

The Philadelphia Art
Commission
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Alan Greenberger
Chair

José Almiñana

Carmen Febo San Miguel

Bridget Collins-Greenwald

Joe Laragione

Raed Nasser

Natalie Nixon

Robert Roesch

Mario Zacharjasz

C. Beige Berryman
Staff

Minutes

The Philadelphia Art Commission

Wednesday, July 22, 2020 - 9:30 a.m. and

Wednesday, August 12, 2020 – 9:00 a.m.

Held remotely via Zoom platform, hosted by DPZ

These Minutes are not a verbatim recitation of the City’s presentation, the public statements and the Commissioner’s deliberations that were recorded on the Zoom platform. Rather they are an edited summary of the key points made by each speaker.

Commissioners Present: Alan Greenberger, Jose Alminana, Carmen Febo-San Miguel, Steven Hartner, Joe Laragione, Raed Nasser, Natalie Nixon, Robert Roesch, Mario Zacharjasz

I. Special Meeting of Philadelphia Art Commission, July 22, 2020 - City Presentation of its Proposal on the Christopher Columbus Statue in Marconi Plaza and Public Comment.

(At 00:00:06) Beige Berryman, staff member for the Art Commission, explained the Zoom platform and remote Art Commission meeting process. She advised that the meeting was being recorded, and by participating in the meeting attendees were giving their consent to be recorded. Ms. Berryman also explained that the meeting video, meeting agenda and written materials submitted by the City and the public would also be posted on the Art Commission’s website at: (<https://www.phila.gov/departments/philadelphia-art-commission/>).

*Ms. Berryman stated some additional instructions for the public. She explained that at today’s Special Meeting regarding the Christopher Columbus Statue many persons were expected to speak. Following the presentation by the City as Applicant, the public comment portion of the meeting would begin. Many of those requesting to speak had preregistered and persons would be called upon to speak in the order staff received their requests to speak. The public was advised to use the “raise hand” feature when hearing their name so that staff could identify them. If members of the public were joining by phone, they could also use the “raise hand” feature by dialing “*9”. She stated that she would read written comments that were previously submitted into the record, reading them in the same order as contained on a registration list. Those who registered but did not respond when their name was called would be moved to the end of the list.*

Those who wished to speak but had not preregister would be added to the end of the list of speakers. They too could use the “raise hand” feature at that time.

The public could also use the Question and Answer feature to type comments or questions which staff would then read for the record and to the Commissioners.

In order to give everyone the chance to speak, Ms. Berryman asked that comments be kept to 3 minutes. She thanked all participants for listening respectfully and helping the Commission and staff maintain a professional and courteous environment.

(At 00:03:00) Ms. Berryman conducted a roll call of the Commissioners in attendance. All Commissioners responded that they were present.

(At 00:03:20) Chairperson Greenberger began the meeting by reiterating what Ms. Berryman had mentioned about respecting the time. Regarding public speakers, he requested that persons who wished to speak avoid repetitive comments and keep their statements to raising new points that had not yet been made.

Additionally, he stated that this was a matter that came before multiple commissions, specifically in this instance before the Philadelphia Historical Commission as well as the Art Commission. He explained that it was generally the custom of the Art Commission to wait for the Historical Commission to state its ruling before the Art Commission made its decision. In compliance with a Court order, he confirmed that will occur in this case. There will not be a vote taken at the end of this meeting. Rather, the Commission will consider the ruling of the Historical Commission in arriving at its decision. As a result, Chairperson Greenberger advised that the Commission would hear the City's presentation, take public statements and then continue the meeting until after the Historical Commission meeting currently scheduled for Friday, July 24, 2020. He stated that the Commission is tentatively scheduled to meet Wednesday, August 12, 2020 at 9:30 a.m. to vote.

Finally, Chairperson Greenberger noted that due to the anticipated length of the meeting, some Commissioners had to leave around 1 PM but the full record, both verbal statements and written documents submitted by the public, would be available to them for review in a day or two.

(At 00:08:01) James Engler, Chief of Staff, Mayor Kenney, gave opening remarks regarding the relocation of Christopher Columbus statue stating that to maintain the statue in its current location was unacceptable as it presented a continued threat to public safety.

Presentation

1. Marconi Plaza, 2700 S. Broad Street Christopher Columbus Statue

Review Type: Removal, relocation or alteration of existing artwork in the possession of the City

Owner/Applicant: City of Philadelphia, Public Art Office

Proposal: The City has determined that the continued display of the Columbus statue is a danger to public safety and presents a significant risk to the City. The City seeks Art Commission approval to remove the statue and place it in a secure City-owned facility until such time as an appropriate alternative location can be identified. Application Letter dated July 15, 2020.

Presentation begins at minute mark (00:11:38) in video.

Margot Berg, Public Art Director, began the presentation by requesting Art Commission approval to relocate the Christopher Columbus statue from Marconi Plaza to a City storage facility. The presentation included a brief overview of the history of the statue itself. Beginning on or about June 13, 2020, Ms. Berg described the presence of statue “protectors” carrying bats and automatic weapons. This activity, she stated, drew protestors for whom the statue was a symbol of Columbus’ treatment of indigenous people and systemic racism in our county leading in the following days to ongoing violent confrontations at the statue. Following a court hearing, the City agreed to build a plywood box to protect the statue from vandalism. She noted that unrest around the statue continued even after its boxing and that unrest led to injuries and arrests. Ms. Berg also provided a brief history of similar happenings around the country regarding other statues of Christopher Columbus involving efforts by protestors to topple them or decisions by municipalities to remove them. On June 15th, Mayor Kenney asked Ms. Berg, as Public Art Director, to initiate the process of relocating the statue through the Art and Historical Commissions due to the on-going threat to public safety.

Ms. Berg also described the preliminary findings of a public survey process employed by the City between June 24 and July 21, 2020 to gather public input on what the statue symbolized to people, how the statue represented America’s or Philadelphia’s past or present, and suggestions of privately owned locations where the statue might be relocated. Ms. Berg concluded by stating that from a public safety and risk standpoint it was not feasible nor was it in the public interest for the Columbus statue to remain on display in Marconi Plaza. She added that a qualified rigging team would undertake the work of removing the statue and its pedestal under the direction of a sculptor conservator, that it would be stored in a secured, City-owned storage facility until such time as an appropriate private location was secured.

The following written materials submitted by Ms. Berg supplemented the City’s proposal:

- Letter of Request, dated July 15, 2020 from Margot Berg, Public Art Director, to Beige Berryman, City Planner, and the Philadelphia Art Commission;
- Depiction of Christopher Columbus Monument in Marconi Plaza;
- Letter dated, June 15, 2020, from Mayor James F. Kenney to Margot Berg, Public Art Director;
- Memorandum, dated June 22, 2020, from Brian Abernathy, Managing Director to Kelly Lee, Chief Cultural Officer and Margot Berg, Public Art Director;
- Affidavit of Francis T. Healy, Special Advisor to the Commission of the Philadelphia Police Department, dated July 10, 2020;
- Letter, dated July 13, 2020, from Kathryn Ott Lovell, Commissioner, the Philadelphia Department of Parks and Recreation, to Beige Berryman, City Planner, and the Philadelphia Art Commission;
- Letter, dated July 13, 2020, from the members of the City’s Public Art Advisory Committee to the Philadelphia Art Commission;
- Letter, dated July 14, 2020, from Nikil Saval to William Burke and the Philadelphia Art Commission
- A statistical analysis of the City’s public outreach process;
- Specifications and schematics regarding the removal of a marble statue; and
- Four (4) articles from the Philadelphia Inquirer and one (1) article from Philly Voice reporting on the protests and conflicts occurring with respect to the Columbus statue in the month of June 2020.

(At 00:18:40) Chairperson Allen Greenberger asked if there were any questions or comments from the Commission.

Commission Nasser requested to review the City power point slide again which depicted the respective percentages of local community input in the 19145 and 19148 zip codes. Commissioner Roesch inquired if check boxes were used for the public input process. Ms. Berg responded that all responses were in narrative form and “pre-selected” options were not included in the survey. Chairperson Greenberger asked if the statue also included the base and if it was owned by the City of Philadelphia. Ms. Berg answered yes to both. To be clear and certain, Chairperson Greenberger stated the Commission’s understanding that the City’s proposal was to remove the statue and put it in storage, not anything beyond that point. He then asked Ms. Berg if that was her understanding as well, to which she responded that he was correct. Chairperson Greenberger confirmed that if something is done in the future, whether relocation or donation, that would be a separate action that would come before the Commission. Ms. Berg again responded, that he was correct.

Commissioner Nasser asked Ms. Becker about an email from the Philadelphia Department of Parks & Recreation and if that agency needed to be part of the decision process. Ms. Becker responded that a letter of support from that Department was included in the City’s written materials.

(At 00:23:38) Chairperson Greenberger announced the start of the public comment portion of the meeting and reiterated that persons speaking would be heard in the order in which they registered.

(At 00:24:35) Ms. Berryman stated that staff member Alex Smith would oversee the public comment portion of the meeting.

(At 00:24:52) Mr. Smith read a summary of 36 comments received via email prior to July 15, 2020. The emails included a variety of viewpoints. Some individuals requested that the statue stay in its current location, while other individuals recommended that the statue be taken down or placed elsewhere. Additionally, 25% of the emails provided alternative options or recommendations, rather than just stating a remain or relocate stance.

(At 00:25:53) Ms. Berryman introduced the first person to speak, Penny Balkin Bach, Executive Director of the Association for Public Art and Chair of the Public Art Advisory Committee. Ms. Bach stated the Committee’s support for the relocation of the statue, noting that in light of the ongoing clashes, in the interest of public safety removal was necessary. She made the further points that the Commission should not view its action as precedential. Rather, each case should be determined on its own merits on a case by case basis. Second, the sculpture was not site specific, i.e., tied to its current location, as it had existed for 100 years in another location. Third, although there were usually many options, in this case no amount of signage or interpretation would provide a safe environment. She concluded by stating that if the statue remains it will become a site for on-going clashes between opposing ideologies.

(At 00:28:03) Ms. Berryman introduced Francesco Trimboli, who spoke in support of not removing the statue. He stated that as an Italian he could understand the people who are offended by the statue as Italians are always against racism. Italians, however, recognized themselves in Christopher Columbus especially in America. They just wanted to protect the name of Columbus as a pioneer, as an Italian, and as a person who was always respectful of indigenous people and against their mistreatment. He hoped that the Commission would preserve the image of Columbus as a good person.

(At 00:36:01) Ms. Berryman introduced the next four persons to speak: Charles Logan, Vincent J. Fumo, Matthew Sullivan, and Rich Cedrone.

Mr. Logan supported removal of the statue, stating that it should be replaced by Giuseppe Garibaldi, who united Italy. Mr. Logan disputed some of the myths surrounding Columbus and concluded that he was not an appropriate symbol of Italian culture.

