

Responses to the “Request for Comments” portal on the Office of Administrative Hearings website, regarding Possible Amendment to Rules Governing CAAPB Standards for Commemorative Works, as of November 10, 2021 at 9:30 a.m.

Website link to Request for Comments --



Discussion: 37789 Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board Request for Comments

REQUEST FOR COMMENTS

Possible Amendment to Rules Governing Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board, Standards for Civic and Institutional Uses. Subpart 1. Monuments, memorials, and commemorative works. Minnesota Rules, 2400.2705, Subp. 1, 1A, 1B. Revisor's ID Number...

1 Topics | 1 Attachments | 14 Answers | Closes 2021-12-16 View Discussion

<https://minnesotaoah.granicusideas.com/discussions/37789-capitol-area-architectural-and-planning-board-request-for-comments/topics/submit-a-comment-205>

Commentors are asked to respond to 2 questions

Question 1: Do think that there are reasons that the Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board (CAAPB) should alter, reinterpret, or remove an existing monument, memorial, or commemorative artwork on the Minnesota State Capitol grounds? Please explain.

Question 2: What steps do you suggest the CAAPB include in its process to consider adding, altering, reinterpreting, or removing a monument, memorial, or commemorative artwork on the Minnesota State Capitol grounds? Please explain.

Below are the responses received to date

[Craig Smith](#) 23 days ago

Q1: If a work does not meet the guidelines, it should be a candidate for removal if there is significant interest for its removal. It may even be worth revisiting all of them to head off appearing reactive. If a statue is depicting an individual with little of no connection to Minnesota, then it seems inappropriate to have on our grounds. It seems there are plenty of Minnesota related events and achievements to commemorate and promote. This is the state Capitol. There are plenty of other places to commemorate non-state events and people if someone so desires.

Q2: Feedback like this is a good way to include broader opinions from across the state. Public meetings can be good but would likely be dominated by local interests. Perhaps there are ways to include people via videoconferencing. I think it's important that the Capitol grounds reflect the whole state, even if it might be more visible and have greater impact on local communities. In the end, I would still view the public's involvement as providing input, but the decision making rests solely in the board.

[Doug Gray](#) 20 days ago

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Q1: Knute Nelson authored the 1889 Nelson Act confining Minnesota natives to the White Earth reservation and handing their lands to settlers. His memorial should be removed from the Minnesota Capitol grounds.

Charles Lindbergh made his anti-Semitic views clear in many speeches for the America First Committee which opposed US entry into World War II as well as US aid for the Allies. His memorial should be removed from the Minnesota Capitol grounds.

The Columbus memorial should not be returned to the Minnesota Capitol grounds.

Q2. Memorials on the Minnesota Capitol grounds should reflect the ideals contained in the state's and nation's founding documents. Monuments to people, groups and ideas that do not reflect these ideals should be removed. New monuments should reflect the diversity of the state and should have broad approval from all groups in the state via extensive public consultations and hearings.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

[Lynnell Mickelsen](#) 20 days ago

I agree with you 100 percent.

[Tony Williams](#) 20 days ago

Q1. Absolutely. If the constitution has processes for amendments, there is absolutely no reason the state should not have processes for changing the works of art we display. Times change, values change, and the lack of a process for our state capitol to change with them is irresponsible.

1. A public comment period and hearings seem to make sense. Legislative mandates should also be binding as far as keeping or removing statues. While on first glance this would seem to open up the possibility of culture wars around which statues should be displayed, the process would be similar to what happens in the White House - the president in charge decides what his house looks like. The same should be true of the legislature.

[Lee Mehrkens](#) 20 days ago

Q1. Public sentiments and attitudes change over time, so it shouldn't come as much of a surprise that reconsiderations will be desired and a process should be developed to do so. My broader point is this: Cass Gilbert advocated for a grand approach to the State Capitol, not to turn the Capitol mall into a patchwork quilt of memorials, monuments and remembrances. I think his original concept was correct and has been co-opted over the years by legislatures that have been unable to say 'no' to constituent requests. It is a mistake to turn the Capitol mall into a graveyard, even though the honoring sentiments may be well-intended. Please find a better way to honor people and causes than to put up structures on the Capitol mall. Q2. Set criteria for memorial removal, if desired, but consider putting a moratorium in effect on any new memorials. New memorials, if any, should have to meet an exceptionally high bar, not just be based on current whims that come and go in any one legislative session.

[Chris Cinque](#) 19 days ago

Q1. Absolutely we need to revisit who we are honoring on our public lands. We must stop pretending that the white men responsible for and who profited from genocide, carnage, and slavery should

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continue to be celebrated as though they were heroes and not guilty of these heinous crimes against humanity, Columbus chief among them but also anyone who profited from the oppression of others.

Q2. Make sure that women of all races and men of color have a majority voice in decision making. White men are mostly oblivious of and seem to be hostile to learning about other races and women or hearing any stories that don't place white men front and center. We are beyond tired of the lies that have been perpetuated about the heroics of murderous, slaveholding, greedy white men. Let's start celebrating those who've worked for peace and justice and freedom.

