

San Francisco Monuments and Memorials Advisory Committee

ADVISORY COMMITTEE – BACKGROUND

At this important time in our country, we are all examining the ways in which institutional and structural racism permeate our society. Public art is no exception. In cities across the US, many historic monuments are being taken down because the actions and ideas symbolized do not deserve to be venerated. Representation matters. That's why we can, and should, continue to create artwork that reflects our values and the diverse communities we serve.

In June 2020, San Francisco experienced the removal or toppling of public statues and memorials. Mayor London Breed released a directive that asked the San Francisco Arts Commission, the Human Rights Commission and the Recreation and Parks Department to lead a community process to evaluate public monuments and memorials. Per the Mayor's directive, the three City agencies will work together to assemble an Advisory Committee made up of community members from different sectors to establish criteria and recommendations on how to evaluate approximately 100 pieces of public artwork in the City's collection. A public engagement process will take place to ensure that community voices are taken into account and incorporated into the next steps and recommendations.

Mayor London Breed's Directive in reference to the historic monuments that are part of the Civic Art Collection

"If we are going to make real change, let's do the work with our impacted communities to make that change. To do that, I have asked the Arts Commission, the Human Rights Commission, and the Recreation and Parks Department and its Commission to work with the community to evaluate our public art and its intersection with our country's racist history so that we can move forward together to make real changes in this City. Who and what we honor through our public art can and should reflect our values."

ADVISORY COMMITTEE'S CHARGE

Develop and recommend San Francisco's guidelines and criteria for evaluating existing monuments and memorials on public property. Create a recommendations report and plan for handling the City's historic monuments.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE CO-CHAIRS

Three people shall fill the roles of Co-Chairs to facilitate and guide the Monuments and Memorials Advisory Committee.

Co-Chair: Director of Cultural Affairs for the San Francisco Arts Commission

Co-Chair: General Manager of the San Francisco Recreation and Park Department

Co-Chair: Executive Director of the San Francisco Human Rights Commission

Desired expertise and qualifications – the designated Co-Chairs will have experience facilitating Committee meetings and a demonstrated understanding of public/government processes/civic

engagement; and expertise in the areas of cultural equity, cultural heritage, social/racial justice, public art, history, historic preservation, public space and education.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Proposal to create a body of 11-15 individuals that includes three co-chairs. Composition will be a combination of appointed seats and approved applicants.

Interested participants will complete an application and submit a brief letter of interest with a resume or bio. Selection will be administered by Arts Commission staff and accepted by the Co-Chairs.

Members shall collectively satisfy the following requirements:

1. Expertise in Art History/Aesthetic Critique/Public Art
2. Expertise in San Francisco History/California History/Historic Preservation
3. Expertise and experience in San Francisco's Black Diaspora Arts Community
4. Expertise and experience in San Francisco's Native American/American Indian Arts Community
5. Expertise and experience in Black Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC) San Francisco Arts Community
6. Expertise and experience in San Francisco's Native American/American Indian Community, specifically Ramaytush Ohlone
7. Expertise and experience in San Francisco's Latinx Community
8. One member of the San Francisco Arts Commission
9. One member of the Recreation and Parks Commission
10. One member of Human Rights Commission
11. One member who represents an Arts or Cultural Organization or a Cultural District
12. Expertise in Arts and Racial Justice Advocacy
13. Expertise within the Travel/Visitors or Neighborhood Beautification Sector
14. Scholarly expertise and experience in Fine Arts and Racial Justice
15. Expertise and experience in Racial Justice Philanthropy

EXPECTATIONS OF ADVISORY COMMITTEE

All Advisory Committee members shall attend the following virtual meetings:

1. Committee orientation and review of proposed criteria and monument list.
2. Finalize and adopt criteria for the evaluation of the existing monuments in the Civic Art Collection.
3. Public Engagement meetings (minimum of 3) to share criteria for monument or memorial removal and collect public comments.
4. Review public comments and adopt final criteria. Apply this information to prioritize and evaluate a sub-set of monuments from the existing list as a case-study.
5. Apply evaluation criteria to identified monuments for final recommendations report (including the Columbus, Serra, Key and Grant monuments as case studies).

