

# Report of the Capitol Preservation Committee to the 2015 Kansas Legislature

**CHAIRPERSON:** Jennie Chinn, State Historical Society

**SENATE PRESIDENT'S APPOINTEES:** Senator Elaine Bowers; Ryan Gilliland

**HOUSE SPEAKER'S APPOINTEES:** Wade Hapgood; Lana Gordon, Secretary of Labor

**SENATE MINORITY LEADER'S APPOINTEE:** Tim Graham

**GOVERNOR'S APPOINTEES:** Landon Fulmer; Dr. Richard Kyle; Peggy Palmer

**HOUSE MINORITY LEADER'S APPOINTEE:** Representative Valdenia Winn

**OTHER MEMBERS (EX OFFICIO):** Barry Greis, Statehouse Architect; Peter Jasso, Kansas Creative Arts Industries Commission

## CHARGE

- Finalize guidelines and request forms for temporary exhibits;
- Finalize guidelines and request forms for permanent displays, artwork, and architectural modifications;
- Select finalists for the *Brown v. Board* mural; and
- Consider submitted requests.

# Capitol Preservation Committee

## REPORT

### Conclusions and Recommendations

- The Committee makes no conclusions or recommendations.

*Proposed Legislation:* None.

### BACKGROUND

The Capitol Preservation Committee was created by the Legislature in 2010 to: approve renovation proposals in all areas of the Capitol, the Visitor Center, and the Capitol grounds to insure that the historical beauty of the areas are preserved; preserve the proper décor of those areas; ensure that any art or artistic displays are historically accurate and have historic significance; approve the location and types of temporary displays; and to oversee the reconfiguration or redecoration of committee rooms within the Capitol. As provided by KSA 75-2269, the Division of Legislative Administrative Services has the responsibility to implement the recommendations of the Committee.

The Committee has 12 members, with the Governor appointing three, the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House each appointing two, and the Minority Leaders of the House and Senate each appointing one. The Committee's three *ex-officio* members are the Statehouse Architect, the Executive Director of the Kansas State Historical Society (Historical Society), and the Director of the Creative Arts Industries Commission. The Governor has the authority to appoint the chairperson from amongst the Committee's membership.

### COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

The Capitol Preservation Committee met on November 13, 2014. The Committee heard

testimony about new information kiosks for the Visitor Center, received mural proposals, reviewed draft request forms, and listened to a proposal to install a new plaque in the Capitol.

### Information Kiosks for the Visitor Center

The State Archivist with the Historical Society reported on the status of two electronic kiosks for the Visitor Center. The kiosks, which were funded by a grant from the Information Network of Kansas, will assist visitors to navigate the building and learn about the functions of the Capitol. The kiosks will be a self-service information portal to be used by visitors and will serve as a supplement to the information desk staff. Four applications—consisting of building directory, calendar, find your legislator, and highlights tour—will be included in the kiosks. The target completion date is January 5, 2015.

### Draft Forms to Request Changes at the Capitol

The Committee reviewed the two draft forms, the Request for Approval of Commissioned or Donated Exhibit or Artwork for Permanent Display form and the Request for Approval of Architectural Modifications form, which would be used by the Committee when considering future proposals. The forms reconcile current law regarding the responsibilities of the Legislature through the Legislative Coordinating Council, Legislative Administrative Services, the Secretary of Administration, and the Capitol Preservation Committee. The Committee plans to define who would qualify as an appropriate sponsor (*i.e.*, a

legislator, a state agency head, or an elected state official) to endorse a request. The Committee also plans to specify when the architectural modification request form would be necessary.

### **KBI Plaque Proposal**

A representative from the Kansas Bureau of Investigation (KBI) requested the placement of a plaque in the Capitol to honor the 75th anniversary of the KBI. The KBI proposes a bronze plaque be installed in the southwest corner of the first floor of the Capitol, either outside Committee Room 152-S or on the exterior wall of the original offices of the KBI. The plaque would be similar in size and quality to other small plaques presently displayed on the Capitol walls.

The Committee will consider the proposal at its next meeting and may make suggestions for the plaque and its wording. If the Committee approves the plaque proposal, then pursuant to KSA 75-2269, a legislative bill would need to be enacted to authorize its installation.

### ***Brown v. Board of Education* Mural**

Over 30 artists initially submitted their credentials for the Committee to consider. From that group, 14 artists were selected as semi-finalists and invited to prepare a rendering. Artists had the choice of two locations for their mural proposals, one being on the third floor on the exterior wall of the Old Supreme Court Room and the other being in an alcove area on the fourth floor leading to the House gallery. All but two of the artists selected the third floor location. The deadline for the Committee to receive proposals was April 1, 2014. Nine artists submitted renderings to the Committee.

A representative from the Brown Foundation for Educational Equity, Excellence, and Research

provided testimony concerning aspects and elements to consider when reviewing the submitted entries. Those who view the mural need to understand that, above all other states in the nation, Kansas was at the forefront to end school segregation. It would be better, in the conferees's opinion, to not depict any of the living people unless all of the living people could be included. The U.S. Supreme Court combined cases from Delaware, Kansas, South Carolina, Virginia, and Washington, DC. The conferee concluded that what the Committee is attempting to do is difficult, because the story is so layered and there are so many elements which could be conveyed in one artistic rendering. The final mural depiction may come down to something simplistic, instead of failing to capture everything that *Brown* encompasses.

Before evaluating the mural proposals, the Committee plans to consider the uniqueness of Kansas in the struggle for school desegregation; the issue of living people, being either all included or not at all; the role of the legal team and the recruitment of parents; and the historic continuum.

A representative from the Brown Mural Project SB-54, Inc., a not-for-profit organization, expressed hope for the mural's mission to be accomplished, because it is long overdue. The community, state, and nation are ready for the mural to take place.

The Committee plans to request an additional meeting day, which would be used sometime before the end of April 2015. At the next meeting, the Committee plans to hear from an art expert on the public aspect of murals.

### **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Committee makes no conclusions or recommendations.