



CAPITOL AREA ARCHITECTURAL AND PLANNING BOARD

CAAPB

Exhibit 4

Request for Comments report

STATEMENT OF NEED AND REASONABLENESS

Proposed Revisions to Minnesota Rules Chapter 2400,
governing Commemorative Works on the Minnesota
Capitol Grounds

Revisor ID No. 04720

Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board

February 2020

37789 Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board Request for Comments

Closed Dec 16, 2021 · Discussion · 18 Participants · 1 Topics · 20 Answers · 3 Replies · 7 Votes

18

PARTICIPANTS

1

TOPICS

20

ANSWERS

3

REPLIES

7

VOTES

SUMMARY OF TOPICS

SUBMIT A COMMENT


 20 Answers · 3 Replies

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.

Important: All comments will be made available to the public. Please only submit information that you wish to make available publicly. The Office of Administrative Hearings does not edit or delete submissions that include personal information. We reserve the right to remove any comments we deem offensive, intimidating, belligerent, harassing, or bullying, or that contain any other inappropriate or aggressive behavior without prior notification.

Craig Smith · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Oct 18, 2021 9:36 am

 1 Votes

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.

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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 · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Oct 21, 2021 6:30 pm

👍 3 Votes

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.

Response:

Lynnell Mickelsen · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Oct 21, 2021 7:51 pm

I agree with you 100 percent.

Tony Williams · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Oct 21, 2021 9:09 pm

👍 0 Votes

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.

2. 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 · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Oct 21, 2021 9:23 pm

👍 0 Votes

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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 · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Oct 22, 2021 2:11 pm

👍 1 Votes

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 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 · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Oct 22, 2021 4:27 pm

👍 1 Votes

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 · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Oct 22, 2021 7:17 pm

👍 0 Votes

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

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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 · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Oct 22, 2021 8:49 pm

👍 0 Votes

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 · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Oct 23, 2021 11:09 am

👍 0 Votes

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 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 · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Oct 23, 2021 8:34 pm

👍 1 Votes

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

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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 · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Oct 24, 2021 4:30 pm

👍 0 Votes

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 · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Oct 25, 2021 12:53 pm

👍 0 Votes

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.

Response:

Alex Andrea · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Nov 27, 2021 3:25 pm

"Disproportionately represented" is meaningless as a category unless you urge mere quotas.

Bill Nicol · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Nov 03, 2021 2:19 pm

👍 0 Votes

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

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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.

John Camerota · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Nov 13, 2021 8:14 pm

👍 1 Votes

The Columbus Statue should be restored and anyone that defaces or damages a statue should be fined with the full cost of repairing the damage (at minimum), if not jail time. Here's why:

People love to mention that Columbus never set foot in North America, but then say he committed atrocities against Native Americans?? I can't even imagine what twisted logic-jujitsu one needs to do to get to that conclusion. Or better yet, they blame HIM for atrocities committed against natives by nations and leaders that came after him. That's as ridiculous as blaming the Chinese for every gun death in the world because they discovered gunpowder. Or better yet, let's blame the Chinese for "genocide" because they inadvertently spread the Black Plague to Europe and other parts of the world. I think people should be held responsible for their own actions. Anyone who bothered to read his journals or a book from a reputable historian would see the truth:

- 1)Columbus championed Indigenous rights: He was against slavery as his goal was to convert natives to Christianity (FYI, according to Papal law Christians could not be enslaved). He ordered his men to treat and trade fairly with indigenous tribes and even protected the Tainos from the Caribs and Canibs (who practiced slavery, torture, human sacrifice and cannibalism). He hung his own men (Spaniards) for mistreating the natives and when Spanish nobles found out about this they arrested him, removed him from office, and sent him back to Spain in shackles (FYI, Columbus was found innocent and given back all his honors & titles.).
- 2)He owned no slaves when slavery prevailed among the indigenous cultures, Europeans, and many other civilizations.
- 3)Columbus was the first to discover a sustainable, wind-powered, trans-Atlantic route and return to Europe with proof of a new world.
- 4)Columbus' breakthrough application of magnetic declination gave birth to modern navigation.
- 5)He introduced the wheel for widespread use in the Western Hemisphere.
- 6)Columbus united a world that was separated in two hemispheres for millennia unaware the other existed

Stop living WOKE (WithOut Knowledge or Education):

[https://www.italyusa.org/2020/10/setting-record-straight-on-christopher.html?](https://www.italyusa.org/2020/10/setting-record-straight-on-christopher.html?fbclid=IwAR2aHez2oAe_YgQio2WwSPT2W3CLgRByWsoEXHiv1sbuGymhDaOgdPSfiEU&m=1)

