September 23, 2020 at 2:00 P.M., Meeting called to order by Chair Indovina

In Attendance
Luckett
Goulatia
Arimoto-Mercer
Moss
Parsakian
Lucas

Staff Present
Dash
Minnaert
Cavalline

Items For Review Covered in These Minutes

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A. Approval of Minutes
Roll call. Luckett asks Commissioners to review and comment on minutes from August 2020. Goulatia and Luckett ask for amendments. Cavalline notes these to be corrected in the final draft. Moss motions to approve the minutes with these corrections, seconded by Goulatia. All ayes. Motion carries.

B. Items for Review

Luckett notes that the published agenda originally had another item on it, the 2635 Penn Avenue tree pits, which was withdrawn.

1. Christopher Columbus Statue

Luckett introduces this item, which the Art Commission will deliberate on and make a decision. She introduces public comment for this item, which is given here verbatim:

1. Miguel Sague
First of all, thank you very much for allowing me to speak at this meeting again. My name is Miguel Sague with the Council of Three Rivers American Indian Center and I sit on the board of directors of our organization. I'm also a Taino, living in the Pittsburgh area since 1977. So I'm a longtime resident of the area. The Taino people were savaged. And there is no other way of reading the history. I know, it's been said that we're not reading history correctly. There really aren't any other ways of reading this history except the facts. There were thousands of indigenous people living in the Caribbean, the area that Christopher Columbus was given power over. And by the time that the catastrophe was over, less than 30 years later, there were barely a few hundred people living in all of the islands, the depopulation of the area was severe, and permanent. That is a form of genocide. And one of the main reasons for that
was the overwork. Columbus was the main proponent of working these people to death. He purposely, when it was told to him, you know, one of your tasks, coming to the Americas is to convert these Indians to the Catholic religion so that they can become proper citizens of the Spanish crown. He surreptitiously kept the monks from converting them to Christianity. The main reason for that, if they were converted, they could no longer be considered heathen slaves and he would lose his slaves. That was an important element in his tactic is to not let the monks convert the Indians to Christianity. It has been said that the Spanish took away my people's spirituality and it's true. But it's also important to know that Columbus actually worked against that because he knew that he needed those slaves, he needed those Indians of slaves and then being converted. would make them Spanish citizens. He didn't want that. Columbus should not be considered a hero to the Italian American people. He gave up his Italian citizenship, he gave up citizenship in the Republic of Genoa to become a subject of the Spanish crown and became a very pronounced subject, he stopped speaking Italian for the rest of his life, and spoke only Spanish. He gave all his children Spanish names, this man does not represent you.

2. Prem Rajgopal
I'll try and be brief. I just wanted to, I think I've already pled my case on why Columbus was a problematic figure. And I'm not going to use this time to do that. Instead, I wanted to speak to the decision making process and who has the final say here. I really think the commissioners should consider that Ms. Mackler’s interpretation of the city code was false last week. And that this final decision of removing the statute does lie on the commission, there was an NPR article that quoted someone who left the Law Department, after nearly five years on the job, Daniel Friedson. And he said, “the authority for replacement and removal of public art in the public realm rests with the art commission, according to chapter 175 of the city’s law”. So I just really wanted to stress that this whole obfuscation from the mayor's end is something that should just be sidestepped altogether. And a final decision should be made by the Art Commission. And the other point I want to make and I already kind of made this up the hearing, but I really don't want to see the statue just sold and put up in a prominent public private property location. And I think that would just recreate all the tensions that we’re trying to dismantle. And thank you. I'll yield the rest of the time.

3. George Bochetto
Thank you very much. I appear here as counsel, having been retained by Basil Russo, who is the national president of the Italian Sons and Daughters of America, who are deeply, deeply concerned with any purported removal of the statute. Because I only have three minutes, I'll get right to it. The proposal that the Art Commission make a decision to remove that statue would be contrary to law. 175.01 g of the code in Pittsburgh requires that this commission not take any action, which is inconsistent with any ordinance. There is an ordinance that put this statue in Schenley Park, it is ordinance number 198 of 1955. And section three of that ordinance, which has the force of law says that once that statue is located in Schenley Park, it shall be maintained in perpetuity by the city of Pittsburgh. And administrative agencies such as the Art Commission, or an executive such as the mayor does not have the authority to disobey this ordinance or force of law. The only way that can be accepted from is if the city council that originally passed the ordinance amends that ordinance, or if a court declares that ordinance unenforceable. But as we sit here today, we have an ordinance and each of the Art Commission members has a sworn duty to obey the law. And the law here is that that statute shall be maintained in Schenley Park. And it would be a shame if this commission were to ignore that and purport to vote to remove that statute or to recommend that it be removed, because it’s only going to
go to a court decision. And then that court decision, we will be given no choice other than to point out that the Art Commission and each of its individual members acted contrary to law, and I don't think any of the Art Commissioners want to be in that position. I don't think the Art Commission wants to become known for acting contrary to the law, and I think it's of very upmost importance. We had the exact same situation in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. I was counsel. And the court of Common Pleas agreed with our position completely and stayed the action of the Art Commission which purported to remove a Columbus statute in Philadelphia, declaring that the Art Commission was acting contrary to law. I have provided the commission with a copy of that order. And I urge you to take that into consideration.