Mr. Fumo stated his support for not removing the statue. Mr. Fumo characterized the Commission's proceeding as unprecedented, questioning its fairness, how it was advertised, the lack of opportunity to cross examine, the selection process for the Commissioners, and the potential for conflicts of interest as appointees of the Mayor. Mr. Fumo also questioned the methodology and validity of the survey conducted by the City for public input. He pointed out that only until recently was there any conflict over the Columbus statue. He also stated that other scholars dispute the conclusion that Columbus was racist and enslaved people.

Mr. Sullivan supported removing the statue stating that the history of Columbus was a settled matter, that the statue represented mythology over history and to its defenders the lie of white supremacy. He noted the recent attacks made on Black Lives Matter protestors by defenders of the statue and based on public safety, he concluded that the statue should come down.

Mr. Cedrone spoke in support of not removing the statue. He stated his agreement with many of the statements expressed by Mr. Fumo. He disputed the validity of the public survey conducted by the City pointing out that it would be easy for anyone to type in a zip code from any location in the world. Mr. Cedrone stated that he lives a block away from Marconi Plaza and is the President of the Friends of Marconi Plaza. He said that the community is involved in the beautification and maintenance of Marconi Plaza, and the park is the site of many community activities, such as movie nights, concerts, Christmas celebrations and the like. As a result, he stated that the statue means much to the Community. He also pointed out that only until recently did the presence of the statue in Marconi Plaza pose a problem.

(At 00:58:43) Carol L. Delaney was introduced by Attorney George Bochetto. He stated that Ms. Delaney undertook a 10-year study of the primary source material regarding Christopher Columbus, is a scholar at Harvard University and Stanford University, and the author of the book, "*Columbus and the Quest for Jerusalem*." He submitted that this book cleared up many current misrepresentations about Columbus. He noted that Ms. Delaney's book was submitted as part of the record before the Commission. Due to technology challenges, Ms. Delaney was unable to give her statement at that time. However, at a later point in the meeting, Ms. Delaney did access the meeting and was able to speak to the Commissioners. (See July 22, 2020 Minutes at 01:48:43)

(At 01:01:56) Ms. Berryman introduced the next five persons to speak: Francis Recchuiti, Jody Della Barba, Joe Mirarchi, Torren Melone Smith, and Susan Davis.

Mr. Recchuiti introduced himself as legal counsel to the Grand Lodge of the Pennsylvania Sons & Daughters of Italy and spoke in support of not removing the statue. Mr. Recchuiti described two letters, both included in the written materials submitted to the Commission, which he had written to Mayor Kenney in support of the statue remaining at Marconi Plaza. With respect to addressing future security of the statue, Mr. Recchuiti stated the Grand Lodge was prepared to provide a security system, including cameras, to protect the statue. He professed his belief that there was much misinformation surrounding Columbus.

Ms. Barba spoke in support of not removing the statue. She stated that she represents the 1492 Society, that tens of thousands attend or watch on TV the annual Christopher Columbus parade which the Society organizes. She added that the Italian community celebrates Columbus as the first Italian immigrant to come to America and that it stands for every Italian American who came to America and worked hard to create a new life. She asked the Commission to make its decision based on the artistic value of the statue and not mob rule. She questioned the percentages of the local community in favor of removal reflected in the City's survey and concluded that in her experience 99% of the community wanted the statue to remain.

Mr. Mirarchi experienced technical issues and was unable to speak at his allotted time. He did regain access and spoke to the Commissioners later in the meeting. (See July 22, 2020 Minutes at 01:52:54).

Mr. Smith spoke in support of removing the statue and its eventual destruction. He stated that Columbus did not represent the best that Italian Americans can be, and he questioned the motives of those who had testified in support of the statue as racists.

Ms. Davis spoke in support of the City's proposal to temporarily remove and eventually relocate the statue. Ms. Davis stated that she is an architect, a public art consultant and advocate, and member of the Mayor's Public Art Advisory Board. She stated that her position in support of the City's proposal was not a comment on the Italian American heritage or its importance to Philadelphia. Rather it's was a comment on public safety. She stated that temporary removal of the statue was vital to continue the important discussion of determining the best representation of the Italian American contribution.

(At 01:19:14) Ms. Berryman introduced the next five persons to speak: Pasquale Bianculli, Jessica Lynn Argondizza, Josh McGrath, Robert Petrone and Christopher Binetti.

Mr. Bianculli, Ph.D., spoke in support of not removing the statue. Mr. Bianculli illustrated the spiritual importance of statues by citing the importance of those located in Notre Dame to Quasimodo in Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables*. He urged retaining the statue in Marconi Plaza because for many the statue represented the memories of many celebrations of Italian culture in the Plaza. He suggested that to remove it or relocate it would remove a landmark that represents the community. He concluded by saying the statue should stand as a symbol of unity for everyone regardless of race or ethnicity who call this place home.

Ms. Argondizza spoke in support of not removing the statue. Ms. Argondizza stated that the reason the statue existed is because of the lynching of 11 Italian men in New Orleans. She also spoke of growing up with the statue in Marconi Plaza and her memories of participating in the Christopher Columbus parade. She stated that Italians had chosen Columbus as a mascot. For her community, Columbus was not a sign of racism, but rather a sign of pride. She expressed her feelings that taxpayer funded square should not be sanitized by taking down the statue. She felt that the current process was appropriate for this discussion, but she questioned the validity of the public survey conducted by the City and the ability of nonresidents to identify themselves falsely using the community zip codes. She urged that the Commission not erase history, that the meaning of the statue to one group was pride while to another group it was oppression and stated that allowing one group to prevail over another would foster resentment.

Mr. McGrath spoke in support of removing the statue. He identified himself as of enrolled Delaware member of the West Tribe Oklahoma and commented that nothing so far about Columbus was being said from the Native American standpoint. For him as an Indian, Columbus represented what Hitler represents to the Jewish people. He expressed his view that what happened to Native Americans after Columbus arrived was an atrocity. Therefore, speaking as an original inhabitant of the area of Leni Lenape descent, he supported the statue's removal to a location where no one can see it.

Mr. Petrone spoke in support of not removing the statue. He described work he had perform for City Council as a Columbus scholar based on primary sources he had read provided to him by City Council, although he clarified that he was not speaking on behalf of City Council, but rather for himself as a Columbus scholar. He stated that primary sources belied the accusations against Columbus by other speakers, that Columbus was the first civil rights activist of the Americas, promoting indigenous people as citizens of Spain, not slaves and that atrocities attributed to Columbus were committed by his rivals. He concluded that as the first civil rights activist, the statue should remain in Marconi Plaza or even be relocated to a more prominent place like Dilworth Plaza.

Dr. Binetti appeared to be in support of not removing the statue. Dr. Binetti introduced himself as the President of an Italian American organization he had founded located in New Jersey and a historian, adjunct professor at Middlesex College. He described Columbus statues and the memorializing of Columbus in Columbus Day parades as counters to the historical discrimination against Italians and early efforts to eradicate them, including the 1891 lynching of 11 Italian Americans in New Orleans. Through this historical process, he stated that Italians had chosen Columbus to symbolize them as their hero. He stated that Italians needed statues like Columbus as they represented the civil rights of Italians as a minority ethnic community.

(At 01:48:43) Abigail Poses introduced Ms. Delaney.

Ms. Delaney (whose background as a scholar and historian had previously been described by George Bochetto – see July 22, 2020 Minutes at 00:58:43) emphasized the religious motivations of Columbus, including his voyages west which were motivated to finance his crusade to take Jerusalem back from the Muslims. Ms. Delaney wrote about this in her book, *“Columbus and the Quest for Jerusalem.”* His religious motivation continued as later in life Columbus became a lay Franciscan monk. She concluded by saying that the current view of Columbus should change based on the religious aspect which motivated his actions throughout his life.

(At 01:52:54) Ms. Berryman introduced the next two people to speak: Rue Landau and Joe Mirarchi.

Ms. Landau spoke in support of removing the statue. Ms. Landau introduced herself as the Executive Director of the Philadelphia Commission on Human Relations and read a statement on behalf of the Commission which is summarized here. She began with a biblical story involving a king and a statue with feet of clay, meaning that a statue of a hero with feet of clay cannot stand or the society the statue represents will forever be divided. She stated her opinion that that was the reality of the statue located in Marconi Plaza and therefore it must be removed. She described the changing narrative of the story of Columbus as the discoverer of America, proving the world was round, not flat, to a person who never stepped foot in American, took advantage of the native people of Haiti who stood in the way of his search for gold, and left them decimated by slavery, warfare and disease. She further stated that the story of Columbus elevated imperialism, racism and inhumanity over equality, justice and compassion and

therefore, the statue today was a reminder of the Country's dark history of discrimination. She continued that we are now recognizing as a society the evils that were perpetrated on an Indigenous people who managed to survive past attempts to destroy them. Leaving the statue in place would fail to rectify these past injustices. Ms. Landau recognized that to many Italian Americans the Columbus statue was a symbol of Italian pride and he stood in contrast to the discrimination which many Italians experienced when they came to America. Ms. Landau concluded by recommending that the Columbus statue in Marconi Plaza be replaced with a statue of an Italian American, particularly one from Philadelphia, who has contributed to our City, has integrity and who is emblematic of who we are as Philadelphians and Americans.

Mr. Mirarchi spoke in support of his view that the statue should remain. He stated his view that the previous disputed public commentary heard by the Commission from previous speakers was irrelevant because the Columbus statue was protected by federal law, 36 USC Section 107. In his opinion, any attempt to remove the statue would violate that law. He further stated that the statue represented the long-standing tradition in America of celebrating Columbus Day, a federal holiday. He also pointed out that the Columbus statue in Marconi Plaza was designated an historic object by the Philadelphia Historical Commission in 2017, is over 144 years old and was a gift of the Italian people and the king of Italy at the time for the 1876 Centennial Exposition in Fairmount Park. He described in detail the history of the statue's use by the Italian American citizens of South Philadelphia on the federally designated Columbus holiday first from its location in Fairmount Park starting in 1876 and in more recent times from its current location in Marconi Plaza. He concluded by saying that the historical significance of the statue coupled with artistic significance to the Italian American community required that it remain where it is today.

(At 02:04:34) Chairperson Greenberger called for a short break from 11:36 - 11:45 a.m.

(At 02:14:22) The meeting resumed, and Ms. Berryman introduced the next five people to speak: Truby Chiaviello, Russell Kollins, Alessio Giacomucci, Sally Polk and Maryann DeStefano.

Mr. Chiaviello spoke in support of preserving the statue and recognizing the sculptor, Emanuele Caroni. Mr. Chiaviello introduced himself as the editor of Prima Magazine, an Italian American newsletter. He stated that Emanuele Caroni was the sculptor of the statue, he was a great artist, and that the statue should be recognized as a great work of art. He stated his view that the statue needs to continue to be on display so people can learn from it, sketch it. In his opinion what is needed is more statues, not less statues. He said Columbus represented our history, he represented exploration and development. He added that there was no reason why a sculpture of an Indigenous figure who represents another view of history could not be added. He felt that putting a beautiful work of art into storage where it will gather cobwebs and dust is a bad result. He urged a focus on the artists, their rights and their contributions. In his view the Columbus statue as a beautiful work of art should remain and if necessary, a plaque could be added to explain the historical context. In conclusion he advised that we should preserve what we have and move forward with more works of art.