[Cynthia Robinson](#) 19 days ago

Q1: We definitely need a process. The State of Minnesota has existed for really a very short period of time, relative to how long it has been inhabited. The land was taken by force and our history has been written by the victors. Just because those who prevailed chose to erect statues and memorials proclaiming their triumph doesn't make it right, and now that we are beginning to acknowledge the harm and injustice that has been done we need to get rid of these things.

Q2: Evaluate the full picture of a person's effect on history. No one is perfect, and the people we choose to commemorate won't be either. But they certainly should be people who acted with goodwill and a desire to serve and make the world a better place.

[Pat Thompson](#) 19 days ago

This is a living state full of living people, and our State Capitol and its grounds should not be frozen in the past, especially pasts honoring people who directly damaged the state's people then and continuing to this day through their abuse of power. Reinterpreting is not enough. These monuments have had decades of honor through their presence. Reading about them can lend reinterpretation: they don't need to be present anywhere for reinterpretation to happen.

[Denise Gathman](#) 19 days ago

Those who deny history are doomed to repeat that history. The answer is not to remove Christopher Columbus, the answer is to add statues of those who were victims of redlining, genocide, and lack of opportunity. Taking down statues, charging people with crimes that were not crimes in a historical context needs reflection, not knee jerk responses. I'm in my 60's, sexual exploitation was common throughout my career and my earlier life. Am I pissed yes, but all I can do is be accountable in a changing world. Put Christopher Columbus back, prosecute those who violated the law. Then put up statues of those who were violated.

[Nancy Carroll](#) 18 days ago

Question 1: Yes to this question. Artwork on State Government grounds is usually paid for by our taxes. There should have been written rules guiding the addition or deletion of these pieces. A written protocol needs to be developed NOW, to guide the future of the Board's decisions.

Question 2 - recommendations: 1. The CAAPB should represent the diversity of our state: races, cultures and gender should be equally represented. If this is currently not true, the Board needs to be updated and 'balanced'. 2. If the board is approached to install artwork, the Board should present this to the public - like you are now doing. 3. When an artwork represents one individual it honors that person above others. If serious actions are found later that discredit the individual, the artwork should be removed. 4. Our taxes should not support warehousing these pieces. They should be given away or auctioned to raise money for future artwork. 5. Perhaps the more final answer is to NOT put up any

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artwork, on government grounds, that singles out individuals and holds them higher than 'common humanity'. The large pieces in D.C. represent masses of people who fought in wars. That's the only artwork I believe my taxes should pay for.

[JANE ODGERS](#) 18 days ago

There needs to be guidelines in place to determine if a piece should be placed on the capital grounds. Descriptions of the pieces need to be updated every 2-4 years. A piece should not be removed based on opinion or current political winds, but only for restoration. The guidelines for placement would include importance in Minnesota history or culture, artist's place in Minnesota life and culture, usefulness in teaching the legislative process, purposefulness in representing all types of persons in Minnesota life (PC - diversity) . When space constraints become an issue, have a place to rotate the pieces to. Possibly history museum, Senate office building , governor's lawn or the Walker Determine if a piece is offensive. Pieces that certain persons find offensive should have a longer descriptions. Explain who paid for the piece. These pieces may need fencing or higher mounting. If we take out of public view every piece of art that is offensive to some one, all we have left is grass. (And you can' even smoke it) :)

[Steve Holland](#) 17 days ago

I could certainly do without Columbus. He never landed in North America, and even if he had, the Vikings had "discovered" it some 500 years earlier. But unlike the Vikings, Columbus brought slavery, disease, and forced religious conversion - none of these "achievements" meriting a plaque, much less a statue. I don't find Columbus "objectionable" but he doesn't live up to the hype and there's no real reason to pretend he did.

[Mary Burmeister](#) 16 days ago

Question 1 & 2: There are very good reasons for the CAAPB to look at all existing monuments, memorials & commemorative artwork on our Minnesota State Capitol grounds. It took a group of Native Americans/First Nation People tearing down a columbus statue, which should have been gone long ago, to bring attention to this issue. (if you think columbus is worthy of honor take another look at the history of this man who never set foot in North America) Kudos to them. White men are disproportionately represented in Minnesota's buildings, roads, parks, towns etc. Suppression of people of color and women needs to be addressed and corrected. And the CAAPB needs to be a diverse group.

[Bill Nicol](#) at November 03, 2021 at 2:19pm CDT

If the purpose of State Government is to serve the public then monuments on the grounds should be dedicated to that purpose. I feel uncomfortable with monuments to the political process as those seem self serving of the decision makers in government and would suggest that those be reviewed and removed. They may be a political milestone but I don't think that deserves to be enshrined in a monument. Monuments should be dedicated to service and self sacrifice.

It would be sad to see monuments put in place as a celebration of the Heritage of Minnesotan's removed but maybe their place should be on the grounds of the History Center or other historical sites.

I also don't appreciate the abstract monuments made to express some artistic movement. The monuments should be judged based on how well they tell their story. Otherwise, they just end up being clutter.