4. Basil Russo [Staff note: Mr. Russo asked to address the Commission via email on 9/22 and was confirmed as being on the list of those giving public comment.]
I don't know that I had raised my hand, but I appreciate being called on, and I don't feel uncomfortable speaking, because the first two speakers that you called upon are individuals that had previously, I believe, spoken at both of the of the prior hearings. Suffice it to say, at this point in time that the ISDA feels very, very strongly about this issue. We feel that the effort to remove the Columbus statue from Schenley Park is an effort to erase the history of Italian Americans in the City of Pittsburgh, and the contributions that Italian Americans have made to the City of Pittsburgh. We are prepared to do whatever is necessary, legally, to protect our community's interests. And to ensure that our community's interests is not subordinate or overridden by any other community's interests. It's our intention that everybody should be working together in a spirit of cooperation and good faith, and not be in a position of having confrontation, which is exactly what this scenario creates. It's a scenario that pits one group against another group. And there has to be a winner, and there has to be a loser. And that certainly is not a healthy situation for the City of Pittsburgh or its residents to be in. There should be a way that our community can be honored and respected and our heritage can be preserved, and at the same time, that of the Native Americans can be honored and preserved as well. I would also indicate that in addition to what Mr. Bochetto said, that part of the claim that we will be bringing to the court when this matter is ultimately presented to the court, is the fact that we believe that two of the commissioners acted in a biased manner by expressing their point of view on this issue, prior to the time that any public hearing was held. And that that denies the resonance of the City of Pittsburgh due process under the law, and that those commissioners are obligated to recuse themselves from voting. So we're fully prepared to pursue this matter and to pursue the bias that has been shown by the Art Commission with respect to this matter, to whatever court is necessary for us to prevail on this issue. Thank you.

5. Kate Myers
Hi, my name is Kate Myers, and I'm a resident of Armstrong county about 45 minutes from Pittsburgh. By now I'm sure that you've heard many arguments from both sides in the weeks previous to this current meeting. I think the facts are exceedingly clear. Whether one believes it or not, that it was his intention or not, Columbus was the beginning of centuries of marginalization, disenfranchisement, and frankly abuse suffered by the indigenous peoples of America. Now, I realize that this is a more nuanced situation, however, concerning specifically the Italian American citizens of Pittsburgh and as well as our country. Here, I would like to state that I am in fact, a product of several generations of Italian immigrants. And Italian Americans have also suffered prejudice and racism and many looked up to Christopher Columbus as an icon of heritage and as a figure that validated their place and experience in America. So this is the problem. How do we as a city serve these groups and acknowledge the immense impact that both Italian American immigrants as well as Native Americans have made in our city as well as our country? I think the solution after many weeks of learning and hearing testimony should be
exceedingly clear - education. First, the statue should be taken down, placing the man that murdered, raped and enslaved Native peoples on a literal pedestal with no other context than Discover of America is wrong and extremely misleading as well. So once the statue was taken down, which must happen, educate people. Why was the statue put up in the first place? Why was it taken down? What is Columbus’s true history and what place did he have as a figure in the Italian American community. I would also like to point out that taking out a statue is not equivocal to erasing the history of Italian Americans. The Heinz History Hall has many artifacts and stories, it shows the history of Italian Americans in Pittsburgh. One artifact being taken down from public view is not erasing a history. I believe it would be in the Commission's best interest to put up something like a plaque in place or in the park to educate, so conversations like these can continue amongst the people. This issue is not going away in the near future, and education would be the biggest asset. Thank you for your time and consideration.

6. Dana Leahy
Hi, my name is Dana Leahy. I live in Morningside and I just did a quick Google and figured out that Basil Russo lives in Cleveland, and I think this decision should be left up to the citizens of Pittsburgh. I understand that he has a vested interest in this, but I just think it's so important that we listen to the will of the people who actually reside in the city. And overwhelmingly that is to take this statue down. No one is trying to disparage the Italian American community. But Columbus didn't work in a spirit of togetherness and inclusion. And so I don't know why we should continue to honor him with a statue in Schenley Park. It's very disheartening that the statue remains. And the other point is, this is the public art commission, that statue, if a majority of people look on it with contempt, and it reminds them of our terrible history of colonization, that's not public art. That's private art. If it's only for the enjoyment of some, that is not for the enjoyment of everyone. And if we want to build a livable city that is inclusive for all, this statue cannot remain. Thank you.