Mr. Kolins spoke in support of not removing the statue. Mr. Kolins introduced himself as a security consultant with 51 years of experience in private practice. His CV and written statement were included in the written materials previously submitted to the Commission which he incorporated into the in-person statement he was making today. He stated that his opinions stated today were made to a reasonable degree of security certainty. Mr. Kolins cautioned against accepting the City's reasoning for removal of

the statue based on public safety. It was Mr. Kolins belief that the City itself brought the public safety threat to Marconi Plaza and the Columbus statue by instructing its police officers to stand down in the face of violent protestors who attacked the statue. Therefore, he concluded that the City itself had created the public safety issue. In his view, this resulted in the residents themselves being forced to protect the statue. Mr. Kolins stated that security could be provided to Marconi Plaza through the “Crime Prevention through Environmental Design” approach and referred to an offer made by Mr. Recchuiti in his previous statement (see July 22, 2020 minutes at 01:01:56) to provide surveillance cameras, which could be monitored in real time at the Crime Center. This would result in a dispatch and the arrest of anyone who was trying to attack the statue. Finally, Mr. Kolins offered to consult with the City voluntarily as this would be doing his duty as a citizen to give back to the City.

Mr. Giacomucci spoke in support of the statue remaining in place. He introduced himself as an immigrant and a naturalized citizen. He stated that the statue was given to the City in gratitude for the ability to live and work in America and the City of Philadelphia. He believed that the City should not turn its back on that gratitude. He added that the statue should not be used as a scapegoat for the problems of the City like poverty, poor education, high crime and riots for which Columbus was not responsible. He stated that Columbus was an important link in history to the new world where new ideas such as that all should live in freedom were born. He stated that Columbus foreshadowed the journey that continues today of those who seek to live in this new world. Finally, he proposed that the people today who want to protect the statue are themselves a minority and their rights deserve protection too.

Ms. Polk spoke in favor of the statue’s removal. She favored removal of the statue because in her view it stands for police brutality, colonialism, racism and oppression. She identified herself as a protestor who had spent time in protests against the statue occurring even before the current civil unrest. She described her recent observations of the violence that occurred at the statue involving white men with baseball bats against black individuals and families, stating racists slurs, and attacking people. While acknowledging that protests two months earlier had involved rioting and looting, she stated that far more protests were not of this nature. She felt that much violence and racism was inspired by the statue. She ended by saying she wanted the statue to be removed, that it should be destroyed as she did not want to see a racist monument protected in storage.

Ms. DeStefano spoke in favor of the statue remaining in place or relocating it to a museum. She spoke of her Italian heritage and that her grandparents had looked to Columbus. He was a navigator and a historical figure. If the statue was not wanted on City property, she suggested that it could be relocated to another place, perhaps giving it to the Sons and Daughters of Italy or putting it in a museum where it belonged. She made the point that many in the past were racist, but we should not forget the good things they did.

(At 02:45:01) Dr. Joseph V. Scelsa spoke in favor of not removing the statue and read a statement into the record which is summarized here. He introduced himself as the President and Founder of the Italian American Museum in New York City. He also described numerous positions he held as an historian and a scholar with various academic institutions, and his participation as a litigant in a major case involving discrimination against Italians in academia. He expressed his view as a historian that removing statues is a mistake because it erases history. He suggested that more statues are needed – statues of Indigenous, statues of African Americans, Hispanics and other peoples who have made contributions. But he opposed denying one group over another - all should be included. He concluded by saying the statue of Columbus was an expression of speech by the Italian people and should not be removed.

Mr. Gregorio Fierro spoke in favor of not removing the statue. He expressed his concern for the validity of the survey that was conducted by the City, stating that he saw many outsiders urged to complete it on social media and therefore the statistics it contained were wrong. In contrast, he pointed to the overwhelming support for the statue heard today. He considered removal of the statue to be “culture cancellation” and an act of prejudice against Italians. Mr. Fierro then read a statement to the Commissioners urging as a proud Italian American that the statue not be removed. The statement attributed the creation of Columbus Day to President Herbert Hoover who did so in reaction to the mass lynching of Italian Americans in New Orleans. He described bipartisan political support for preserving statues of Columbus. He concluded that Italian should be allowed to have their cherished symbols.

Mr. Mario De Lorenzo spoke in favor of not removing the statue. He expressed his view that the statue of Columbus was for generations an important symbol of Italian American heritage and pride which others should not be allowed to take it down. Therefore, he concluded, the statue should remain.

(At 03:00:19) Ms. Berryman read the written statement of Anthony DeJoseph which is summarized here. The story of Italian immigrants, he stated, was a success story of an immigrant group succeeding in the face of bigotry and violence, a story of optimism and great food. This was also an issue of public safety. It encouraged crowd decision making in the future. However, there was an opportunity for another choice to be made that would unite. Mr. DeJoseph recommended that by adding a statue of an indigenous person next to Christopher Columbus, - he suggested the beautiful statue of Tedyuscung, the Leni Lenape Indian that is located on Forbidden Drive in the Wissahickon - Philadelphia would become a national leader by starting the process of reconciliation and unity.

Anthony Giordano spoke in favor of not removing the statue. He introduced himself as the founder and President of Stand-Up South Philly, a group of concerned citizens dedicated to keeping their neighborhood safe and improving the quality of life for all. He expressed his concern over the vandalism and removal of statues and public art, and the present tendency to focus on the negative rather than the contributions of historical figures. He described the Columbus statue as the latest target of this trend. In his view, Columbus was celebrated not only by Italian Americans but also by many immigrant groups who came to this country to escape perilous conditions. In his view, removing statues and erasing history would not make things better. He stated that statues serve their purpose when they remind us of our flaws, our great achievements and great art. On behalf of the members of Stand-Up South Philly he asked that the statue be allowed to remain in Marconi Plaza. In conclusion he stated his view that the City’s poll of those living in zip codes 19145 and 19148 was flawed and suggested that the issue of the statue’s future should be decided by a vote of the residents of zip codes 19145 and 19148.

(At 03:08:57) Ms. Berryman read a written statement by Eva Yuen, a staff person in Councilwoman Helen Gym’s office, which is summarized here. The statement articulated the Councilwoman’s position in support of removing the statue. The Councilwoman’s letter pointed out that public spaces were for the benefit of all Philadelphians, therefore they should be places for diversifying and democratizing our City. She stated that the City was a national symbol that stands against oppression, but the statue of Columbus did not reflect that spirit and therefore should be removed. The Councilwoman suggested that it was the Commission’s responsibility to determine if City statues stood the test of time. In her view the statue did not stand for accurate history; rather it rewrote history even as it stood today on historic Leni Lenape land. She felt that it erased the facts of Native American genocide and the Transatlantic slave trade that are part of Columbus’ legacy. The letter also referenced the City’s presentation as it described the recent

incidents of violence that occurred around the statue which required a heavy police presence and did not subside until the statue was hidden. She submitted that the City deserved a better representation of the City and its future and urged the removal of the statue to better reflect a public space that belonged to everyone.

(At 03:14:10) The next speaker was George Bochetto, Esq., who introduced himself as the attorney who had brought a civil action into court to raise the issue of the process by which the statue was being discussed, and not whether or not it should be removed. He stated that the process was important as the eyes of the public and the press were on the Commission and it would be subject to court review. He stated that the Commissioners should be mindful of the oath they had taken to uphold the City Charter which required an adequate and deliberative due process. He stated that the Commissioners should want their vote to be seen as a vote of integrity. He stated his view that the Mayor had initiated a process that was contrary to the published rules of process and instead implement an expedient process that rushed the Commission to a decision. He stated that it should bother the Commission that no law enforcement person from the Mayor's office was speaking personally to the Commission on the issue of public safety. He also stated that the Commission should be concerned about the validity of the survey that had been conducted by the City that did not identify the persons being surveyed and contained a result-oriented statement in its introduction. He stated that the Commission should be concerned that the City had not presented anyone with the expertise to speak on the artistic worth of the statue aside from its political implications. He stated that the Commissioners should be concerned about being a rubber stamp in what he characterized as a deeply flawed process. He stated that the City administration had failed to put forth any witnesses that could support its main premises based on public safety, the history of Columbus, or public opinion on the statue. He stated that what other Cities had done with respect to statues of Columbus was irrelevant to the City of Philadelphia. He stated that what happens here is precedential, that it will affect the next statue and the next mayor or the next social crisis. Therefore, the way this was being handled should be something the Commission is proud of. He stated his view that the Commissioners should have a more thorough hearing with professional witnesses and a professional survey. He stated that he could not live with the current process which in his view was based on unsubstantiated assertions and would result in a rush to judgement to get rid of the statue that would embarrass everyone. Rather, he stated, what the City deserves is a process that serves as an example, that is based on reason, due process and careful consideration. He stated that the Commission would be an example for other boards and commissions, not only of the City, but around the country, and therefore it should conduct these proceedings the right way.

(At 03:27:40) Chairperson Greenberger requested that the meeting continue with a return to the list of registered speakers. He also recognized that Commissioners Zacharjasz and Almiñana had to leave the meeting, but as there was still a quorum of Commissioners present the meeting would proceed.

Ms. Poses stated that the next public comment was a written statement by Theresa Vaccarino that would be read by Ms. Berryman. It is summarized here. Ms. Vaccarino stated her view that the statue should not be removed. She expressed her appreciation for both the history of those with faith and courage and the beauty of sculpture. She saw sculpture as an expression of thought. She saw nothing to fear in a sculpture whose image was cast to represent the past. She questioned the desire to refute history by removing the statue as an attack against humanity. She hoped that wisdom would prevail over allowing others to suppress freedom of expression.

Ms. Poses announced the next speaker, Toni Columbus. Ms. Columbus hoped that the current situation surrounding the statue would prove to be a learning moment. She described herself as a fifth generation Italian and African American who had descended from slaves. She stated that much of the dialogue around the statue was not logical - terms such as “cancel culture” and “vigilantism.” The focus should not be on hysteria and division. She described her family’s roots in Italy. She stated that the City was a beacon of hope. She stated that her name “Columbus” was anglicized from the actual Italian name. She stated that her Italian ancestors, just as her African American ancestors were both treated unjustly. She felt that this was an opportunity to hear what Indigenous, Italian and African American people are saying. She described incidents of discrimination against her ancestors who, like her, were both Italian and African American because of the discrimination against African Americans during Jim Crow. She described the existence of statues of Columbus and the naming of Columbus Day as a national holiday as an atonement for the lynching of 11 Italians in New Orleans which she also likened to the massacre of blacks in Oklahoma. She expressed the hope that the present discussion could be an opportunity for learning and an acknowledgement of the systemic racism that has occurred to the Indigenous, African American and Italian peoples.

