



SPECIAL MEETING SUMMARY DRAFT

Metro Development Center, 444 St. 5th Street, Suite 100
Louisville, Kentucky 40202
September 6, 2017

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT	COMMISSIONERS ABSENT
Anna Tatman, Chair	Miranda Lash
Sarah Lindgren	Gretchen Milliken
Bob Marino	
Chris Reitz	
Cathy Shannon	
Glen Stuckel	
Kellie Watson, Mayor’s Designee	
Shannon Westerman	

The meeting was called to order at 4:10pm. Anna Tatman, Commission Chair, invited Commissioners to introduce themselves. Ms. Tatman then reviewed the procedure for anyone that would like to register to speak during the meeting. Sarah Lindgren reported on the public comments received through the online form, email, and postal mail. Ms. Tatman then proceeded to call each speaker to the podium.

Thirty-four people registered to speak during the meeting. Comments included support for the removal of artworks and monuments, support to keep them in their current locations, and requests for further exploration of the significance of some artworks and monuments.

Speakers made comments specifically about the John B. Castleman Monument in the Cherokee Triangle, its original intent and current perceptions. Comments included:

- Object is a documented monument to honor the Confederacy based on published lists or databases, or is a protected cenotaph marker.
- Object should not be perceived as a monument to honor the Confederacy; the object depicts a historic figure in civilian dress that is recognized for his life and contributions after the Civil War.
- Supporting arguments included historic references and anecdotes including Castleman’s actions in the Confederate army, pardon and subsequent military and civic service following the Civil War, leadership of the Louisville Legion during threats by lynch mobs and election dispute, insistence on saluting officers, recognition as “father of the park system”, self-interest misrepresented as public service, segregation during his tenure on the Board of Parks Commissioners, contributions to the American Saddlebred Association, representation of post-war reconciliation, and whether his service should “redeem” historic actions.
- Speakers questioned whether current criticism is misconstrued, or whether Castleman’s misdeeds have been overlooked due to his status and privilege.
- A speaker posed questions about the legal ownership of the monument.
- Speakers stated that despite the historical figure’s actions, perception has changed and the community expects public art to reflect change.

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- Suggestions to change the signage, but keep the monument intact.
- Support of the monument as a neighborhood landmark.

Some comments addressed other public artworks. These comments included:

- George Prentice at the Louisville Free Public Library Main Branch is an historic figure known for association with political parties that were anti-immigrant, anti-Catholic, and pro-slavery. The journalist's writing has been associated with Bloody Monday riots. The Heigold Façade on Frankfort Avenue was pointed out as a counter narrative.
- One speaker called for consideration of the sculpture of Henry Clay in Metro Hall, stating Clay was not from Louisville, was a slave owner and contributor to the Great Compromise, but is currently honored in a significant way.

Some speakers expressed support for the removal of Confederate monuments as in other cities; especially monuments commissioned during Reconstruction, Jim Crow and Civil Rights eras, but questioned whether Louisville has any remaining monuments that belong in this category (after the removal of the Confederate Monument from 3rd Street in 2016). The accuracy and accepted historical truths of historical narratives were questioned. Speakers stated that monuments are or are not synonymous with history, and that they do or do not play a role in educating the public.

Speakers declared public space should not be devoted to figures with any history of hate and violence. Some speakers suggested that it is acceptable to move public art as communities change, and that an objective standard should be developed to determine the artistic and historical value of objects before further action is taken.

There were also speakers in support of adding more public art to the city, to tell additional historical narratives including the impact of slavery, important figures in African American history, women in history, and local figures.

Speakers requested additional meetings be held at various times of day to provide opportunity for many perspectives.

Following the public comments, the Commission on Public Art reflected on what they heard from the speakers and what stood out as important factors:

- The unique challenge of creating criteria to evaluate historical monuments, and to identify why an object was placed in a particular place and time, and whether an object was intended to represent historical fact or implication of supremacy or political views.
- An object may be important to a specific neighborhood, but there is a need to consider what/who constitutes "the public".
- Whether "it has been there a long time" is enough to defend the appropriateness of an object by today's standards.

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- Although many comments were focused on the Castleman monument, a broad review is needed.
- The Mayor has set review criteria – racism, slavery, and bigotry.
- Commission is dedicated to hearing all perspectives and considering all information and possible solutions.
- Commission expressed gratitude for civil discourse and historical research brought forward.

Ms. Tatman concluded the meeting by stating that public comments submitted online will continue to be accepted and considered, and that dates and times for additional public meetings will be announced soon by the Mayor's Office.

Bob Marino made a motion to adjourn, and Cathy Shannon seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 6:55pm.