7. Anthony Tony Ferraro
My name is Anthony Tony Ferraro, I’m a Pittsburgh resident, I live in Glenshaw Pa. I've been a resident this area. I'm very active in the Italian American community. And I have to be taken back by the comment about Basil Russo’s position living in Cleveland, Ohio, when he represents thousands of Italian Americans that belong to the Italian Sons and Daughters which is located and has been a tenant and landlord in the city of Pittsburgh for many, many years. So as everybody was stating their reasons to take the statue down and remove it, I have to go to the speaker that read the legality and that we have the right to have it up. We've done all the due diligence, we made the investment. If somebody would like to put their own statue up, go raise the money, put it up, and that's your belief. We are very proud of what could Pittsburgh and Pittsburgh region see and Christopher Columbus's accolades. He was living in the time, times were different. Times were different 40 years ago, 100 years ago. So I don't know where there is proof. There has never been a trial. Obviously, years ago, when Columbus was recognized as a hero, people did their due diligence. So for a group to want to have to make this change, I don't buy it. I don't believe in it. And I say the statue stays. And we continue to honor Christopher Columbus, not only in the statue, by the way, we have a parade every year, which we get protested by. And that's our right to have a parade. And we don't really want to be hassled there either. Thank you.

8. Giorgio DePaolo
Yeah, my name is Giorgio DePaolo. I reside on Florida Avenue here in Pittsburgh. And I've attended the special hearing, in addition to the committee meetings. And I appreciate the committee's dedication to this. I think it's a model for the country to follow. So I'm really proud to be a citizen here in Pittsburgh.
And as part of this process, what I would like to say is that there have been many opinions shared. And I was unfortunately disappointed at the last meeting to hear only one side of an expert's viewpoint of Columbus. So that was probably my only thing that I would say, if the commission can do better the next time is to get opposing views. That would be very educational. But the one thing I would just want to remind the commission is that, at one of the meetings, it was mentioned, to review all the statues. And I feel really, really unfortunate about why Columbus solely is being pointed out versus a clearer view of all the statues within Pittsburgh. Metrics, clearly defined, in terms of which statues are deemed appropriate and which ones aren't. And then the vote cast accordingly. I would love to see a vote of all the people of Pittsburgh, an official vote of some manner, to vote on all the statues. But I'd just very simply recommend to the commission, that at this stage of the game, where funds are few, and people really, really need money, and other manners of assistance with their families, that simply all we do with all the statues is put a pro and a con signage for every statue within Pittsburgh, it's very simple to do. It's not very costly. And it's something that can educate everyone, and would not require a lot of money. So I really would appreciate if the commission would consider that seriously. Let's just go with signage. It's very simple. And you would allow this issue to be appropriate. Thank you.

9. Christy Cleaver
Hi, I'm Christy Cleaver. I live in Wilkinsburg. I apologize, I came in a little late to this meeting today, but I believe that last place things have stood was there was a pretty overwhelming response to the Art Commission about the status of the statue. And overwhelmingly people voted either to remove or to replace it. So I was participating and helping make sure that people contributed their vote to this. We've done it, we've done the due diligence, the response seems to be pretty overwhelming. It seems like every single time, there's suggestions to get public responses on this statue, it's just delaying and delaying and delaying a decision being made. And this is at least the second meeting, that there hasn't been a decision made. And the decision has been punted. I think we're at there, we've gotten there, and it would be, I think, the best decision for the commission to actually follow what has been responded to, I think it would be useful perhaps, if you already went over this, I apologize, but to address what the actual breakdown and comments were. And with that, I yield my time.

Luckett asks Cavalline to give a tally of public comment. Cavalline gives the following tally, as of the previous day at noon:

- Total individual commenters: 5273
  [Staff note: Cavalline later corrects this number to actually be 5272.]
- Those favoring No Action: 1818
- Those favoring Removal: 1937
- Those favoring Replacement: 1445
- Those favoring Alteration: 65
- Those with no outcome stated: 7

Goulatia asks if these commenters were all from Pittsburgh. Cavalline gives the following tally:

- Commenters residing in Pittsburgh: 3131
- Commenters residing outside of Pittsburgh: 1829
- Commenters with unknown residence: 312
Arimoto-Mercer asks for a breakdown of outcome based on residence in Pittsburgh. Cavalline gives the following tally:

**No Action**
- From Pittsburgh: 408
- From outside Pittsburgh: 1196
- From unknown residence: 214

**Replacement**
- From Pittsburgh: 1548
- From outside Pittsburgh: 303
- From unknown residence: 12

**Removal**
- From Pittsburgh: 1130
- From outside Pittsburgh: 303
- From unknown residence: 12

**Alteration**
- From Pittsburgh: 43
- From outside Pittsburgh: 20
- From unknown residence: 2

**No Outcome Stated**
- From Pittsburgh: 2
- From outside Pittsburgh: 1
- From unknown residence: 4

Moss says that he would like to make the point that while the Commission has asked for and appreciates the public’s input, that this process is by no means a process of popular vote. Arimoto-Mercer adds that they are aware that there were at least two petitions online, but that because they are not run by the City and the signatures cannot be vetted by the City, that information does not weigh in the same way that the communications made to the City do. Goulatia clarifies that those petitions were through change.org.

Luckett says they will now move into deliberation on the Columbus statue. She says that per Chapter 175.04 of the City ordinance, it is under the Art Commission’s purview, and they do have the authority to make a decision. Goulatia asks if Director Dash should speak regarding the letter received that morning from the Law Department. She asks that Dash read the letter.

Dash says the Law Department issued an opinion on the ratification procedure and the request from the Mayor of August 24. He reads:

This memo is intended to assist staff and the Art Commission by answering questions raised regarding the appropriate procedural path with regard to the hearings pertaining to the Christopher Columbus statue based on various hypotheticals. It is important for government bodies to follow appropriate procedure in taking official actions so as to avoid the risk of procedural legal challenges which may result in those actions being voided by the courts.

As previously discussed, the Law Department has concluded that the Art Commission serves as an advisory body to the Mayor and cannot spontaneously ratify the removal of public art in the City without a decision first coming from the Mayor. The Mayor has yet to make a decision regarding the statue in question, and has instead requested a recommendation from the Art Commission following a public hearing. With this understanding of the law, the appropriate next step is for the Art Commission to make a recommendation to the Mayor regarding the statue.

If the Art Commission recommends removal and the Mayor then decides to remove the statue, causing the decision to come before the Art Commission again, the Art Commission would need to ratify that decision at a separate hearing. As noted previously, it is unclear whether the Art Commission is subject to the Sunshine Act and its minimum requirements for public process. Regardless, the Sunshine Act represents the best available guidelines for a public body such as the Art Commission. Therefore,
action taken on a potential decision to remove by the Mayor should be done at a public hearing. In order to avoid any unnecessary procedural challenges and comply with the relaxed minimum standards permitted by the Commonwealth for public process during the COVID-19 emergency, the City should provide notice of that meeting at least five days prior. There's a listing of [citations]. A quorum will also need to be present to hear and act at that meeting.

After discussions with staff, we also considered the possibility of a dual motion both recommending to the Mayor and ratifying the removal of the statue. If the Art Commission recommends removal, the ratification portion of this motion would be preconditioned on the Mayor deciding to remove the statue and would affirm such a decision in advance. We do not recommend this course of action for two reasons, number one, the validity of such a conditional ratification might be susceptible to a challenge as an improper procedure, and two, opponents might claim that they did not have adequate notice of the potential action beforehand. Notice provided prior to the hearing held on September 17, 2020 was broad and would appear to put participants on notice of the potential stakes of the hearing. However, the public letter from the Mayor to the Art Commission dated August 24, 2020 gives the clear impression that the Art Commission's initial action would only be to make a recommendation to the Mayor.

Given that opponents to the potential removal of the statue have already raised procedural objections concerning the Art Commission's process in reviewing the statue, we recommend that the Art Commission make only a recommendation at its upcoming September 23, 2020 meeting and consider ratification of a potential decision by the Mayor at a separate hearing, which could be scheduled, with required notice, expeditiously.

Luckett states that the letter is in response to the Mayor's letter to the Art Commission, however the Art Commission did write an initial letter to the Mayor stating that they have the authority and that the Commission isn't an advisory group.