Vince Borelli spoke in support of not removing the statue and providing it with adequate protection. Mr. Borelli described his background in law enforcement for 46 year, now retired, including service as police chief in four municipalities. He stated that he wished to speak on the subject of public safety. He stated that the view that the statue posed a danger to the public was ludicrous. In his opinion adequate police protection could be provided to the statue and he cited other experiences in his law enforcement career when adequate police protection was provided, for example for the Liberty Bell in the mid-70’s. He urged the Commissioners not to give into anarchy. The City could resolve the public safety issue if it provided adequate police protection, which in his view, the City had not done. This was why, he stated, the people from that area had come out to protect the statue. He posed the proposition that someday in the future some might want the Vietnam Memorial Wall to be taken down. He concluded by saying the City should do its duty to preserve and protect.

(At 03:42:39) Ms. Berryman read from another written statement provided by email from Steve Perzan. It is summarized here. Mr. Perzan expressed his support for not removing the statue. He made the following points: One, that the statue was a historical reference to the City of Philadelphia given its donation for the 1876 Centennial. Two, its significance to American immigration – that the artwork was originally paid for by a small immigrant Italian population to show their appreciation to this Nation as their new homeland. Three – it was a work of art – the statue was attributed to Emanuel Caroni and was one of the few remaining artifacts of the 1876 Centennial. In his view, blaming Columbus for the obvious wrongs done to the Indigenous people, making Columbus a scapegoat by removing the statue, would not recompense Indigenous Americans and would only dishonor the contributions of another group.

(At 03:47:36) Ms. Poses identified the next five persons to speak: Sandra Pilla, Caitlin Sheeder-Borrelli, Mabel Negrete, Amy Eusebio, Americo Mendoza-Mori.

Sandra Pilla spoke in favor of replacing the statue with a better representation of Italian heritage. She introduced herself as a nearby resident of Marconi Plaza for 42 years, her parent had immigrated from Italy six decades ago and she has been a teacher of Italian American culture and language in South Philadelphia schools for the past decade. She pointed out that South Philadelphia was originally founded by the Indigenous Leni Lenape people, followed by various other immigration populations. She stated her view that her Italian ethnicity deserved better than Columbus as a symbol. She stated that she is a

founding member of a new group, the Philadelphia Italian American Cultural Alliance whose purpose is to consider how to best represent Italian residents. She stated the group would like a seat at the table to discuss alternative representations that would serve as a testament to the immigrants of the South Philadelphia community. She stated that other symbols could be found to represent an honorable population. Referencing the recent turmoil at the statue, she stated her belief that people deserved to be protected over statues and people should not be assaulted in defense of statues. In her view, the anarchy came from the defenders of the statue who attacked peaceful protestors and uttered shameful ethnic slurs. She described her own family being threatened by defenders of the statue. She concluded by stating that the community deserved a far better representation than an outdated, inflammatory piece of marble.

Ms. Borrelli spoke in favor of removal and destruction of the statue. She introduced herself as an Italian American from Philadelphia. She stated her view that past celebrations of the Columbus Day parade had nothing to do with Columbus, but instead were a way to celebrate Italian heritage. Representations of Columbus were not only dangerous to Indigenous and other disenfranchised communities, but also to Italian Americans, their collective memory and sense of identity. In her view, Columbus led the way to the Atlantic slave trade and generations of systemic racism. She stated that maintaining statues of Columbus only served to glorify white supremacy, colonialism and genocide. She considered the vigilantism that occurred at the statue to be a symbol of the racist violence that still exists. She felt that it was long overdue to stand in solidarity with the City's Indigenous communities, the focus should be on the victims, not the perpetrators, and that Columbus Day should be replaced by Indigenous Americans Day. She stated that making these changes was not about erasing history but correcting it. She urged the City and the Commission to be on the right side of history. She concluded by saying that she also did not consider the statue to be a great work of art.

Ms. Negrete spoke in support of promoting Indigenous people over Columbus. She began by stating that she is in the ancestral territory of the Leni Lenape Indians, she is of Indian descent, born in South America, but has lived in the USA since 1988. She is also Executive Director of Indigenous People in Philly (?) and spoke on their behalf. She expressed gratitude to all the black, brown and Indigenous communities who spoke up for removal of this statue and perhaps later others of Columbus. She dedicated her testimony to George Floyd and an Indigenous man who she stated had also been killed by the same police officer in Minneapolis 14 years ago. She stated that Native Americans are being killed by police and discriminated across the continent, not only in the United States. She stated that for American Indians, Columbus stands for colonialism and the claim of Christian superiority that occurred with European occupancy of the Americas. She felt that you cannot eliminate the statue without discussing the underlying white supremacy and racism that is present today in 2020. She felt that the statue celebrates the genocide of her American Indian ancestors. She stated that Native American history is almost non-existent and that many monuments of Indigenous Americans are stereotypes. She stated that Indigenous Americans continued to suffer today, they continued to be marginalized. She said that the statue of Columbus represented violence. She recommended that the Art Commission demystify Columbus and find ways to celebrate Indigenous Peoples Day

(At 04:04:47) Ms. Berryman read the written statement, summarized here, of Ms. Eusebio, made on behalf of the Office of Immigrant Affairs of Philadelphia. The statement read: The continued existence of the Columbus statue brings harm to the citizens of Philadelphia. The services provided to the immigrant community by the Organization are aimed at promoting their inclusion in the civic, economic and cultural life of the City. It is well documented that Columbus, while an iconic figure recognized for his "discovery"

of America, was also infamously recognized for his domination and oppression of Indigenous people. Fast forwarding a few hundred years the legacy of America was still plagued by the oppression of lands and people that he represents. In a country that represents freedom and opportunity, it seemed contradictory to hold up the figure of a well-known violent oppressor. The City should be thoughtful about its public spaces and the impact historical symbols can have on creating unwelcoming environments. Philadelphia's vibrant Italian Community has consistently celebrated Columbus as a prevailing symbol of its Italian heritage through its celebration of Columbus Day. However, the protests over the past 8 weeks across the country and in Philadelphia highlighted the need to critically analyze statues and monuments in public spaces that should welcome all residents. Of concern was the violence that had erupted at Marconi Plaza creating an unsafe environment for residents. Our office hopes that the City can find other ways to celebrate Italian culture. Thank you for considering all perspectives and providing a forum for the careful consideration of how the City moves forward to reconcile the racial trauma of the past and today's multicultural community.

Mr. Mendoza-Mori spoke in favor of removing the statue. He introduced himself as a University of Pennsylvania professor who teaches and performs research on American Indians. He stated that the public spaces in Philadelphia barely recognized Indigenous Americans and that we stand on the land originally occupied by native Americans such as the Leni Lenape Indians or Indians of the Delaware. He stated that in the 1680's they negotiated with William Penn to facilitate in the founding of the colony of Pennsylvania. He described that it was common for Indigenous delegations across the country to visit the City of Philadelphia as the nation's first capital in the early history of our country. However, he stated, the City of Philadelphia did not reflect this history. The City should reflect on what it wants to recognize. The current association of Columbus with oppression was not something either the City or the early Italian Americans of the late 18th or early 20th centuries would want to promote. He stated that Columbus' diaries contained admissions of human trafficking and violence. He stated that the Italian American community now had the positive opportunity to embrace more admirable icons that fairly reflected their values. He recognized the outrage of some members of the Italian American community over the Columbus statue. But he compared that to how native Americans might feel after almost being wiped out and to some considered extinct. He stated that the removal of the Columbus statue could be a first step to make room for the almost zero representation of Indigenous peoples in Philadelphia. He urged the Commission to aim for a visceral City that better reflects the City's diversity and complexity. He concluded by recommending that the Commission consider a Cemetery of Statues.

(At 04:13:45) Ms. Poses introduced the next five persons to speak: Jeanne D'Angelo, Michael J. Lewis, Coryn Wolk, Justice Seamus McCaffery and Kenneth Gross.

Ms. D'Angelo spoke in support of removing the statue. She said her family had their roots in the Philadelphia Italian American community. She realized that the loudest voices in support of the statue came from this community. Therefore, she considered it important to counter the way people had weaponized this identify. She recognized the on-going work of the Indigenous community and felt an honest appraisal of Columbus was needed. She stated it was important to also recognize the demands of the Black Philly Collective which demands a removal of all existing statues to stave off violence from black, brown and Indigenous people. She stated her opinions on what Columbus and modern events around the statue represented as reasons why the statue should be removed. She stated that now was the time to make amends and for the community to seek a new identity. She urged people to keep pushing back against racist institutions in Philadelphia. She concluded by asking the Commission to

please remove the statue from public view and to be open to community input, especially from those being harmed, about any future art works going into that space.

(At 04:18:16) Ms. Berryman read a written statement from Michael J. Lewis in which he stated his view that the statue should be preserved. The Statement is summarized as follows: He introduced himself as a scholar of American art and architecture with a specialty in the art and culture of Philadelphia. He described books he had authored about sculpture, including one about Frank Furness. He also said he was the architectural critic of the Wall Street Journal. Therefore, he wrote from the perspective of a historian and cultural critic. He stated his view that the statue of Columbus was important as an early expression of the Italian presence in the population of the United States. The statue was an inspiring symbol of the Country's capacity to accept and welcome new populations. He stated that it was wrong to conflate the Columbus statue with Confederate monuments. The historical legacy of Columbus was vast and complex and should continue to be debated. Therefore, he concluded, removal of the statue would be an act of cultural vandalism.

(at 04:21:21) Ms. Poses introduced Coryn Wolk. Ms. Wolk introduced herself as a resident of Philadelphia and a descendant of American immigrants. She stated that although she did not reside in South Philadelphia, she had spent a lot of time there. She made the semi-serious proposal of replacing the Columbus statue with a statue of a hog. She said that this was relevant because in the 19th century and first half of the 20th Century the area of South Philadelphia known as the "neck" had been occupied by Irish and Italian immigrants who raised hogs. She stated that because developers sought this land for development, the City criminalized the behavior of these residents including the raising of hogs. This area – Hog Island – so named because of the hog activity - became the largest shipping facility during WW I and employed many Irish and Italian immigrants. She stated that there were also some theories that the word "hoagie," the sandwich Italian's would eat while working at Hog Island, could have been derived from this hog-related activity all of which, she submitted, was part of the quirky history of Philadelphia. Thus, she concluded, a statue of a hog might better represent the pride and rebellion against authority of these immigrants more than the statue of a man who never set foot in Philadelphia and who had a much darker history everywhere he had impact.

Justice McCaffery spoke in support of not removing the statue. He began by saying he did not wish to talk to the Commission as a retired justice from the PA Supreme Court, but rather as a military man, a retired full Colonel with the U.S. Marine Corps. He was honored to have served with hundreds of Italian Americans in law enforcement, the courts and the military. Numerous Italian Americans had fought and died for our nation. One thing he knew about them was their love of their Italian heritage. He stated that to many of them the Columbus statue was indicative of what American was all about - that Christopher Columbus, an Italian, had discovered America, and therefore they took pride in the statue. He stated that he hated the idea of alienating the Italian American community especially after all their contributions and sacrifices. He stated that he had Italian friends who experienced bigotry merely because they had a vowel at the end of their name. As an Irish immigrant who left Ireland on a boat, he stated that his experiences living the American dream were similar to their experiences. He stated his opinion that a small group of people, through ignorance and bigotry, were now trying to alienate the Italian American community. He concluded by saying the Commission had an opportunity to do the right thing – to show the country that we are about unifying, not disenfranchising. He questioned what would be next if the Columbus statue was removed – the Irish famine monument, the Jewish memorials or other memorials that represent our country's great immigrant history. He urged the Commission that this must stop. We

must come together as a unified nation, not alienating any one group. He concluded by saying the nation is a melting pot, we have all assimilated, we are all Americans.