PROPOSED PROCESS

Scope: The scope of the review will be limited to the approximately 100 monuments and memorials in the Civic Art Collection. Monuments and memorials shall be defined for the purposes of this review as artworks that were created with the intent of honoring either a person or an event. This working list has been culled by Arts Commission staff.

Public Information: The Arts Commission will establish a page on its website where relevant documents, meeting announcements, minutes, etc., are located for public review. The Arts Commission newsletter will provide monthly updates on progress.

The Advisory Committee will hold virtual public meetings. A public engagement effort will be established in order to maximize the participation of all interested parties. There will be opportunities for public comment at meetings and the Arts Commissions will also collect written feedback for those who wish to submit written statements. Steps include:

1. Advisory Committee and Co-Chairs established.
2. Arts Commission staff to research existing archive files and other resources for background information for the monuments and memorials on the working list. cursory reports will be available at first committee meeting.
 - a. Subject or event honored or depicted, such as biography of person depicted, the historical context in which the artwork was commissioned.
 - b. Means of acquisition, i.e., gift to the City or commissioned by City; identity of donor and relevant information regarding purpose or intent of gift.
 - c. Artist's name, brief description of biography or career
 - d. Object description, imagery
 - e. History of community feedback
3. Arts Commission staff to draft criteria for evaluating current Monuments/Memorials using current Civic Art Collection guidelines, examples from similar reviews in other cities, and the Arts Commission's racial equity statement. Circulate criteria for review and comment between participating City agencies (Arts Commission [SFAC], Recreation and Park Department [RPD], and Human Rights Commission [HRC]). Draft criteria will be available for first committee meeting.
4. Meeting #1 - Advisory Committee orientation and review of proposed criteria and monument list. Determine and agree to overarching guiding principles that will govern evaluation process.
5. Meeting #2 - Advisory Committee adopts final draft of review criteria and evaluation process.
6. Undertake public engagement process. Advisory Committee convenes multiple public meetings to share criteria and receive public comment. An online survey may be released for further public engagement and it will be collected concurrent to the public process.
7. Meeting #3 - Advisory Committee reviews public comments, public survey data and evaluation criteria. Amend evaluation criteria as necessary to incorporate potential changes recommended as a part of the public comment process and adopt final guidelines. Utilize data gathered to prioritize and evaluate a sub-set of monuments from the existing list as a case-study. This sub-set should include sculptures toppled during recent vandalism.
8. Meeting #4 and #5 – Advisory Committee completes final report detailing evaluation methodologies, applies these methodologies to case-study recommendations, and outlines future action plan for evaluation of additional artworks. This report also includes:

- a. Evaluation of case-study artworks relative to the review criteria. Based on results of evaluation and ranking relative to the criteria, the Advisory Committee will recommend appropriate action to be taken.
 - b. Cost estimates prepared by City staff for possible outcomes, i.e., removal, relocation, de-accessioning, ongoing maintenance, storage, etc.
9. Final report presented and approved by resolution at appropriate City commission meetings. Arts Commission will endeavor to undertake any necessary processes as outlined in program guidelines to determine final disposition of evaluated monuments and memorials. Implementation of recommendations detailed in the final report is contingent upon available funding.
10. Arts Commission staff to review and amend Arts Commission guideline criteria for any new memorials or honorific sculptures proposed as either gifts or commissioned by the Arts Commission to include adherence to the Commission's Racial Equity policy and processes recommended by Advisory Committee.
11. Draft similar guidelines for the Board of Supervisors to adopt by ordinance so that they can be applied to any artwork being proposed to the City as a gift.
12. Arts Commission staff to research and implement programming opportunities related to the monument evaluation in an effort to bolster community healing and continue public dialogue. Programming opportunities to be implemented as funding allows.