

MINUTES

CAPITOL PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

October 12, 2021
Room 548-S—Statehouse

Members Present

Jennie Chinn, Chairperson
Senator Elaine Bowers
Representative Fred Patton
Representative Valdenia Winn
Chase Blasi
Frank Burnam
Melinda Gaul
Tim Graham
Peter Jasso
Will Lawrence
Sharon Wenger
Larry Wolgast

Staff Present

Heather O'Hara, Kansas Legislative Research Department (KLRD)
Martin de Boer, KLRD
Jason Thompson, Office of Revisor of Statutes
Chris Waggoner, Office of Revisor of Statutes
Gary Deeter, Committee Assistant

Conferees

Shreepad Joglekar, Associate Professor and Area Coordinator, Photography, Kansas State University
Marlene Merrill, League of Women Voters Kansas and American Association of University Women of Kansas
Perry Wiggins, Executive Director, Governor's Military Council

Others Attending

See [Attached List](#)

MORNING SESSION

Welcome and Introductions

Chairperson Chinn called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m. and requested Committee members and staff introduce themselves. She then outlined the agenda for the day.

Overview of Proposed Projects

Chairperson Chinn welcomed Perry Wiggins, Executive Director, Governor's Military Council, who requested establishing a Gold Star Family Memorial on the Capitol grounds ([Attachment 1](#)) and ([Attachment 2](#)). He noted the origin of the star-in-the-window during World War I, when mothers of American soldiers who were killed in action placed a blue star (later a purple star) in their windows as a memorial to the soldier's sacrifice. He explained Kansas is one of only a few states without a Gold Star Memorial on statehouse grounds recognizing the sacrifice of a fallen family member who died while serving during a time of conflict.

He requested placing a Gold Star Family Memorial on the Veterans' Walk on the Capitol grounds. He provided dimensions for the proposed memorial ([Attachment 3](#)), a sample photograph ([Attachment 4](#)), and referenced those on the Gold Star Family Memorial Committee ([Attachment 5](#)). He explained that when the application is approved, the fundraising committee will begin soliciting donations, and a legislator will be recruited to introduce appropriate legislation; the projected completion and placing of the memorial are to be no later than summer 2022.

Mr. Wiggins responded to members' questions:

- Costs have yet to be determined, but private funding will cover the entire cost of the project.
- Both Democratic and Republican legislators have indicated support for the proposed project.
- The Memorial will be stand-alone and will be designed to be viewed primarily during daylight hours.

A motion was made by Will Lawrence and seconded by Senator Bowers to approve the request for a Gold Star Family Memorial to be placed on the Capitol grounds. The motion passed.

Via WebEx, the Chairperson welcomed Shreepad Joglekar, Associate Professor and Area Coordinator, Photography, Kansas State University; he presented a request for a temporary exhibit in the Capitol highlighting food shortages in rural Kansas ([Attachment 6](#)) and ([Attachment 7](#)). He explained that even though Kansas is considered the breadbasket for the world, in rural areas where grocery stores are closing in small towns, accessing fresh foods has become increasingly difficult for low-income families. By having this student-created exhibit in the Capitol, the proposed Hungry Heartland multimedia display will document the deficit and expand awareness to a wider audience ([Attachment 8](#)).

Answering a question, Mr. Joglekar requested the display be exhibited from two to four weeks.

A member expressed concern that since there have been no previous requests for a temporary display, approving this request would set a precedent. Another member suggested that location and other details could be worked out with Facilities Management. Another member recommended the display begin three weeks before the beginning of the 2022 Legislative Session and continue for another week during the session. Another member suggested the Director of Legislative Administrative Services be involved in the conversation about exhibit dates.

A motion was made by Senator Bowers and seconded by Peter Jasso to approve the temporary exhibit with dates and duration to be coordinated with Facilities Management and Legislative Administrative Services staff. The motion passed.

Marlene Merrill, representing the League of Women Voters Kansas and American Association of University Women of Kansas, appeared before the Committee to request a permanent commemorative monument celebrating the Suffragist Movement ([Attachment 9](#)) and ([Attachment 10](#)). Noting the year 2020 marked the 100th anniversary of the ratification of the 19th amendment to the *U.S. Constitution*, she said a permanent memorial at the Capitol would celebrate a milestone for women and would educate people about the importance of certain Kansas women, five of whom she cited in her presentation.

She suggested a cooperative venture with the Committee using a Kansas artist would result in recognizing this important facet of American life. She presented other states' memorials and recommended a modest monument within the Capitol building; funding would be provided by grants and donations with a dedication projected within two years.

Members discussed at length the ramifications of the request and the need to gather further information before committing to the project. Dr. Merrill commented the memorial would be best suited inside the Capitol building.

Senator Bowers moved, seconded by Larry Wolgast, to support the proposal and to determine how best to move forward by creating a subcommittee to gather further information and provide a recommendation to the full Committee. The motion passed.

The Chairperson appointed herself as Chairperson of the subcommittee, with members Frank Burnam, Peter Jasso, Senator Bowers, and Representative Winn; she stated the subcommittee would try to meet before the holidays. It was further recommended the Director of Legislative Administrative Services be included in the subcommittee.

Lunch

The Committee agreed to continue work through the lunch hour to facilitate adjourning early. Afternoon Session

Follow-up on Previously Proposed Projects

The Chairperson reviewed a proposed 1st Kansas (Colored) Infantry mural; she noted that during the Civil War, Kansas was the first state to recruit "colored" soldiers into the Union Army, a significant event that was discussed as an important part of Kansas' cultural history

worthy of recognition. A member commented that earlier proposals to develop a mural failed for lack of funding.

Following staff advice that the Committee was not authorized to sponsor legislation, *a motion was made by Representative Winn and seconded by Tim Graham to move forward with plans to create a 1st Kansas (Colored) Infantry mural by identifying a legislative sponsor for the project. The motion passed.*

Senator Bowers commented on the need to complete the *Ad Astra* Project by working with the family of the artist who created the *Ad Astra* statue atop the Capitol. The token replica statue would be mounted on its base at the southwest corner of the Capitol grounds. She said two issues have hampered the project: inadequate funding and the copyright owned by the deceased artist's family. Members discussed other possible locations, what to do with the 300-400 personalized bricks used in former fundraising efforts, and the most effective way to proceed.

By consensus, a subcommittee was formed with Senator Bowers as Chairperson and members Larry Wolgast, Jennie Chinn, and Frank Burnam. They were charged with recommending a way to bring the statue to the Capitol grounds.

Frank Burnam, Director, Facilities Management, updated the Committee on the Overmyer murals, which he said require substantial attention to be restored. He reported that suitable artists would require 8-10 days to do the restoration at a cost of \$9,000 to \$12,000. He recommended that Facilities Management supervise the process, which would best occur after the 2022 Legislative Session. Members agreed with the recommendation.

Mr. Burnam also reported on Facilities Management's work to update and improve signage at the Capitol. Answering a question regarding preservation of limestone, he replied that ongoing maintenance is required; it is a process of cleaning the stone and applying a waterproof agent.

A question was asked about the lack of artwork or photographs in committee rooms. Chairperson Chinn explained there had been artwork in the committee rooms prior to the renovation of the Capitol, but that artwork had not been requested to be reinstalled. She offered to put that topic on the agenda in a future meeting.

Adjourn

With no further business before the Committee, Chairperson Chinn adjourned the meeting at 12:35 p.m.

Prepared by Gary Deeter

Edited by Heather O'Hara

Approved by the Committee on:

November 10, 2021

(Date)