(At 04:31:54) Ms. Poses introduced the next five people to speak: Kenneth Gross, Christine M. Flowers, Anne Kelly King, Mary Foster, Kathleen Galante and William Marchio.

Dr. Gross spoke in support of the statue remaining in its current location. He introduced himself as a physician with an interesting story to tell dating back 50 years. He spoke about his professional travels and encounters with various monuments to Christopher Columbus starting with Columbus Circle in New York City, monuments in Mexico City, Cuba, and other South American countries. He described the settlements of various Central and South American countries by Columbus, his son and brother, and their establishment of the first university in the Americas. He acknowledged the spread of smallpox that killed many natives in the Americas brought on by the Europeans and that there were problems with some of Columbus' tactics. Turning to his view on the statue, he stated that Philadelphia was an important, capital city in the Americas. The Columbus statue was significant not only to the local community but also because it was located in a major City like Philadelphia where it stood as a testament to Columbus' explorations and discoveries in the Western Hemisphere. Therefore, the statue should stand.

Ms. Flowers spoke in support of not removing the statue. She stated that the statue represented various things to her based on her identity as an Italian American, a Catholic and most importantly as an immigration attorney practicing immigration law for the past 25 years in Philadelphia, representing many asylum and refugee cases. As such, she stated, she was keenly aware of the displaced and marginalized. It gave her great joy that many of these clients were now American citizens. She stated that until now the City, which she loves, had never made her feel ashamed of her Italian heritage. But now, she stated, that had changed as she was being told to feel ashamed of a central part of that heritage, ashamed of the alleged acts of a heroic person of that heritage whose own diaries did not support those allegations. She stated her belief that the slurs that have been bandied about do not have historical support. She stated that she was present to say that she was not ashamed and those who live around the statue, those living in the 19148 and 19145 zip codes were not ashamed. While she appreciated this forum and the ability to speak out, she stated that these proceedings would not be the end. As an attorney she understood that legal processes must be and would be followed. Unlike other cities, she stated that this statue would not end up unceremoniously dumped in a river or beheaded. She also questioned that if it is OK to delegitimize Italian Americans today, will it then be OK to erase other histories tomorrow. She concluded by asking rhetorically where does it end, who gets to remain and who gets to choose – and quoted the famous statement of Martin Niemoller to the effect that if you don't speak up there may be no one left when they come for you.

(At 04:42:40) Ms. Berryman read a written statement from Ms. King, a staff person in Councilman Mark Squilla's office, which is summarized here. The statement urged the development of a process of full discussion around the existence of statues and art in the City. It stated that Philadelphia should be a leader in dealing with the current atmosphere on statues, art and history. As the nation's first world heritage City, the birthplace of America, and our nation's first capital, Philadelphia should set a precedent on the creation of constructive solutions to the divisive issues at play. It continued that we should be able to tell the entire history of our past - the good, the bad and the ugly. Whether the statue was art or a representation of history, it continued that public opinion needed to be taken into consideration. It stated the Councilman's belief that a process needed to be implement where the opinions of others on statues, murals or other art installations can be acknowledged and explored. It stated that we should learn from

our past as an opportunity to teach our future. For example, it cited the statue of George Washington, a slave owner, which stands in front of Independence Hall, while nearby the development of George Washington's House tells the story of his slaves. The statement proposed that this was one example of how to deal with the valid concerns of citizens and still acknowledge the facts of our history. We should not try to hide our history; but, instead, learn from it so as not to repeat past mistakes. In conclusion the statement urged that Philadelphia not follow other cities, but instead lead the nation with addition and multiplication rather than subtraction and division.

(At 04:45:56) Ms. Foster spoke in support of removing the statue. She introduced herself as an educator in Philadelphia. She stated that although she was a proud Italian and Native American and nearby resident, she did not see Christopher Columbus as a hero, but more as Jewish people see Hitler. She stated that she is deeply troubled, upset and hurt by the celebration of Columbus Day and finds the statue quite offensive, archaic and a misinterpretation of the truth. She pointed out that the statue stands on Lenape land where there once existed thriving Indigenous communities. In her view, the very absence of these people from this area represented genocide and the systematic racism that was created by colonialism. She concluded by saying that removal of the statue was but a small ask for the suffering of these people.

(At 04:48:11) Ms. Berryman read Ms. Galante's written statement, summarized here, which supported not removing the statue. In the statement Ms. Galante proposed that continuing to erase American history from our City was disgraceful and wrong. She stated that the City was full of beautiful art and beautiful people. She felt that the Mayor's removal of the statue would be an abuse of power. Further, she stated that the statue was a South Philly staple and removing it would be hurtful to the residents in the area. She questioned whether the people who have started the initiative to remove statues are from Philadelphia. She urged that the Commission pay attention to the people of Philadelphia who pay taxes here. She concluded by saying that removal of the statue will encourage residents to move out of the City because its removal amounts to erasing the City's rich history and culture.

Mr. Marchio stated his support for not removing the statue. He stated that he was a resident of the area who had been interviewed by Fox 29 as a person who was trying to go about this process democratically in support of his position of defending Christopher Columbus. He stated that much of what was being attributed to Columbus was not backed up by academic sources; rather it was conjecture. He stated that white supremacy could not be attributed to Columbus because white supremacy did not exist when Columbus was alive. He stated that the Atlantic slave trade actually occurred hundreds of years after Columbus. He stated that the choice of Columbus by early Italian Americans was their effort to confront oppression and lynching and to assimilate. They picked the only person that had ties to both Italy and America. He stated his opinion that it would be a great disservice to his Italian American ancestors to deny their choice of Columbus as their symbol. He stated that many historians disputed the accuracy of the current depiction of Columbus which is based on a book by Howard Zinn. He stated that if you take down the statue of Columbus, you will not be taking down his legacy, rather you will be taking down his family, Italian Americans and his community. He concluded by saying that the choice of an Italian representative should be left to the Italian American community.

(04:55:30) A discussion occurred between staff and the Commissioners advising the Commissioners that they could read approximately 12 questions or comments that were contained in the Zoom meeting Chat feature. The meeting then turned to persons who had not pre-registered, but during the meeting had indicated a desire to speak.

(At 04:58:07) Ms. Poses announced the next five people to speak: Jack Johnson, Maurizio Lo Piccolo, Gina Renzi, Nacerine Nordonne and Seth Dailey.

Mr. Johnson was offered an opportunity to speak but could not be found.

Mr. Piccolo spoke in support of not removing the statue. He began by saying that he agreed with the prior statements that had been made by Justice McCaffrey and the immigration attorney (Christine Flowers) who read the same quote by Martin Niemoller that he included in his own email to the Commission. He stated that he could understand the desire of the Mayor to deflect the anger against the statue and protect the citizens of Philadelphia by removing the statue. But in his view, this was the wrong action to take to reduce the current chaos in our cities. Rather he offered Mahatma Gandhi, Nelson Mandela and Martin Luther King as examples of leaders who thought it best to peacefully state their case for equal treatment and to work together harmoniously to make things right. Mandela did not call for retribution; he called for forgiveness and cooperation. Martin Luther King did not call for tearing down of other persons to address past wrongs. He disagreed with the taking down of Confederate statues as in his view, they were erect as a means of reconciliation in a war that was between brothers. Taking down statues of person of accomplishments even with all their shortcomings, only angered those who take pride in those accomplishments. He urged saying no to those who are making demands for these removals as giving in to those demands only encourages further demands and further unrest. He concluded by urging the Commission to just say no and prevent one group of people from greatly harming another group.

Ms. Renzi spoke in support of removing the statue. She introduced herself by describing her involvement as Executive Director and Director of several local artists organizations and stated that she had worked in community arts her entire career. She continued that she was born and raised in South Philadelphia and her family resided in the 19148 Zip Code. She said she was proud of her Italian American heritage and the struggles her family had overcome. She said she was just as Italian as other speakers of Italian descent who disagreed with her. She said that none of her pride or Italian history would be erased by removal of the Columbus statue. She could understand why so many of her fellow Italian Americans venerated Columbus. Like them, she had grown up going to Columbus Day parades which were synonymous with Italian pride. She also understood the presence of Columbus monuments as responding to the discrimination and vilification that had occurred against Italians in the past. But in her view, there were better representations. Notwithstanding the past, Italians had managed to break through and were no longer the victims of systemic racism as were other groups today. There were many other names that could be pulled from Italian history - trade workers, opera singers, artists or neighborhood heroes of Italian descent. Or an effort could be made to right the wrong done to the Leni-Lenape people by erecting a work that celebrates them. Any of these would be better than the representation of a man who had nothing to do with the values of Philadelphia. She concluded by urging the Commission to take this opportunity to change the narrative on Italian icons.

Nacerine Nordonne was offered an opportunity to speak but could not be found.

Mr. Dailey spoke in support of not removing the statue. He began by saying he was neither Italian or Native American, but an American. He thought that even talking about heritage was itself racist. By accomplishing his voyage, Columbus had brought Spain and America together. He felt that by undertaking this dangerous voyage, Columbus had accomplished a great thing that no one other than

Leif Erickson up to that time had tried. He was brave to have undertaken this journey and he deserved having the statue in his honor.

(At 05:12:37) Ms. Poses introduced the final group of persons to speak: Charles Tomaino, Violet Cutler, Anthony Delvecchio. In addition, two written statements would be read into the record.

Mr. Tomaino spoke in support of not removing the statue. He introduced himself as a born in America Italian American whose great grandparents came from Sicily to make a better life for his grandfather. He stated he understood the disparate historical accounts concerning Columbus. But in his opinion, the statue should remain because he questioned what would come next. He concluded by saying he loves his Italian history and he thinks the statue should remain.

Ms. Cutler spoke in support of removing the statue. She stated she wanted to make a point that referenced a statement Attorney Bochetto had made earlier concerning the importance of having scholarly reports that relate to whether Columbus was an enslaver and committed acts of atrocity. In her view these arguments were disingenuous because they elevated people who have acquired qualifications and certifications as a way to invalidate the experiences and perspectives of Blacks, Indians and other peoples of color. She felt these certifications were tied up in white supremacy, that people who are “authorities” to speak on topics like this tended to be white. Because of their privilege in attending universities they became experts in other people’s cultures. In her view the speakers who should be elevated in these conversations as they are more qualified to speak are Indigenous people and Black people.

Mr. Delvecchio spoke in support of not removing the statue. He stated that his family had roots in Philadelphia for over 100 years. He described his experience and perspective as one of the defenders of the statue. He said it began with the riots that had occurred in Center City and others in his community put their lives on the line trying to protect a Target located in the Community because the police were standing down. He stated that the Mayor called them racists and vigilantes, but they thought they were doing good. Turning to events a week later at Marconi Plaza, he said it was not about the statue, it was about protecting the community. He pointed out that for years there was no issue with the statue, but now it was all political. He concluded by saying that it was not the statue that caused the turmoil, rather it was people protecting their neighborhood. Therefore, the statue should remain.

