

**Report of the
Ad Astra Subcommittee
to the
Capitol Preservation Committee**

CHAIRPERSON: Senator Elaine Bowers

OTHER MEMBERS: Frank Burnam and Patrick Zollner

STUDY TOPIC

Installation of the Ad Astra replica statue and completion of Ad Astra Plaza

October 2022

Ad Astra Subcommittee

REPORT

Conclusions and Recommendations

The Subcommittee recommends consideration of the topic by the Capitol Preservation Committee.

BACKGROUND

The Capitol Preservation Committee met on Tuesday, October 12, 2021. There was discussion on the Ad Astra replica statue and the uncompleted Ad Astra Plaza in the southwest corner of the Statehouse grounds. The Committee voted to establish a subcommittee to further study the issues associated with acquiring the statue and completing the project on the Statehouse grounds.

SUBCOMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

The Ad Astra Subcommittee met on Thursday, October 6, 2022, in Room 152-S of the Statehouse. Chris Waggoner, Assistant Revisor of Statutes, Office of the Revisor of Statutes, provided background information on the replica *Ad Astra* statue and Ad Astra Plaza. The original law authorizing Ad Astra Plaza was passed before the creation of the Capitol Preservation Committee.

The 2003 Appropriations Bill abolished the fund into which donation dollars could be placed; however, as appropriation bills only apply for one year, it is certain the funds that existed were transferred to the State General Fund, but whether the fund still exists would need to be determined.

Gordon Self, Revisor of Statutes, stated new legislation would be needed to revitalize the project and ensure there is clear legislative intent

to create the fund and complete the project. No state monies would be used in the completion of the project.

Former Kansas Senator Randall Hardy stated during a legislative session, he took a walk around the Statehouse grounds. He noticed the granite base and engraved bricks and noticed that many of the bricks were engraved with the names of his constituents in Salina. He made further inquiries and became involved in attempting to complete Ad Astra Plaza.

Richard Bergen, MFA, and artist and owner of Bergen's Art, LLC, in Salina, spoke briefly about Dr. Richard Bergen, the artist who created *Ad Astra*. Lynda Frazier Buehre, PMP, and project manager for Bergen's Art, LLC, detailed the Ad Astra Project as it was envisioned and designed, the available materials, the remaining work to be done, and a cost estimate for completing the project.

The Subcommittee members discussed the topic of engraving bricks with the names of donors to the project as originally promised. The Subcommittee also discussed the cost estimate and discussed what contractors would be needed and the time frame for installation and receiving of needed supplies, such as bronze casting.

After further discussion, the Subcommittee recommended forwarding the issue to the Capitol Preservation Committee for its consideration.