Luckett asks the Commissioners to begin deliberation. Commissioner statements are given here verbatim:

Moss:
I’d first like to start by thanking all of those who have taken their time to express their opinions in regard to the Columbus statue and as to the question whether the statue should remain as part of our shared public space. This is certainly been a complicated complex and difficult matter for the Art Commission's consideration. Much has been explained and expressed regarding the history of how Columbus had become a symbol to the Italian American citizens of our country. We've heard from those who continue to see this historic figure as an important symbol representing this ethnic heritage. We've also heard from those, many of whom also describe themselves as being of Italian American descent, who either don't relate to this figure or in many cases take strong offense to the history and character of this figure. As the Art Commission, we are responsible for the works of art that we place in the public realm. The greater question before us is what is the purpose of erecting statues of historic figures? I would believe that such statues should serve a purpose of reflecting who we are as a society, a symbol of pride and aspiration of those who have come before us. I recognize that public opinion changes over time. We evolve, hopefully for the better. I understand that there was a time the symbol of Columbus served as a point of pride for Italian American heritage. The times have changed and hopefully we are wiser and have grown in our understanding of this history. Italian Americans have a tremendous amount to be proud and this American heritage and culture should be celebrated. As a City I am confident that we can find many great Italians or better yet Italian-American individuals who may be better examples of this pride. Pittsburgh is an amazing city that exemplifies the melting pot of America. We are a community of many distinct heritages of immigrants that call our city home and do so proudly. This is a city of immigrants built upon the backs of hard-working people who came to this country seeking a better life and freedom. Let us celebrate that. We use public figurative sculptures often to commemorate heroes of our past that have shaped our society today. Our monuments reveal our beliefs and should serve as reflection of who we are as a society. They should exemplify the best in us as a shared community. Does Columbus do that for us today? It is appropriate for us as a community to evaluate and reconsider our heroes confirming that those whom we have put on pedestals still reflect whom we are, whom we aspire to be, and who demonstrate the ideals of yesterday as well as tomorrow. I believe we must do this. As a society we should continue to strive to become better, we should hold those from our past whom we have honored in the highest regard as long as they continue [recording interrupted] whom we are as a society. I believe that we as a City can do a better job at finding a way to honor and celebrate the great Italian heritage of our city. I would charge that our city leadership do this but in doing so I would also ask our
city leadership to take this as an opportunity to consider the many other immigrant communities that have also been an important part of our city's history. As a member of our City's Art Commission I welcome the day that we see proposals, maybe many proposals, for public artworks that take a step toward doing this. Let us celebrate those who built this city - the tired, the poor, the huddled masses, rather than the conquerors who had nothing to do with our city and massacred innocent people. Remove the Columbus statue as it no longer has a place on a pedestal in our city. Removing a monument should not be seen as an erasure of history, removal is not a reflection of a lack of respect to those whom it was intended to honor, nor ignoring the horrors and injustice the sector of our society faced. Removal of a monument reflects a change, a change in our society and of our public identity as a community. This is a public monument on shared public land that should continue to be a reflection of whom we are as a shared society and we should not be afraid of acknowledging that we as a society have changed over the past 60 years. Rather we should be proud of ourselves. Let us find a new more appropriate symbol that honors the great Italian American heritage of our city as well as the many other immigrants who have made it for city what it is today.

Goulatia:
Today I speak from the vantage point of the colonized. I'm a South Asian Indian American. As unified Americans we need symbols of freedom and liberation and I feel no single recognizable human historical figure can ever successfully represent the many diverse perspectives and experiences of today's America. People are complicated and controversial and hence we cannot continue to commemorate an individual for as long as 500 years. Collected memory of imperialism has been perpetuated through the ways in which knowledge about indigenous people have been edited, suppressed, often silenced or completely erased. One side of history does not represent the whole story of our humanity. From the public testimony there were many moving descriptions from Italian American residents who spoke passionately about Columbus as a symbol of Italian pride, however it has disheartened me to also hear others describe Native Americans, the true and first inhabitants of this beautiful country, as a species, as if our indigenous brothers and sisters are separate and inferior, equated with beasts of the animal kingdom. Glorifying our history by subjugating another doesn't elevate us. Italian Americans have a rich culture, a rich heritage, their warmth and inclusivity gives them the power to be celebrated alongside the indigenous Pittsburghers, Eastern European Pittsburghers, Pittsburghers from Asia, Africa, Australia, South America. I would love for the public art in Pittsburgh to celebrate all Pittsburghers in the totality of our rich and varied history. We need to use our voice to amplify others, to pave a way for the future generations to reconnect to their ancestors without fear and oppression, shame or guilt. This is a pivotal moment where we can show our connections as human beings, where our glory cannot ride on another's fame or a single perspective. I vote for the Columbus statue to be removed. Thank you.

Arimoto-Mercer:
I would just want to affirm what the other commissioners have said and to add that many of us who are recent arrivals or descendants of immigrants have been and continue to be the targets of racism, latent or nuanced. Textbook history does not always reflect our experience and history is not static. When it becomes relegated to a few sentences recited by school children we know that this full story is not being told. So I hope that Pittsburgh's history will show the expansion of Pittsburgh's culture to consider the well-being of its residents and the place where all stories are heard and welcome. Thank you.