(At 05:22:42) Ms. Poses acknowledged five raised hands from the public who wished to speak: Gloria Lamore, Anthony Rujaro, Athena, Brett Robinson and James Gitto.

Gloria Lamore was offered an opportunity to speak but could not be found.

Anthony Rujaro was offered an opportunity to speak but due to technical difficulties - it was possible that he was at a desk top computer lacking a speaker and therefore was not able to speak.

Athena (no last name available) was offered an opportunity to speak, but also due to technical difficulties – a desk top computer that lacked a speaker - she was not able to speak.

Ms. Robinson spoke in favor of removing the statue. She described her experience at Marconi Plaza during the protests against the statue. She stated that water was thrown at her, she was called a roach, ugly and stupid. She said grown adult men encircled her, but police did nothing. She wondered if the

history represented by the statue was worth people not being able to be at the Plaza safely. She went on to state that now was an opportunity to replace the statue with something greater – to replace it with something that better represented the community and where we are as a people today.

Mr. Gitto spoke in favor of removing the statue. He introduced himself as a neighbor of Marconi Plaza and the President of West Passyunk Neighborhood Association. He also sits on the Neubold CDC Board. He stated he is adamant that the statue should come down. He said he had received multiple death threats at both his home and business addresses, his home had been broken into, all because of the Columbus statue. He said there was no reason to have it there as it had no history to connect it with South Philadelphia. He concluded by endorsing everything that had been said by the previous speaker, Brett Robinson.

(At 05:30:38) Margot Berg responded to questions that had been raised in the Chat feature over the survey the City has conducted for public comment on the statue. She stated the survey contained open ended questions, was advertised by local TV, print media and social media, and 30 signs were put up at or near Marconi Plaza directing people to respond to the survey. In the final analysis of the survey, Ms. Berg explained that the City would look at the percent of participants relative to the total residents of the City.

With respect to Zip Codes 19145 and 19148, Ms. Berg stated that her team worked with a colleague at Drexel University to determine the minimum level of survey participation that when compared with the overall population in that Zip Code would reflect a reliable assessment of the two community's opinions. In the case of the 19145 Zip Code, with a total population of 47,261 based on the 2010 census, the minimum number of survey participants for a reliable assessment was 1,044. The survey actually exceeded that number as there were 1,049 responses from that Zip Code. In the case of the 19148 Zip Code with a total population of 49,732 based on the 2010 census, the minimum number of survey participants for a reliable assessment was 1,045. Again, the survey actually exceeded that number as there were 1,175 responses from that Zip Code.

Special Meeting is Continued

(At 05:32:48) Chairperson Greenberger reminded everyone that the Commission would not be taking a vote at today's special meeting on the City's proposal for the Christopher Columbus Statue. In compliance with a Court order, the Commission would await the decision of the Philadelphia Historical Commission and take that decision into consideration in its own decision to be made at a continued special meeting of the Commission scheduled for August 12, 2020. In deference to Art Commission colleagues who were not present for the entire meeting and needed time to view the portion of the recorded meeting they had missed and the upcoming vote of the Historical Commission, Chairperson Greenberger suggested that the Commission's deliberations as well as its vote be deferred to the August 12th meeting. Chairperson Greenberger then acknowledged that a total of 164 people observed the meeting which he felt was extraordinary. He thanked everyone for their participation, those who made public statements, and the Commissioner for their time.

Chairperson Greenberger asked Ms. Becker whether there should be a motion to continue the hearing to August 12th. Ms. Becker responded that a motion to continue was appropriate. Chairperson Greenberger called for the motion. The motion was made by Commissioner Nasser and seconded by Commissioner Roesch. The motion carried by a unanimous vote of the Commissioners present (6-0).

The July 22, 2020 special meeting of the Philadelphia Art Commission concluded at the minute mark (05:36:05) in the Zoom video.

The following written materials were submitted by the public for the Art Commission's consideration in connection with its proceeding on the City's proposal for the Christopher Columbus Statue located in Marconi Plaza:

1. George Bochetto Written Materials #1 – July 17, 2020

- Exhibit A – Correspondence between Counsel for Friends of Marconi Plaza and Counsel for the City of Philadelphia concerning the postponement of the Historical Commission hearing;
- Exhibit B – Statement of George Bochetto, Esquire, concerning Fairmount Park Commission's jurisdiction;
- Exhibit C – Letter and evidence related to serious conflict of interest concerning Historical Commission and Art Commission's counsel;
- Exhibit D – Philadelphia's biased public survey that treats the removal of the Statue as a forgone conclusion;
- Exhibit E – Statement of Carol L. Delaney, Christopher Columbus Expert, Emerita Professor, Stanford University;
- Exhibit F – Letters from Francis Recchuiti, Esq., legal counsel to the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania Sons and Daughters of Italy, to Mayor James Kenney;
- Exhibit G – NBC New York Article: "Controversial Columbus Statue Will Stay, City Says;"
- Exhibit H – Observer Article: "New York City to Keep Columbus Statue, Build Monument Honoring Indigenous People;"
- Exhibit I – CNN Article: "Cuomo, de Blasio don't want to see Christopher Columbus statue removed or NYC's Columbus Square renamed;"
- Exhibit J – Court Ordered Stipulation concerning treatment of Columbus Statue;
- Exhibit K – Unanswered subpoenas sent in an effort to prepare for Art Commission and Historical Commission hearings; Administration's response to subpoenas;
- Exhibit L – Motion for Preliminary Injunction and accompanying exhibits;
- Exhibit M – Response to City that the publicly advertised policy addressing the removal of statues is applicable;
- Exhibit N – Historical Commission Nomination/Designation Documents.

2. George Bochetto Written Materials #2 – July 21, 2020

- Carol L. Delaney Bibliography;
- Correspondence between Francis Recchuiti and Mayor Kenney;
- Testimony of Carol Delaney;
- Curriculum Vitae of Russell Kolins, BSSM, CCDI, ICACP, BAI
- Security for Christopher Columbus Statue at Marconi Plaza, Report of Kolins Security Group, dated July 21, 2020 (updated);
- Summary document of work of Professor Carol Delaney.

3. George Bochetto Written Materials #3 – July 22, 2020

- Two reports by Robert F. Petrone, Esquire, to City Council of the City of Philadelphia,- (1) “History of the Indies Book I of III,” dated December 6, 2018, and (2) “History of the Indies Books II and III (of III)”, dated March 18, 2019.

4. Rue Landau Written Materials – July 22, 2020

- Letter dated July 22, 2020, from Rue Landau, Esq., Executive Director, on behalf of the Philadelphia Commission on Human Relations to the Philadelphia Art Commission.

5. Celeste A. Morello Written Materials forwarded by the Philadelphia Historical Commission – July 14, 2020

- Memorandum (undated) from Celeste A. Morello to Jonathan E. Farnham, Executive Director, Philadelphia Historical Commission containing the written statement of Ms. Morello which she requested be shared with the Art Commission for consideration.

6. Public Written Materials received on or before July 21, 2020

- Letter dated July 20, 2020, from Helen Gym, Councilmember At-Large, to the Philadelphia Art Commission.
- Letter dated July 20, 2020, from Amy Eusebio, Executive Director, on behalf of the City of Philadelphia, Office of Immigrant Affairs, to the Philadelphia Art Commission.
- Letter dated July 21, 2020, from Michael J. Lewis, Faison-Pierson-Stoddard Professor of Art, to Alan Greenberger, Chair, Philadelphia Art Commission.
- Statement of Steve Perzan dated July 20, 2020.
- Statement of Anthony DeJoseph.
- Statement of Christine M. Flowers.
- Statement of Kate (no last name provided).
- Statement of Theresa Vaccarino.

7. Public Written Materials received on July 22, 2020

- Letter dated July 22, 2020, from Mark Squilla, Councilman, 1st District, to the Philadelphia Art Commission.
- Statement of Joseph V. Scelsa dated July 22,2020.

II. Continued Special Meeting of Philadelphia Art Commission, August 12, 2020 – Deliberation and Vote on the City’s Presentation of its Proposal on the Christopher Columbus Statue in Marconi Plaza.

Commissioners present: Alan Greenberger, Jose Alminana, Carmen Febo-San Miguel, Steven Hartner, Joe Laragione, Raed Nasser, Natalie Nixon, Robert Roesch, Mario Zacharjasz

(At 00:00:04) Beige Berryman, staff member for the Art Commission, stated that this meeting is a continuation of the special meeting of the Art Commission held on July 22, 2020, regarding the City’s

proposal for the Christopher Columbus Statue at Marconi Plaza. Ms. Berryman then explained the Zoom platform and remote meeting process, advising that the meeting was being recorded, and informed those attending the meeting that by participating in the meeting they were giving their consent to be recorded. Ms. Berryman also explained that the meeting video, meeting agenda, and written materials submitted by the City and the public would also be posted on the Art Commission's website at: (<https://www.phila.gov/departments/philadelphia-art-commission/>).

Ms. Berryman conducted a roll call of the Commissioners in attendance (all confirmed their presence), then turned the meeting over to Chairperson Greenberger.

(At 00:03:20) Chairperson Greenberger began the meeting by mentioning that at the previous special meeting, the Commission took public statements from 70 persons over the course of six hours. Additionally, by court order, the Commission had been directed to delay its deliberations and final decision until the Historical Commission had a chance to deliberate and make its decision. He read the Historical Commission's decision into the record as follows:

"On July 24, 2020, The Historical Commission voted to approve the City's application as necessary in the public interest, provided the following four conditions were met: (1) The statue is stored at an undisclosed, secure location within the City of Philadelphia; (2) The statue is moved to the storage facility under the auspices of a conservator and by a firm experienced in the moving of important works of art; (3) The City reports to the Historical Commission annually on the statue's condition and situation; and, (4) The statue is visually recorded with a three-dimensional, digital, laser scan before it is moved to the storage facility."

(At 00:04:30) Commissioner Laragione suggested that the City should make a commitment to bring its proposal before the Art Commission again in one year, after the social climate has changed. Chairperson Greenberger responded that he might ask Commissioner Laragione to repeat that suggestion during deliberations.

(At 00:05:13) Chairperson Greenberger explained that the Commission would now begin its deliberations. He invited each Commissioner to comment and offer their points of view. He said that following the deliberations he would ask for a motion to be followed by a vote.

(At 00:05:46) Commissioner Roesch initiated the discussion by noting that Emanuele Caroni made the statue in 1876 and it was not site specific as it had been moved from a previous site to Marconi Plaza. He shared that while he was looking over the six hours of recording of the special meeting held on July 22, 2020, he began to realize that history is all about who's telling the story. He looked up an article entitled, "*Who is the Real Christopher Columbus*," by David Morrell who in turn called upon Matthew Restall, a Penn State University professor of history, to talk about this piece of art. Professor Restall described that there are two "Christopher Columbuses:" one from the 15th Century, who is Genoese and spent most of his time in Portugal, and then there is the 19th Century Columbus, who is Italian. From this Commissioner Roesch concluded that there seems to be great conflict about the exploits of the two "Christopher Columbuses" and like all history it is spin, depending on who is telling the story. He continued that public art belongs to the public, and the public either embraces it or they don't. He stated that when he sees a work of art being spray painted and people standing around it with guns and bats, he finds it very upsetting as that is not the purpose that public art should serve. Furthermore, in his view to suggest that the community can guard the artwork is patently absurd. Unrest leads to more unrest.

