

UNM Board of Regent's
Historic Preservation Committee
Regular Meeting October 17, 2018
11:00 am to 12:30 pm
Hodgin Hall

Present: Taudy Miller, Audra Bellmore, Amy Coburn, Durwood Ball, Patrick Hogan, Francisco Uvina, Marilyn Strube, Portia Vescio, Kim Feldman

Guests: Kym Pinder, Karen Mazur, Ed Padilla, Jeff Pappas, Steven Moffson, Alex Lubin

Agenda Item 1: Portia Vescio moves to approve agenda. Kim Feldman seconds the motion. Motion is approved by acclamation.

Agenda Item 2: Patrick Hogan moves to approve amended minutes. Durwood Ball seconds the motion. September minutes are approved with amendments by acclamation.

During technology adjustments, Kim Feldman announces the Alumni Lobo Living Room event at Zimmerman Library on November 2nd.

Agenda Item 3: Art Education graduate student Karen Mazur shares information Regarding the HPC Public Art Inventory. She will send a database link to the committee. Audra Bellmore added information.

Agenda Item 4: Alex Lubin introduced himself to the committee and said that he looked forward to guidance on the murals issue. Dr. Lubin provided some history on his involvement with the matter. Previously, Craig White asked him to continue working on the matter that Virginia Scharf began working on in November 2016. Dr. Lubin provided background on the nationwide issue of public art on college campuses including in Indiana, at Dartmouth, in Virginia, at Notre Dame, in Minnesota, where controversial public art is no longer in public view.

Audra Bellmore stated that there needs to be a conversation with SHPO and the process should be thoughtful, taking care and time with deliberation because of the importance of Zimmerman Library's historic status.

Alex Lubin noted that Virginia Scharf was in the thick on the debate on the UNM seal. The seal was suspended, but not abolished. Then, in the fall of 2017 Craig White said the murals needed to be addressed. In the fall of 2017, a taskforce was created and then a class was created to study the issue. The Spring 2018 class studied the issue, had 30 guest speakers, and every lecture is posted on Alex Lubin's UNM website. Alex Lubin noted that the committee had a course summary in their materials. Some students said to remove the murals while some said to leave the murals and cover or conceal them. There were other creative alternatives and some students said to leave the murals in plain view, but to add more context.

Alex Lubin then studied the logistics necessary. This included an architectural study that presented a ballpark estimate of \$200,000 with steep environmental costs. Moving and preserving the murals would require much more money and there is no logical place within the library or the university art museum to move them to. The cost of concealing and preserving in place would minimally be \$60,000.

Alex Lubin indicated that he consulted with the new Provost and the new President, both of whom felt the impulse to continue the conversation as the status quo is unacceptable.

Alex Lubin stated that President Stokes and Provost Wood recommend installing theater curtains over the murals in situ. The default position would be for the curtains to remain closed with options for designated viewing times. Alex Lubin indicated that it would have to be the Library to determine how it happens. However, President Stokes wants to continue the dialogue, move it from Academic Affairs to the Office of Equity and Inclusion where the newly-to-be-hired Director would deal with it.

Audra Bellmore indicated that a formal proposal would be welcomed by the committee and Amy Coburn asked Alex Lubin for clarification about what he might need from the HPC.

Alex Lubin indicated that the committee needs to recommend to Regents whether curtains can be recommended. Further, he is seeking HPC guidance as UNM policy gives HPC some authority to advise the Regents.

Amy Coburn then asked what the process had been and who comprised the task force committee. Kim Feldman advised that there are 160,00 alum and 80,000 in-state alum not included in the process. Alum have strong feelings about these things and should be involved in the process.

Alex Lubin said that President Stokes agrees and that is why she is proposing a very temporary solution while the university pursues a broader conversation. Also, the issue and class was publicized in the Daily Lobo, reported in the Albuquerque Journal, and community members did sit in on the class. Everything was public and transparent in the class, but still need a broader constituency. Marilyn Strube asked if they should agree to putting up the curtains and then continue the research.

Audra Bellmore shared that she had directed Alex Lubin to the HPC website where guidelines are available for all proposals with details about everything required, including 30 days before next HPC meeting. It is never a black and white thing. For example, if the Anthropology Annex want to put new lights on the building, the HPC understands the need for these lights, but gives instruction on where to place them and/or make modifications to their proposal. Dr. Bellmore referred to UNM policy that if it is a major alteration or if it's a removal or if it's an important structure, the requirements might rise to higher level. The HPC does not receive many of those and instead come across more practical needs more frequently. A formal proposal would go to the Regents' Finance and Facilities committee.

Patrick Hogan suggested that perhaps a two-step process is in order. The initial step for the HPC might be advising how to accomplish something with minimal impact to the cultural resource. The second part would be for the HPC to guide the process and later again consider to advise the regents.

Amy Coburn expressed concern about how the proposed theater curtains are good for the university when the university is the caretaker tasked with protecting and maintaining these types of cultural resources for the state.

