

## Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board

### REQUEST FOR COMMENTS

#### Application to add a new Commemorative Work at the State Capitol Grounds: The Pillbox (Ballpark)

The Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board requests comments on whether **ALL** of the conditions in [Minnesota Rules 2400.2703 Subpart 2](#) have been met for the Board to consider an application to commemorate the 'Pillbox' (ballpark) on the Minnesota State Capitol campus.

#### Background

The Downtown Baseball Park, also known as the Pillbox due to its small size, was a historic baseball venue located at 12th and Robert in St. Paul. In use from 1903 to 1910, it served as the home field for the St. Paul Saints, a minor league team, and frequently hosted the all-Black St. Paul Gophers (also called the St. Paul Colored Gophers). At the time, professional baseball remained segregated, with organized leagues excluding Black players until the 1940s. However, independent Black teams, like the Gophers, played against both amateur and professional white teams, sometimes integrating outside talent for special matchups.

In its later years, the Pillbox was a key home for the team, who notably faced the Saints in 1907. Star pitcher and future Negro National League founder Andrew "Rube" Foster played with the Gophers, even throwing a no-hitter in 1908. The team continued playing at the Pillbox until the park was abandoned in 1910, leading to the team's decline. Beyond baseball, the Pillbox hosted events such as speed skating in winter and professional wrestling in summer. Today, the site is occupied by a laboratory building for the Minnesota Departments of Health and Agriculture, located near Spaghetti Junction.

On December 18, 2024, CAAPB received an application from Stew Thornley of the Halsey Hall Chapter Society of American Baseball Research, to add a new Commemorative Work for The Pillbox per Minnesota Rules 2400.2703, on the State Capitol Grounds.

Detailed information on the application to commemorate The Pillbox can be found on the CAAPB website: <https://bit.ly/4j1GPBQ>

#### Board Consideration

**“Conditions for adding new artwork.** The board must consider displaying new commemorative artwork in the Capitol area if the artwork meets all of the following conditions:

- A. there has been documented public support of the artwork;
- B. the artwork has lasting statewide significance for Minnesotans;
- C. the artwork is respectful of the diversity of Minnesotans;
- D. viewing the artwork provides a rich experience to broaden the understanding of Minnesota's shared history, heritage, and culture;”

### **Staff Finding Leads to Public Comment**

The Board itself will only consider the addition request if it meets **ALL** of the conditions stated in *Minnesota Rules 2400.2703 Subpart 2*. So far, CAAPB's staff have made the finding that the removal request meets all of the conditions, which means that by Rule, the Board is now required to open a 30-day public comment period to gather input on the conditions.

### **Public Comment Request Due May 5th**

Interested persons may mail comments on whether they believe **ALL** of the conditions have been met to CAAPB via email or mail (to the contact below) until 4:30pm on May 5, 2025. Input received will be considered by the Board in determining if all of the conditions have been met to consider for further review the application to add The Pillbox (Ballpark) Commemoration at the Capitol Campus.

### **Website and Contact Information**

To stay informed of the application to add The Pillbox Commemoration, follow updates through the agency's website <https://bit.ly/4j1GPBQ>.

All other questions and requests for more information on the application to add The Pillbox (Ballpark) may be directed to Tina Chimuzu, Planner-Fellow for the Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board, Freeman Building, 625 Robert Street North, Saint Paul, MN 55155. Phone: 651-757-1508 (leave message if no answer) or email at [Tina.Chimuzu@state.mn.us](mailto:Tina.Chimuzu@state.mn.us).

### **Alternative Format**

Upon request, this information can be made available in an alternative format, such as large print, braille, or audio. To make such a request, please contact the agency contact person at the address or telephone number listed above.

### **Statutory Authority**

Minnesota Statute, 15B.01, gives the Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board the statutory authority to consider the application to propose addition of new commemorative works.