

Report of the Capitol Preservation Committee to the 2020 Kansas Legislature

CHAIRPERSON: Jennie Chinn

LEGISLATIVE MEMBERS: Senator Elaine Bowers; and Representatives Fred Patton and Valdenia Winn

NON-LEGISLATIVE MEMBERS: Melinda Gaul, Tim Graham, Harrison Hems, Will Lawrence, Jeremy Stohs, and Sharon Wenger

EX OFFICIO MEMBERS: Frank Burnam and Peter Jasso

CHARGE

The Committee will review various issues regarding the Capitol and its grounds, including:

- A study of a proposed new exhibit on Kansas symbols in the Visitor Center, a plaque commemorating the Capitol restoration, and brochure displays; and
- Receiving updates on the law enforcement memorial and *Ad Astra* plaza project.

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Capitol Preservation Committee

ANNUAL REPORT

Conclusions and Recommendations

The Committee makes the following recommendations:

- The Committee approves a form that shall be used by persons wishing to propose long-term or permanent changes to the Capitol or grounds;
- The Committee recommends the State Historical Society display the state symbols exhibit outside the Office of Revisor of Statutes in the Capitol building;
- The Committee did not recommend approval of the Amelia Earhart statue project at this time, but reserves the idea for future consideration;
- The Committee recommends the updated restoration plaque be installed on the wall of the first floor of the rotunda and recommends the offering of the previous plaque to the Brownback family first, but it would otherwise become part of the collection at the State Historical Society;
- The Committee recommends the Committee review the master plan of the Capitol grounds at the next Committee meeting;
- The Committee recommends the State Historical Society and the Department of Administration have follow-up discussions concerning the Fallen Firefighters Memorial;
- The Committee recommends the Director of Legislative Administrative Services, the Chairperson of the Committee, and the Department of Administration follow up with the Legislative Coordinating Council concerning the Overmyer mural restoration project;
- The Committee recommends the Department of Administration continue to explore options for signage to the entrance to the Capitol building, including directional pavers on the Capitol grounds;
- The Committee recommends the *Official Kansas State Travel Guide* and the state map be the main forms of information to be provided to tourists at the Visitor Center and recommends those items be distributed around the Capitol building, including outside the House and Senate Chambers and in the Governor's office;
- The Committee recommends the Visitor Center keep other community brochures and information available at the desk to be distributed upon request and recommends the State Historical Society place signage related to additional brochures and information at the Visitor Center information desk;
- The Committee recommends the State Historical Society provide information at the Visitor Center information desk to direct visitors to www.travelks.com;

- The Committee supports the completion of the *Ad Astra* Plaza project on the Capitol grounds to honor the State’s commitment to the project and artist; and
- The Committee recommends exploration of legislative approval for a 1st Kansas (Colored) Volunteer Infantry mural in the Capitol building during the 2020 Legislative Session.

The Committee also directs the Chairperson of the Committee to discuss possible destination guide signage for the Visitor Center with the Kansas Department of Transportation for placement on the interstate to reflect the easiest way for visitors to get to the Capitol building.

Proposed Legislation: None

BACKGROUND

The Capitol Preservation Committee was created by the Kansas Legislature in 2010 to approve renovation proposals in all areas of the Capitol, the Capitol Visitor Center, and the Capitol grounds to ensure the historical beauty of the areas is preserved, preserve the proper decor of those areas, assure any art or artistic displays are historically accurate and have historic significance, approve the location and types of temporary displays, and oversee the reconfiguration of committee rooms within the Capitol. As provided by KSA 75-2269, the Division of Legislative Administrative Services (LAS) is responsible for implementing the recommendations of the Committee.

The Committee is composed of 12 members, with the Governor appointing 3, the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House each appointing 2, and the Minority Leaders of the House and Senate each appointing 1. The Committee’s three ex officio members are the Statehouse Architect, the Executive Director of the State Historical Society, and the Director of the Kansas Creative Arts Industries Commission. The Governor has the authority to appoint the chairperson from the Committee’s membership.

The Committee was granted one meeting day during the 2019 Interim by the Legislative Coordinating Council (LCC).

COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

The Committee met on September 25, 2019, at the Statehouse. During the meeting, the Committee discussed a form; heard proposals for a symbols exhibit in the Visitor Center, placement of a statue of Amelia Earhart on the Capitol grounds, and replacement of the current Capitol restoration plaque with an updated plaque; heard project updates for the Law Enforcement Memorial and the Fallen Firefighters Memorial; received an update of the Overmyer murals restoration project; heard an update on Visitor Center signage; discussed brochure racks in the Visitor Center; received an update on the *Ad Astra* Plaza project; and discussed legislative exploration of a 1st Kansas (Colored) Volunteer Infantry regiment mural in the Capitol building.

Form to Request Changes at the Capitol

The Committee reviewed a draft form to be used by the public to request approval to place artwork or an exhibit either on a long-term basis or permanently in the Capitol, including the Visitor Center and grounds. The draft form combines previous forms into one document to simplify the process. The Committee revised the form to include how the artwork would be displayed and for how long the artwork would be on loan. The Committee also granted permission to the Chairperson to make any revisions to the form she believed necessary resulting from the Committee’s discussion. The Chairperson indicated the form would be available on the State Historical Society website.

Proposed Symbols Exhibit in Visitor Center

A representative of the State Historical Society provided an overview of a proposed state symbols exhibit in the Visitor Center. She reviewed a document listing the official state symbols; stated the proposed site for the exhibit would be the small room outside of the Office of Revisor of Statutes; and noted items that would be included in the new exhibit, including a chair made from the famous cottonwood tree that stood on the Statehouse grounds for more than a century and the *Tylosaurus* fossil.