Alex Lubin stated that the process needs to unfold with broader input, but in the short-term President Stokes is moved by the fact that people are uncomfortable in the space.

Pat Hogan stated that another temporary solution to covering the murals might be a change in use of the space, a space solution. Guest Ed Padilla added that it is a highly used space. Audra Bellmore mentioned the original decorative iron gates that are now in the Zimmerman Library loading dock could perhaps be reinstalled. Ed Padilla confirmed their location as he is the building manager. Audra Bellmore added that classes could be scheduled in to view the murals and join the conversation.

Amy Coburn inquired about the national conversation on matters like this and wonders if there is a prominent precedent. Guest Kymberly Pinder stated that there has been a spectrum of solutions without one dominant way in handling it.

Audra Bellmore mentioned the Dartmouth trajectory where they closed the room, covered the art with curtains, going back and forth, and now planning to remove the art. Bellmore noted that institutions in England are going through similar issues. The Pitt Rivers Museum invited the community in to reinterpret material and conducted thoughtful programming. Guest Kymberly Pinder stated that she would argue that the UNM class did just that.

Taudy Miller suggested that guest Jeff Pappas from SHPO might have some input at this point. Mr. Pappas notes that the statutes and regulations do not allow SHPO to be involved in the cultural conversation. Instead, SHPO deals with alternatives to mitigate any visual intrusions to character defining features. It is possible that curtains constitute an adverse effect. Also, there is a curious clause in federal law. NHP Act, defers to federal law when state law is quiet which has considered “reversible and removable in time” as having no adverse effect on a property. Further, the plan comes from the UNM Architect’s office and the state will not become involved in the discussion.

Kim Feldman asked if SHPO can make a decision. Mr. Pappas clarified that SHPO determines effect and mitigates adverse effect, and encourages properties to avoid adverse effects, perhaps through an MOA. Kim Feldman suggested that their recommendation would be persuasive with the Board of Regents. Patrick Hogan suggests that that some material from the class could be utilized as mitigated measures.

Audra Bellmore inquired if there were other projects like this in NM. Mr. Pappas indicated that there are. For example, they are studying the history of segregation in the state and schools segregated during Jim Crow as the black experience in NM is not well represented. There is a lot of resistance to document those histories where public buildings are left in the community. To SHPO, these are tangible evidence onsite. That’s where national preservation can help inform the state on tangible evidence of the past or actions that might be adverse mitigations. In 1954, there were six segregated communities in NM and it still has cultural implications. In 2014, Japanese internment was finally recognized.

Audra Bellmore stated that SHPO does get involved in stating significance, not an antiquarian effort, already established.

Alex Lubin offered subtext by stating that he does not consider the murals hostile to himself, but others find it hostile for themselves. The question is whether a minority serving institution is doing the right thing by having these murals.

Amy Coburn asked how the HPC can help Lubin’s group to advise the president.

Alex Lubin stated that he has a sense of the proposal process and will apprise Stokes/Wood on this meeting and assign proposal task completion.

Taudy Miller urged Lubin to consult with an architect familiar with historic preservation so they are able able to guide him and help refine the recommendation.

Alex Lubin stated that he was working with Jose Zaliga, the architect responsible for moving the historic mural in Artesia.

Amy Coburn said that what we hear from the state gives us good understanding and all of the materials should be utilized for contextualized text in a book.

Audra Bellmore stated that no matter the end result, interpretative materials must be made.

Audra Bellmore suggested that there are other possible options not considered by the taskforce or the class. Durwood Ball suggested that the murals could be left up there with a digital component added like at the 9/11 museum installation. Alex Lubin stated that in the interim, President default position is covering the murals.

Ed Padilla stated that many people in community would want to keep murals and the university has the responsibility to provide access to murals. The issue of censorship issue needs to be addressed. 20 people signed the letter when there are over 120 library staff members. It is a beautiful space and it is terribly important for the HPC to consider censorship issue and what the implications are for the community. Curtains are censorship.

Portia Vescio requested that the timeframe for temporary curtains be defined. There are other issues, such as who would manage the curtains, the opening and closing of the curtains, as well as the potential for curtains to attract pests. Taudy Miller asked if Equity and Inclusion manages the process, when would they begin? Alex Lubin stated that after new leadership is hired, Equity and Inclusion would be tasked with providing a permanent solution.

Pat Hogan cautioned that curtains could become permanent unless there is a transparent timeline for the entire process. Audra Bellmore added that for the discussion to continue in intellectual way and to find a satisfying solution, it would be helpful if the murals are still in view during the process. To restrict access during the process seems contrary to the process. Ironically, that's when you want to look at them. Covering them doesn't seem appropriate. Taudy Miller stated that curtains might instead highlight the issue as a curiosity and highlight it for conversation. Alex Lubin stated that they spent the last year doing that and the murals would still be visible. Audra Bellmore stated that Zimmerman Library is one of the 100 most important buildings in NM and tourists come through all the time so viewing would need to be managed.

All other agenda items were tabled. Meeting adjourned at 12:30 pm.