Commissioner Roesch suggested the artwork be removed and held in storage for a period of 90-days, because the art no longer had the respect of the public as art. During that 90-days, he suggested the City would have an opportunity, perhaps with the help of concerned citizens, to decide on another location for the art on private ground where it could begin a new life as an object of art – maybe the Philadelphia Museum of Art. If a decision couldn't be made in 90-days, then Commissioner Roesch said he would like a report from the City team at the first Commission meeting following the 90-day period on what progress they have made towards relocating the statue. He did not want to see the statue sitting in storage for the rest of its life. In closing, Commissioner Roesch cited the example of a work of art known as "Titled Arc," by Richard Sagor, which was located on a site in New York City from 1981 to 1989. For various reasons the work became controversial and the public wanted it removed. It had lost its definition as public art. The controversial piece was removed, placed in storage in Maryland where it remains today. Commissioner Roesch stated that he would not want that to be the fate of this Columbus statue which he considered to be a rather nice sculpture of Christopher Columbus whatever he was.

(At 00:09:55) Commissioner Laragione proposed that after the statue goes into storage within one (1) year it should come back to the Art Commission for a decision on its location – whether returning it to Marconi Plaza or another Philadelphia location. He stated his personal preference that it return to Marconi Plaza because the people who live in South Philadelphia love the statue. He believed the statue should be stored temporarily and return to the Art Commission within a reasonable period of time.

(At 00:10:39) Commissioner Raed stated his belief that a statue should not be removed because of unrest, violence or because people are angry about it. He disagreed with placing the statue in storage as that would be a disgrace to the artist who built it and all the years that it had stood as a representation of the community. Rather, he felt that it should be located with a community that is proud of it. Therefore, he suggested that a community center be found that would embrace the statue, perhaps place it on its front steps where people could see it and be proud of it.

(At 00:12:23) Commissioner Laragione stated his view that no matter where the statue is relocated, it will be tracked down and efforts to destroy it will continue. Therefore, he recommended that it should be secured and protected at this time until the unrest settles down.

(At 00:12:42) Commissioner Febo San Miguel expressed her opinion that Commissioner Roesch had presented an argument that reflected the complexities of the issues involved. She did not think it was as simple as saying you shouldn't yield to unrest. She stated that minority communities have been misrepresented historically by characters imposed on minority communities that hurt those communities. Whether or not the Commission agreed with revising history, she observed that the feelings on both sides were very deep and strong. She stated that she could understand why the City had come up with a plan to store the statue as putting it into storage respected it, didn't mean that it would be destroyed, but rather allowed time to consider the complexities and sensitivities that were involved. Commissioner Febo San Miguel agreed that the statue should come back to the Commission, although she felt that ninety (90) days might not be enough time to arrive at the best option. Perhaps, as suggested by Commissioner Laragione, revisiting the statue within a year would provide sufficient time to conduct the kind of analysis that respects the strong and convincing arguments that had been articulated to the Commission by both sides on the historical equation that was Christopher Columbus.

(At 00:15:16) Commissioner Nixon stated that there were many learning moments for her in listening to the public testimony that was presented to the Commission. A large takeaway for her was the diversity

in the Italian community. As an African American, she could appreciate that diversity as no culture should be perceived as monolithic. For example, she appreciated learning of the trauma that had been experienced by early Italian immigrants with the lynching's in Louisiana. She stated that she is not an advocate of erasure of any culture and she could see that removal of the statue might symbolize a type of erasure. However, she felt that we also need to be mindful of the context of art, that it does not live in a vacuum. At this moment when systemic racism was being publicly address and because of the social justice protests, she expressed her view that the Columbus statue had become a living symbol of all types of revisionist history around the man, Christopher Columbus, not the icon. She stated that she was not an advocate of permanent storage of the statue. However, given the times, she thought that it was important that the statue be temporarily removed from its current location. She also felt that the Commission should revisit and identify another location for the statue, a place where people who had an affinity for what Columbus represented to them could access the statue in a new context. In the name of avoiding total erasure, Commissioner Nixon concluded by saying that it would be interesting to explore another sort of artistic contribution that reflected the true diversity of Italian American perspectives and Italian American experiences in Philadelphia specifically and maybe in the United States more broadly.

(At 00:19:47) Commissioner Almiñana expressed his appreciation for the commentary he had heard from the Commission thus far. He stated that he believed the statue represented a flashing point right now, bringing about raw feelings that were not being managed properly by some individuals. He stated that the statue posed a conflict that was expressed by differing interpretations of history. He felt that it was important to take this moment in Philadelphia to have a meaningful discussion involving a convergence of ideas in such a way as to reconcile opposing perspectives, taking into consideration the arguments made on both sides that came from many different perspectives. Taking down confederate statues was one thing, but having a lasting discussion about them and having a lasting impact on our culture should be the purpose. In his view, it would be a shame if the statue was removed just for the sake of protecting public art. Rather, the statue should be removed to protect the people that come in contact with it, protect the people from each other which was the unfortunate reality at this time. However, he stated that it would be a shame if the removal did not also include a meaningful discussion that reconciled both sides perhaps around a resetting of this particular object of art among other objects of art. That, he concluded, would be his proposal.

(At 00:23:40) Commissioner Zacharjasz agreed with Commissioner Roesch that the statue is public art. Given the current unrest, he did not think that storage of the statue for 90 days would be enough, suggesting instead that perhaps one (1) year would be long enough. He stated his opinion that the statue did not represent the Italian American community; rather it was just an icon of Christopher Columbus. He stated that he learned much from the public statements that were made to the Commission, both pro and con. There were Italian Americans who were for that statute and Italian Americans who were against it. Both sides had strong, passionate feelings. He concluded by stating that he believed the statue should be stored.

(At 00:25:12) Commissioners Roesch, Raed, Zacharjasz and Chairperson Greenberger briefly discussed and clarified issues of the storage, amount of time, and relocation pertaining to the statue. The consensus formed by this discussion was that storage of the statue should not be permanent, but whether 90 days, one year or another period, a suitable place to relocate the statue should be found, and there should be movement forward on determining the place of relocation.

(At 00:27:44), Chairperson Greenberger expressed appreciation for the thoughtful comments of the Commissioners, stating that, as always, they arose to the occasion on difficult subjects. He stated that he too was moved by what he had heard from both points of view. Looking at the numbers, he felt that the points of view expressed were evenly split between those who wanted the statue removed and those who favored keeping it. It was also very clear that those who spoke from either point of view made very powerful, sincere, heartfelt statements. The Chairperson then made the following points:

First, in response to many comments that were made regarding the precedential nature of the decision – suggested by comments such as “if this statue is taken down due to a small group of people, where does it all end?” - he said that as a general rule the Commission does not act according to precedents, rather it takes things at their own value, depending on the circumstances of each case. He reminded the Commission that in this instance, it was the elected officials, the leadership of the City of Philadelphia that had initiated the proposal before the Commission, not a group of random citizens. He observed that that fact did not necessarily compel the Commission to support such a proposal; in fact, in the past the Commission hadn’t supported proposals made by various public agencies. But he thought it was important to be reminded that we do not operate in an Athenian democracy where individuals decide every issue, rather we operate in a representative democracy.

Second, he stated that it was clear from the testimony that there were multiple “Columbuses” out there and the point of view of a statue or individual or a fact of history alters over time as circumstances alter. Changing circumstances, he proposed, can be a legitimate vehicle for a reexamination of a piece of art. He was not concerned with the idea of precedent being set if the Commission chose to support the removal of the statue. He continued that we are finding out today that heroes are imperfect. In his view, the question was not whether they are perfect, rather the question is what their ideals stand for or what people now believe they stand for. A balance should be struck. He recalled that someone had made the public comment about the Vietnam Memorial and whether it would be next. No, in his view it would not be next. Elected officials were not likely to put it forward and even if they did the debate would be quite different by the nature of the memorial, the intentions behind it and the beliefs held about it. However, he was also very moved by how the Italian American community had adopted the statue as a symbol. He thought that many of the people who supported removal of the statue saw Columbus, the person, while many in the Italian American community who spoke in favor of the statue saw it as a symbol of a long journey, that had tragedy in it, but who had emerged from it to become full members of the American community. However, whether that symbol should continue to be invested on public land in the form of Christopher Columbus he felt was legitimately debatable. Even if the Commission were to elect to support the City’s proposal to move the statue, he submitted that there was a broader obligation to consider that journey of Italian Americans in Philadelphia just as the journeys of other groups in Philadelphia were celebrated sometimes through holidays, sculpture, memorials or events. Therefore, he felt it was incumbent upon the City to work with local community groups to consider how the story of Italian immigration to this country gets told. There are many ways the story can be told, he said, it does not necessarily need to be told through a statue.

Last, the Chairperson expressed his views on the timing. He thought he sensed a consensus among the Commissioners that as a matter of practicality the statue needed to be removed. The statue was a serious piece of art, a gift from Italian residents of the City and it needed to be put safely into storage until its future could be figured out. He agreed with other Commissioners that the worst that could happen is that it is put into storage and forgotten. However, sorting out the life and meaning of the statue would take some time. He suggested that it would not be unfair to ask the City to make a report back to the

Commission so that there is an on-going statement from the Commission on what happens to the statue. He thought that the more likely time frame for a final resolution would be a year as opposed to 90 days, especially given the social and COVID-related issues existing today; but a report back along the way would be appropriate. He concluded his remarks by saying that if the Commission intended to support removal of the statue it should do so with caveats that obligated the City to provide on-going commentary of its business in dealing with the statue. It should not just remain in a warehouse forever and be forgotten.

(At 00:38:42) Commissioner Almiñana proposed that the City be required to report back in a shorter timeframe than a year so that the Commission would know that the City was moving forward, suggesting that maybe a report be made in 4 months by the beginning of next year. He felt that the views of all interested ethnic groups should be heard, positive or negative, on the subject of the statue. He said that it was critical that all sides be heard. Ultimately, he felt that the Commission had an obligation to put forward a process that would work towards the betterment of the City.

(At 00:41:06) Commissioner Zacharjasz recommended that any report the Commission required of the City should include specific information such as an update on whether the statue was going to be relocated, not just reporting on the physical condition of the statue. He also agreed on the inclusion of diverse ethnic groups in the discussion.

(At 00:42:23) Commissioner Roesch recommended that the team Ms. Berg assembled to consider the statue's future should include leaders and residents from the community that represented a diversity of ethnic backgrounds. Bringing these voices to the table could provide a great opportunity to have a meaningful discussion.