[fbclid=IwAR2aHez2oAe_YgQio2WwSPT2W3CLgRByWsoEXHiv1sbuGymhDaOgdPSfiEU&m=1](https://www.italyusa.org/2020/10/setting-record-straight-on-christopher.html?fbclid=IwAR2aHez2oAe_YgQio2WwSPT2W3CLgRByWsoEXHiv1sbuGymhDaOgdPSfiEU&m=1)

Response:

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Alex Andrea · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Nov 27, 2021 3:29 pm
Well said. I have little faith in this commission to take any comments into account. The emails leaked from the Lt. Governor's office to the Star Tribune say they/the Walz Administration won't restore the statue. This evil decision has already been made. Also: Columbus' journeys as "sustainable, windpowered" route cracked me up.

Alex Andrea · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Nov 27, 2021 3:49 pm
👍 0 Votes

I am against instituting any procedure for the removal of monuments. I say that based on the fact that such removals will be one-sided. Look only to Thomas Jefferson being removed from NYC Hall and Theodore Roosevelt's statue in NYC--he's on Mt. Rushmore remember--being move to North Dakota. The people who took down Jefferson and Roosevelt are the same as those who took down Columbus: Historically Illiterate, Anti-American radicals. Why put this power to constantly rewrite history in such hands?

I must say I have little faith in this commenting opportunity. The Columbus statue was taken down illegally and feloniously. It was done in collusion with the Governor and Lt. Governor's office. Having been taken down illegally it must be restored. I have looked at all the monuments. None compare to Brioschi's creation. Some may have noble ideas animating them but are ugly: "The Promise of Youth" and the "Minnesota Fallen Firemen's Memorial" among them. Perhaps more care should be taken in initially allowing them.

Nancy Stark · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 15, 2021 1:59 pm
👍 0 Votes

In response to the 2 questions:

1. The CAAPB is responsible to maintain, along with the Department of Administration, memorials that are life safety secure and do not promote physical harm to the public. The CAAPB has the authority to reinterpret or remove an existing monument, memorial, or commemorative artwork on the MN State Capitol grounds, or along with the MN Historical Society, within the Capitol Building. Any consideration for reinterpretation or removal should occur with an appropriate time frame, so set by the CAAPB and the Commemorative Works rules.

2. The CAAPB should base its decisions for new, altering, reinterpretation, or removal of a monument, memorial, or commemorative artwork on the MN State Capitol grounds, or within the Capitol Building on its Commemorative Works rules.

The CAAPB should define and outline action to be taken, and by whom, for the removal of any monument, memorial, or commemorative artwork not approved for removal by the vote of the CAAPB.

In approving the removal of a monument, memorial, or commemorative artwork, the CAAPB should require the requesting party/parties provide a 5 year response to how the action of removal has benefitted their cause, and provided historical significance for all Minnesotans and the public.

The MN State Capitol Building and its grounds are unique by so many standards, thoughtful planning, and organization. The grounds have order, a gracious calming, and in the future will not be able to provide space for new additions. Provisions/options for future works of art should be expanded to other state site locations where their historical significance is even more enhanced and brought to a greater MN public.

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Senator Carla Nelson · Citizen · (Postal Code: unknown) · Dec 16, 2021 3:58 pm

👍 0 Votes

Question 1: The CAAPB has already established a system in which individuals can legally request to have artwork put up or removed in and around the capitol area for many reasons. Unfortunately, the current CAAPB members and board leadership has allowed publicly owned property (Columbus statue) to be torn down and damaged without due process. The removal of the Columbus statue was not authorized by the CAAPB and therefore must be put back up. This statue was erected to commemorate citizens who were being marginalized - to honor them and ensure no Minnesotans were marginalized thereafter. I suggest we put the damaged statue back up and place a plaque on the base detailing the historic discussions and context surrounding Columbus, including how the statue was damaged and why.

Precedence shows that the CAAPB can and has provided updated and more accurate information attached to publicly owned art without allowing it to be illegally removed and damaged. One statue in the rotunda was fitted with a plaque explaining the misconceptions surrounding that specific memorial after public confusion and questions arose from the art. There is no excuse why this cannot be done with the Columbus statue.

We must resist retrofitting or removing historic monuments through a modern lens. Instead of allowing one voice to pervade the conversation, let us get back to the intent and charge of the CAAPB; to preserve and enhance the dignity, beauty, and architectural integrity of the capitol area for ALL Minnesotans. The CAAPB owes it to Minnesotans to encourage the full expression of history through our art, not the silencing of all but one view of thought.

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?

Now that there are proper channels through the CAAPB to address concerns over art around the capitol area, it is imperative that the statue be put back up and current procedures be followed when considering the removal of art.