Parsakian:
I'm just going to give a little little history of my family which resonates with what we are talking about today. I am a second generation Armenian American. My grandparents left Armenia during the 1915 Ottoman empire's extermination and genocide of 1.5 million of my people. My father was born in America and was a World War II veteran serving as a staff sergeant under General Patton's 22nd armored division. He fought in the Battle of the Bulge and later freed the Munhausen concentration camp in May of 1945. My father was a witness to man's madness of this Holocaust. All cultures need to be respected and all histories need to be recognized. The contributions of the Italian people in the fields of architecture, music, art, and politics are unparalleled. In America we must celebrate and embrace the diversity of all cultures that have had a history of persecution. Pittsburgh is a work in progress that all of us have an opportunity to give voice to. The discussion today is about Christopher Columbus as a symbol. I agree that the Italian American community should have a source of hope and pride but Christopher Columbus should not be that icon. False narratives omit diverse histories. There are symbols that bring us pride but there are also those that bring us much pain in their display. We should find a balance in this new day of awareness and be sensitive not to destroy any culture, even if we question its history. I have ideas of
what I would love to see happen in the future. I don't know how specific I should be, but basically I would like to see the statue replaced, and of course I believe that it should be replaced by, like what Andrew was talking about, somebody honoring another Pittsburgh Italian American hero. I would love to see the sculpture move to a museum and a learning environment to initiate a discussion of its history. I really would love to see the plinth kept and maybe altered in some way. During this discussion of what will happen I would love to see the statue actually wrapped as a work of art similar to what Christo and Jeanne-Claude have done in the past, so we celebrate it as an art piece but still are moving toward a newer discussion of what to do with it. But basically I would love to see it replaced. Thank you.

Luckett:
As the product of African and European ethnicity and culture, I think that Christopher Columbus doesn't uphold the values of our Constitution and who we are as Americans and as human beings. Pittsburgh is representative of a global community and reflective of a very wide and rich culture of different people from around the world who have come here, whether as an immigrant or forced as an enslaved person. And once again that Christopher Columbus does not uphold the values of our Constitution and who we are as people and Americans and so I vote to remove the monument in its entirety. There's so many different ways to celebrate who we are as a diverse group of ethnically and culturally rich people and it could be expressed in so many different ways instead of just looking at it as one individual. There are so many different ways to express public art in so many ways. Thank you.

Goulatia says she thinks the statue belongs in a museum in the context of the history of Native Americans. She says it should not be destroyed but should be somewhere that people can choose to see it and are not forced to. Parsakian agrees, and says the statue should be a learning tool.

Arimoto-Mercer says they also need to be clear to the public that they are not destroying the statue, but are removing it from public view. She says in the future there may be a proposal to reuse the plinth, but that would be a whole other discussion, and right now they need to think about removing items from public view that can do damage to our value system and who we are as a City.

Moss says that there are a lot of possible things to talk about, but that today's discussion should perhaps be narrowed to the statue's removal, which they seem to have consensus on. He says there should be further discussion on potential future placement and that the City should take steps to ensure there is a new piece of art that celebrates Italian-American culture in a new way. He says that is a separate matter, but that he does not want them to simply remove the statue and forget about it. He suggests a motion that ties a replacement of some sort into the removal, or a motion to remove with a requirement that the City starts a process for replacement.

Luckett says that this ties into looking at who is missing from the conversation in the art inventory, and it is premature to say that we should be looking at another public art piece that celebrates Italian culture, because there are several pieces in the art inventory that honor a wide range of groups. She says this is a larger discussion. Arimoto-Mercer says it also shouldn't be implied that a replacement should go in that exact location.

Luckett says she sees the monument in its entirety, and separating the parts of the installation would do a disservice. Goulatia says it needs to be preserved as a whole. She also says that whatever motion
Moss says there was a comment made that there should be a plaque at the location with perhaps a photo of the statue giving its history and why it was removed. Goulatia says that could be a good idea, once it is removed. She says it would be great if the City was able to initiate discussions around this. Luckett says there are a lot of great examples out there of virtual discussions about public art. She says that like with Stephen Foster there should be information in the City's archives of why this was removed. Luckett notes that the meeting minutes also document this. She says that opportunities to educate people are paramount. She says it is more complicated than just two binary sides.

Arimoto-Mercer says that through public comment people have expressed an interest and a desire to connect and that dialogue can be a means of bringing us closer together.

Goulatia says once the space is empty it would be a fantastic space for installations or performance art. She says that Pittsburgh should be the most livable City for all, not just for some.