(At 00:43:06) Commissioner Nasser agreed that it was important to involve the community in a discussion of where to relocate the statue, including Latinos as well as Italian Americans. He expressed the hope that within five or six months a place could be found, and the statue could come out of storage.

(At 00:43:58) Commissioner Febo San Miguel stated that she thought the recommendations on the statue made by the Philadelphia Historical Commission were very sound, for example, in that they recommended the involvement of experts in moving the statue and putting it into a place that was undisclosed and secure. She also agreed, like other Commissioners, with the requirement of a report back to the Commission. She expressed her opinion that the City's proposal was rushed and the survey the City conducted was not as scientifically sound as it should have been. She recommended that the City consider engaging a firm that could conduct a well thought out, objective survey that included the kind of public involvement other Commissioners were requesting.

(At 00:46:08) Commissioner Laragione expressed his concern for the dangers that were posed by moving a marble sculpture of this size and design. He proposed as an alternative that the Commission consider leaving the statue in place and requiring a security company to be engaged to protect the statue. He suggested that maybe after a few months had passed, the security would no longer be needed. He felt that negative things could be found against anyone. As an example, he pointed to recent statements relating to the person for whom Logan Square was named – that he abused native American Indians. He felt that these acts had no bearing on the quality of the sculptures, and we should not entertain the concept of their destruction.

(At 00:47:32) Chairperson Greenberger reiterated that while the Commission had a role in the process of reviewing City owned art, the Commission wasn't the initiator of that process, rather it is initiated by the City's elected leaders. However, Chairperson Greenberger did acknowledge his agreement with Commissioner Laragione's concern about the danger of moving pieces of art, particularly if they are marble. However, he knew that the City has available to it very accomplished and serious art movers and conservators such that even without the Historical Commission decision, he was sure the City would move the statue with the utmost care and professionalism. He was more worried about the dangers to the statue if it remained in place.

(At 00:49:01) Seeing no further questions or comments from the Commission, Chairperson Greenberger called for a motion.

Motion and Vote

The commission's discussion of a motion to reflect its final decision begins at minute mark (00:49:25) in the video.

Commissioner Roesch stated that he would like to see the statue removed for many reasons, including the safety of both the sculpture and the public; that it be put into storage and a group of people immediately brought together to consider how to get the statue on private property; that this process would include a mechanism by which the Commission would be informed on how the process was moving forward.

Commissioner Nasser suggested that there be a five to six-month period to report back.

Chairperson Greenberger suggested that the Commission consider a stipulation that there be a first report in six months and that thereafter reports be made on an on-going basis at six-month intervals until there was a final resolution to locate the statue on private land.

Commissioner Laragione suggested that it might be easier to destroy the statue if it was located on private land. Chairperson Greenberger responded that the Commission's obligation related to public land and that once it was located by agreement of the involved parties to private land any on-going issues that might arise would not be in front of the Commission.

In response to an inquiry by Chairperson Greenberger, Commissioner Roesch indicated his agreement with the concept of repetitive six-month reporting intervals being added to his motion.

Commissioner Almiñana raised a new issue for the Commission's consideration of the consequences to Marconi Plaza upon the removal of the statue. He suggested that the iron fence area around the statue might be the place where the dialogue starts over what should happen to the statue and that space once the statue is removed. He perceived an opportunity to leave a legacy out of what has been a painful and intense process for many. These discussions could occur in Marconi Plaza in honor of the communities represented, in honor of the history that was subject to multiple interpretations. Chairperson Greenberger agreed that he too had been concerned about the park. He said the statue was rather a small part of a much larger geography and probably the Park needed rethinking, That, he acknowledged, was not the proposal before the Commission, but he encouraged the City to take advantage of this moment as an

opportunity to (1) rethink the park in a broad conversation that included the diverse racial and ethnic communities that more recently had resettled to make their lives in this area; (2) absent the statue, consider how to tell more meaningful stories about the people who lived near and used the park with regularity, there were many ways to tell these stories – signs, photos, digital, oral - that were more achievable than new pieces of bronze and marble.

Commissioner Almiñana added that he did not want to see the place where the statue stood - the footings, the fenced in area - become a void. He was concerned that after the statue is removed Marconi Plaza would become a place where everyone can feel they belong, and healing can take place. He recommended was that the Department of Parks and Recreation and the community organizations that care for the park have a dialogue that involved everyone, that was all encompassing and more democratic.

(At 01:03:32) Returning to Commissioner Roesch’s motion, Chairperson Greenberger reiterated that a stipulation be added that the City report to the Commission in six-month intervals on its progress in terms of finding a place to relocate the statue. In other words, the statue should not remain in storage forever. Chairperson Greenberger continued that the Commission was also recommending that the City engage in a broad set of discussions about Marconi Plaza itself, how it could be used as a vehicle for broad community engagement about the park, about the communities that have a stake in it and about their stories. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Nasser.

(At 01:05:00) Commissioner Laragione asked the Commission to consider another proposal - that after storing the statue for six months, it be returned to its current location in Marconi Plaza. He felt that the statue should return to Marconi Plaza because the people from that area care about the statue and it is important to their culture. He did not want to see the statue kept away from the community forever. Chairperson Greenberger responded that in his view it was for the City and not the Commission to make a proposal on what should happen to the statue going forward.

(At 01:07:43) Commissioner Laragione made a counter motion that the statue be allowed to remain where it is, that in six months the Art Commission revisit the statue, and in the interim a security firm be hired to guard the statue.

(At 01:08:00) Chairperson Greenberger asked if there were any seconds to the motion made by Commissioner Laragione; seeing none, Chairperson Greenberger asked the Commission to vote on the motion that Commissioner Roesch proposed and had been seconded by Commissioner Nasser, with the amendments, stipulations and recommendations previously noted.

(At 01:11:19) Seeing no further questions or comments, Chairperson Greenberger asked Ms. Berryman to conduct a roll call of the vote. Ms. Berryman proceeded with the motion and second then on the table:

Commissioner Almiñana - Aye;
Commissioner Miguel - Aye;
Commissioner Hartner - Aye;
Commissioner Laragione – Abstain;
Commissioner Nasser - Aye;
Commissioner Nixon - Aye;
Commissioner Roesch - Aye;

Commissioner Zacharjasz – Aye; and
Chairperson Greenberger - Aye.

The Commission voted to approve the City’s proposal as follows: Ayes – 8
Nays – 0
Abstention - 1

Chairperson Greenberger thanked the Commission for their efforts, complementing them for making the City proud through their deliberations and conclusion. He expressed additional thanks to everyone who took part in the discussion - the 70 people who took the time to sit for six hours and speak at the previous special meeting, Ms. Becker for providing all the legal advice, Ms. Berryman and her team, all of the City staff, as well as the 64 people that participated in this continued meeting. Thank you for your support.

The Philadelphia Art Commission Meeting was adjourned by Chairperson Greenberger at the minute mark (01:13:42) in video.

Findings and Conclusions of the Philadelphia Art Commission:

Findings:

1. The Affidavit of Philadelphia Police Officer Francis T. Healy, Special Advisor to the Police Commissioner, and the news reports that were submitted with the City’s proposal described on-going incidents of violence, confrontation and civil unrest stemming from the existence of the Christopher Columbus Statue in Marconi Plaza.
2. In response to the incidents of violence, confrontation and civil unrest the City, pursuant to a court stipulation, constructed a plywood box around the statue so that it could no longer be seen.
3. The Letter of Katherine Ott Lovell, the Commissioner of Parks and Recreation dated July 13, 2020, states that even after the statue was boxed up the threat of violence at the statue did not subside as clashes continued to break out at the end of June 2020.
4. The Christopher Columbus Statue was a gift to the City of Philadelphia from the Italian American citizens of Philadelphia in 1876 in connection with the Centennial Exhibition held in West Fairmount Park which celebrated the 100th anniversary of the birth of our Nation.
5. In 1976 the Christopher Columbus Statue was re-located from its original location in Fairmount Park to its current location in Marconi Plaza.
6. The Christopher Columbus Statue is a work of art owned by the City of Philadelphia consisting of the the figure of Christopher Columbus sculpted in marble and is representative of such sculptures from the late 19th century.
7. The public statements made to the Commission by both those in favor of the statue remaining in Marconi Plaza and those who wished to see it removed were sincere and passionate and demonstrated that there are divergent and strongly held views on both sides of Christopher Columbus the man and Christopher Columbus the icon.

8. While to some the Christopher Columbus statue represents white supremacy, oppression and systemic racism against ethnic minorities and Indigenous peoples, to others the statue symbolizes courage, the journeys of immigrants to the new world, and the important contributions of the Italian American culture to the City of Philadelphia and this country.

Conclusions:

1. In the current climate of social unrest, the Christopher Columbus Statue located in Marconi Plaza presents a danger to public safety, including to the statue itself, the users of Marconi Plaza, and the citizens of Philadelphia.

2. In the current climate of social unrest, it is not feasible for the City or private citizens to provide adequate security to protect both the statue and the public from harm.

3. Due to the public safety issues raised by the statue, the City's proposal to remove the statue and place it in storage at a secure facility until another appropriate alternative location is identified is in the best interest of the public health, welfare and safety.

4. The City has the resources in the form of professional movers and conservators of art to safely remove the statute to a secure location.

5. As a work of art that remains significant to many Philadelphians, the Christopher Columbus Statue should not be placed in permanent storage and forgotten; the storage that is now necessary for public safety reasons should be temporary while a process is initiated by the City to determine the appropriate relocation and future of the statue.

6. The current controversy surrounding the Christopher Columbus Statue presents an opportunity to the City to initiate a broad discussion that includes the divergent points of view expressed by the diverse multi-ethnic communities holding a stake in the statue's future and the impact of its removal on Marconi Plaza; therefore, the process undertaken by the City to determine the statue's future should include this broad discussion.

7. At the conclusion of the process initiated by the City to reach a final decision on the appropriate relocation and future of the statue, the City must return to the Art Commission for the Commission's approval of that decision.

8. To ensure that there is forward progress in the City's process of reaching a final decision on the relocation and future of the statue, it is necessary that the Commission require the City to make periodic, on-going reports to the Commission that describe (a) the actions that have been taken as of the date of the report, (b) the future actions it intends to take and (c) the estimated time it anticipates before a final decision on the statue is presented to the Commission.

Art Commission Decision:

Approval – The Christopher Columbus Statue may be removed from Marconi Plaza and placed temporarily into safe and secure storage provided the following conditions are met:

- The City shall conduct a deliberative process that includes broad community engagement to determine an appropriate resolution for the future location of the statue.
- The City shall report to the Art Commission every six months on the progress of those deliberations until a resolution on the statue's future location is reached.
- The City shall return to the Art Commission with the proposal it reaches on the statue's future location through the deliberative process required by this decision.

Basis for Decision: Temporary removal as conditioned is necessary in the interest of public safety to protect both the public and the statue itself.

Recommendation: The Art Commission encourages the City to conduct a broad community engagement process to consider the physical condition of Marconi Plaza following the statue's removal as well as the long-term future of Marconi Plaza.

The next Art Commission Meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday, September 2, 2020 at 9:30 a.m.** via Zoom platform.