
 - iii. Electrical circuitry to accommodate art lighting
 - iv. Security and public use provisions that will enable art to be safely displayed and enhance the user experience.
 - v. Develop wall elevations to document the systems behind the walls for future modifications and determine where future art or technology can be installed.
- d. Rep. Loeffler then made the motion to approve the draft proposal for \$300,000 "as a place holder proposal that will be subject to tweaking over the next three days" with the understanding that members will use everyone's best efforts to reform and refine it before submission on October 15. Ted Lentz seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

5. Governors' Portraits

- a. Facilitator Mariah Levison led a preliminary discussion by having the subcommittee brainstorm alternative approaches. The purpose of the discussion was a preliminary effort to get the subcommittee focused on the issues about the Governors' portraits in preparation for a more detailed discussion. Alternatives approaches brainstormed were written on paper and posted on the wall. Then each member placed 3 dots on the options (could put all on one or distribute them on several).
 - i. Continue to hang all (additional 14-26 over the next 100 years) – 17
 - ii. Establish a "hall of governors" and display all portraits in one location – 6
 - iii. Establish a "virtual portrait gallery" available for viewing on site and online - 6



- iv. Rotate a selection of portraits – 3
- v. Display 10-12 of the most recent governors’ portraits – 3
- vi. Establish and enforce size and design guidelines to minimize future space demands – 2
- vii. Rotate a selection based on selected criteria – 2
- viii. History panel identifies a limited number of “most worth” governors to display – 0
- ix. Archive portraits at the Minnesota Historical Society – 0
- x. Relocate portraits to other locations – 0

6. Public input discussion

- a. Facilitator Levison explained the proposed [public engagement process design](#) to use for public input.
- b. Each location will need a host responsible for the securing the venue and two volunteer note takers, and for conducting outreach by extending invitations and creating awareness for attendance.
- c. For out state locations, the host would help find low-cost accommodations for the subcommittee members attending the event.
- d. There would be at least one subcommittee member present at each event.
- e. Event dates need to be secured by Tuesday, October 20.**
- f. Events will take place between October 26 – November 23.**

City	Host	Date	Venue
Bemidji	Anton Treuer	TBD	TBD
Rochester	Sen. David Senjem	Nov. 2 or 3	TBD
Mankato	Gwen Westerman	TBD	TBD
Bloomington	Hon. Paul Anderson	TBD	TBD
Willmar/St. Cloud	Rep. Dean Urdahl	TBD	TBD
Duluth	?	TBD	TBD
St. Paul	?	TBD	TBD
South Minneapolis	Bill Green	TBD	TBD
North Minneapolis	Rep. Diane Loeffler	TBD	TBD

- g. Recommended [Survey Questions for Public Input on Art in the Capitol](#) were presented by Cathy Klima.
 - i. Justice Paul Anderson moved to adopt the survey questions with the understanding that Gwen Westerman will work with staff to edit to the best of their ability and refine wording while keeping the suggestions of committee members in mind, and then conduct the survey. Motion was carried unanimously.

7. Next meeting: **Monday, November 2.** The meeting will go from 10:15 am – 2:30 pm. The location is to be determined.