MOTION: Removal of the Christopher Columbus monument in its entirety, to include the statue, plinth, fountain, and signage, to be placed by the City in safekeeping and storage, and that the Art Commission receive a report and a timeline from the City for the removal.

MOVED BY: Arimoto-Mercer
SECONDED BY: Goulatia
IN FAVOR: All
OPPOSED: None

C. Items For Discussion

Luckett asks about the Smallman Street Art project. Cavalline reports that the artist selection process for this project is being run in collaboration with the Office of Public Art, and a selection panel recently convened and chose an artist, who is currently going through the contracting process. Goulatia asks what the project is. Cavalline says that the artist will be designing stamps to create an artistic asphalt treatment. Moss asks if this will be on private property. Cavalline says that it is on City property. Moss confirms that this is a project that will come before the Art Commission. Cavalline says yes.

Goulatia asks if there are other Percent For Art components at Smallman Street. Cavalline says the asphalt is the only public art project. Goulatia asks about the budget of the project. Cavalline says he does not have this information at hand. Moss notes that it will all be part of their application when they come to the Art Commission. Parsakian asks if this is the only art being proposed for that project. Cavalline says yes. Parsakian asks if it meets the 1% budget standard. Cavalline says they will have to follow up with the actual budget numbers. Goulatia says that asphalt had been included in the original streetscape project, which came to Art Commission previously. Cavalline says that it had, but adding the artist to design the asphalt patterns is the public art component.

Goulatia says this is a great opportunity for the City to show that they care about public art and this is why the commissioners have been pushing for the Percent For Art. She notes there is a lot of development happening in the City and a lot of opportunities for art, which elevates the City. Luckett agrees and says that it’s important for developers to see art as an advantage. Parsakian says that he thinks the Cultural Trust recognizes that and a lot of their public spaces have included world-renowned artists. Luckett says this would be a great opportunity to describe the Percent For Art on the City’s website, because a lot of developers do not think broadly enough about it, and it is an opportunity for the City to demonstrate what is possible. Parsakian says the new PNC building is an example, and asks if there is a way to highlight great examples. Goulatia says there are many various ways to incorporate art. Moss asks if the City should prepare examples for developers to help them think outside the box. Luckett and Arimoto-Mercer say that is a good idea. Goulatia says she agrees, because the Percent For Art is often treated as an afterthought. Cavalline says that they can share with the Commissioners the information that the City gives to developers relating to art, although in most cases they are talking about private development which does not require a Percent For Art, although there are other systems such as overlays that may have points for including art.
Luckett brings up the Schenley Park Golf Course clubhouse (the Arnold Palmer Learning Center at the Bob O’Connor Golf Course). Cavalline says that he was told the project is still finalizing funding through grants and so did not have a final budget. Goulatia asks if the project is stalling due to the Percent For Art. Cavalline says that a total budget for the final construction was not finalized, but that he was told that the artwork was still part of planning discussions. Luckett says that the project is under construction, and asks what their timeline is. She says that a lot of time has gone by and they haven’t heard anything about that. Goulatia says that when they came for the clubhouse, the Art Commission could not give a lot of input because things like materials were already decided. She says that the Art Commission should be involved at the inception of a project, because she thinks some of the design decisions were rather poor for this project, but it had to be put through due to timing. Luckett says that building was a missed opportunity, and they seemed to be doing the bare minimum to get it approved. Luckett says it would be good to get a status update from them. She says it did not seem like that applicant had any knowledge of how to get an artist or do a call for artists, which the Public Art & Civic Design Division has helped other with in the past. Parsakian asks who connects artists with developers. Cavalline says for City properties, they run RFPs, but that private developers have a range of options of how to engage artists and it is up to them.

Luckett brings up the Art Commission website and notes that it has been updated to reflect the two vacant Commissioner seats. Goulatia confirms that there are seven commissioner seats, not eight. Moss asks if there has been any update on filling the commissioner spots. Minnaert says that there has not been. Dash says that later that week they will be having discussions regarding filling the vacancies. Parsakian asks if there have been recommendations for the architect position left vacant by Indovina. Dash says there haven’t been recommendations, but this will be part of the upcoming discussions on next steps. Luckett says that the Commission has made giving recommendations a part of their standard practice when a seat is vacant. Dash says commissioners can make recommendations.

Arimoto-Mercer asks when the positions will be filled. Dash says he does not have an answer to that right now, but an update can be provided before the next Commission meeting. Luckett says that sometimes the process has taken awhile, given the steps of the Mayor’s recommendation and City Council confirmation.