The Chairperson indicated the State Historical Society is seeking permission to do the project, but no additional funds are being requested to complete the project.

Request to Place Statue of Amelia Earhart on Capitol Grounds

The Committee reviewed a request from John Forsythe, an artist, to commission a statue of Amelia Earhart to be placed permanently on the Capitol grounds.

The Committee discussed the potential costs involved with the artwork and installation of the statue. The Committee noted consideration is being given in Washington, D.C., to erect a statue of Amelia Earhart. A Committee member suggested this project should be postponed until such time as a statue of Amelia Earhart is placed in Washington, D.C., and a replica of that statue could be placed on the State Capitol grounds.

Capitol Restoration Plaque

The Committee heard a proposal from Senator Hensley to replace the current plaque commemorating the Capitol restoration project with a larger plaque listing additional names of key persons involved in the restoration project. He noted the proposed plaque would include the names of Governors Graves, Sebelius, Parkinson, and Brownback, as well as the former Director of LAS, Jeff Russell; state architects William Groth and Barry Greis; architect Vance Kelley with TreanorHL; and Jim Rinner with J.E. Dunn Construction. He commented the proposed plaque is more inclusive and would give credit to the involved parties.

Senator Hensley stated the proposed plaque was constructed by Star Signs in Lawrence, Kansas. He noted the plaque cost \$995 and was privately funded by J.E. Dunn Construction and TreanorHL, and included the installation expense. He stated the plaque maker would be responsible for installing the new plaque.

The Chairperson provided a brief history of the current plaque. The Committee discussed placement of the new plaque and made suggestions for the removal of the current plaque.

Law Enforcement Memorial and Fallen Firefighters Memorial

The Committee received updates on the Law Enforcement Memorial and Fallen Firefighters Memorial.

Law Enforcement Memorial. The Chairperson provided an update on the Law Enforcement Memorial, indicating the money for the project has been raised and a contract has been signed. A representative of the Department of Administration noted the quarry experienced an equipment problem, which delayed the project. The project would resume after receiving the stone from the quarry and is expected to be completed during Fall 2019.

Fallen Firefighters Memorial. The Chairperson discussed the Fallen Firefighters Memorial project, indicating the proposed design for the memorial is out of scale in comparison to the Law Enforcement Memorial and the rest of the Capitol grounds. A representative of the Department of Administration stated he discussed the scale issue with the State Fire Marshal and provided him with the potential costs for a base for the memorial; the State Fire Marshal had indicated the project committee would be reassembled and reconvene; and a local architect is donating time to assist the Topeka Fire Department in reviewing the scope, scale, and budget for the project.

A Committee member suggested the Committee review the master plan of the Capitol grounds at the next Committee meeting.

Overmyer Murals Restoration Project

The Chairperson provided an update on the Overmyer murals restoration project, stating she wrote to the Chairperson of the LCC to explain the potential \$10,000 cost of the project. A representative of the Department of Administration stated an engineer looked at the Overmyer murals to determine whether there was an issue with areas behind the wall. He noted the murals are peeling off because they were painted onto the walls and the same issue has not occurred with Statehouse paintings that were not painted on the wall.

Visitor Center Signage Project

The Chairperson stated visitors often complain about the difficulty in finding the front entrance of the Capitol. A representative of the Department of Administration said possible options to solve this problem could include directional information for those with smart phones, sidewalk pavers, and additional vertical signage.

The Committee discussed the possibility of signage on 10th Street directing visitors to the entrance and parking on the 8th Street side, free-standing kiosks, and partnering with the Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT) to provide the destination guide signs on I-70 that would specify the Visitor Center is located on 8th Street.

Brochure Racks in Visitor Center

A representative of the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism addressed the topic of brochures to be available in the Visitor Center. The Chairperson explained it is important to provide information to visitors while maintaining the professional appearance of the Visitor Center and to not impede the flow of traffic in the building.

The representative suggested the *Official Kansas Travel Guide*, which is a comprehensive piece covering the entire state, as well as a map of Kansas provided by KDOT, be the two documents provided at the Visitor Center. She noted there are other small brochures from various Kansas communities that could be available upon request at the Visitor Center.

The Committee discussed the possibility and the challenges with trying to standardize the size

of informational brochures received from Kansas communities for distribution to visitors. It was noted an option could be to provide some racks that would contain community brochures. The Committee also discussed placing these documents outside of the House and Senate Chambers, placing informational signage at the Capitol Visitor Center information desk, and making an effort to alert travelers about the availability of digital information.

***Ad Astra* Plaza Project**

The Committee heard an update from Senator Hardy regarding the *Ad Astra* Plaza project. He reviewed the project's history; provided an update on fundraising, noting several sources have committed to raising the estimated \$215,000 needed to complete the project; and stated the project is planned to start in Spring 2020 with completion by the 2020 Election Day.

A Committee member suggested using the casting mold to make copies to be sold.

Senator Hardy stated the artist would be paid \$102,000 for the statue. He stated the fundraising would include the cost of the installation and there would be no state moneys required from the Department of Administration for the installation. He also noted a local treasurer and a bank account in Topeka were established to receive and disperse funds.

1st Kansas (Colored) Volunteer Infantry

A Committee member suggested the 1st Kansas (Colored) Volunteer Infantry regiment mural should be revisited by the Committee. The Chairperson indicated the Legislature would need to approve a bill for the mural project because the original legislation did not authorize creation of the mural, only the creation of a report.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Following discussion, the Committee made the following recommendations:

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