Luckett asked if there are any updates on the Percent For Art. Minnaert says they are still working on the mechanics of the Percent For Art in terms of how it works for projects with restricted funding, as well as the trust fund. Goulatia asks if this is just for City-owned properties or all. Minnaert says City-owned properties using City funds. Goulatia says the City should create a good example of utilizing the Percent For Art. Luckett says if it is stalling in a certain department, they need to know why. Minnaert says she will provide an update between now and the next meeting.

Luckett says she was invited by the City to participate in their collection review. She says the letter is signed by Director Dash and the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy. She asks who else will be involved and what the process will be. Dash says they discussed this at a previous commission meeting, after the Commission decided to write a letter to the Mayor regarding Columbus, and that the City Planning Department will be conducting an audit of the City’s entire public art collection in order to proactively flag any potential issues. Minnaert says they are partnering with the Parks Conservancy as many of the City’s memorials and art are located in parks. She says they have put a call out to a number of local experts, using recommendations from the Commission as to who to contact.

Luckett says that the Art Commission needs to know when they are sending out this email to so they can give feedback. Arimoto-Mercer asks what the criteria will be, so that each piece of the inventory is being looked at with similar criteria. She says looking at other cities’ criteria would be very helpful. Minnaert says the plan is to bring any findings to a future Art Commission hearing. Arimoto-Mercer says that it’s important for the Commission to look at the criteria that each piece is subject to. Dash says that the criteria would be worked out after the panel met. Moss says they would like to see what the outline and steps for the project are, suggesting that the steps are to first outline a team of experts, then research what is in the City’s collection, then develop the criteria, and then make a presentation of findings. Minnaert says that is right, with possibly reversing the second and third items on that list. Moss says they would like a timeline of those steps. Minnaert says that the goal was to share the first phase of the project at the November Art Commission meeting.
Luckett brings up the Art Commission bylaws, and the name change of the Art Commission to the Public Art & Civic Design Commission. Luckett says that this change does not need to go through City Council but just be vetted by the Law Department and the Department of City Planning. Minnaert says that she has reviewed the last few years of Art Commission minutes and the issue of the name has come up a few times, and the last instance she saw indicated that the Commission wasn’t going to have a name change. Dash says that the name of the Commission is in the City code, so that would take a legislative act to change the name. Cavalline says that the name change is in the edits of Chapter 175, and would go through along with any other changes. Luckett says she had not known there was discussion of not changing the name. Minnaert says she can forward along the minutes where she saw that, but she is not familiar with the context. She says that the bylaws were last updated in March 2018, and they are out of sync with the current code. Luckett asks for an update on this. Dash says they will need to look at the current code versus the proposed changes to Chapter 175. He also requests that any possible improvements to the code are suggested now before any changes to Chapter 175 are sent through. He says some of the questions that Commissioners have raised as to process and purview are ones that the edits address.

Luckett says they have two open Commissioner seats. She says they currently have a Vice-Chair, no Chair, and no Secretary. Arimoto-Mercer nominates Luckett as Chair. Luckett accepts the nomination.

**MOTION:** Kilolo Luckett for the position of Art Commission Chair, for one year

MOVED BY: Arimoto-Mercer  
SECONDED BY: Goulati  
IN FAVOR: All  
OPPOSED: None

Goulati nominates Moss for Vice-Chair. Moss accepts.

**MOTION:** Andrew Moss for the position of Art Commission Vice-Chair, for one year

MOVED BY: Goulati  
SECONDED BY: Arimoto-Mercer  
IN FAVOR: All  
OPPOSED: None

Luckett asks for nominations for Secretary. Goulati asks what that role would do. Arimoto-Mercer says she does not think they need one. Cavalline says that position may carry over from before there was a Public Art & Civic Design Division. Dash mentions that the current code has the role of President and Secretary, not Chair and Vice-Chair, although the bylaws use the position of Chair.

**MOTION:** Kilolo Luckett for the position of Art Commission President, and Andrew Moss as Art Commission Secretary, both for one year

MOVED BY: Goulati  
SECONDED BY: Arimoto-Mercer  
IN FAVOR: All  
OPPOSED: None

D. Correspondence

None.

E. Public Comment

Tom Davidson of the Tribune-Review asks for a clarification of the public comment number, as total commenters had been stated as being 5,273, but the numbers seem to add up to 5,272. Cavalline checks and confirms that the total number is 5,272.
Davidson also asks about the process following their decision today regarding Columbus, and whether this will go to the Mayor and then come back to the Art Commission for another vote. Moss says that the City Law Department has said this is the process, but in the assessment of the members of the Art Commission, the Art Commission decision is final.

F. **Director & Staff Report**

None.

**MOTION: Adjourn**

MOVED BY: Arimoto-Mercer
SECONDED BY: Moss
IN FAVOR: All
OPPOSED: None

The meeting adjourned at 4:01 P.M.