

Resolution endorsing the Board of Park Commissioners' decision to remove the Hiawatha statue from Riverside Park.

AMENDED RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, one purpose of the Arts Board is to advocates for the arts by commenting on policies and plans, including plans the remove statues;

WHEREAS, the United States continues to contend with the legacy and lasting harm of racism and settler colonialism, including appropriating Indigenous culture and offering generalized, stereotyped representations of Indigeneity.

WHEREAS, the work of Indigenous activists in our community, including ~~Dan Green, Tracy Littlejohn, and Matthew Stewart~~, among many others, have educated the public on the harmful effects of the Hiawatha statue;

WHEREAS, the Hiawatha statue is part of a legacy of visual culture, literature, and public space with colonial perspectives; and standing markers of appropriation evoke the even more violent expressions of systemic oppression that Indigenous people have endured.

WHEREAS, removing the statue is not intended to disrespect its creator, Central High School art teacher Anthony Zimmerhagl, whose intentions were good despite the white popular culture concept of Indigenous people which was (and largely still is) flooded with homogenized and dehumanized portrayals.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City of La Crosse Arts Board that it stands with cities across the country in taking action to dismantle the forms of injustice and inequity symbolized by our public monuments by endorsing the Board of Park Commissioners' decision to remove the Hiawatha statue from Riverside Park.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Arts Board intends to lead the effort in the statue's replacement, to ensure that public art is inclusive for all in the La Crosse community, and to redress the slights and erasures evident within the City's public art and symbols.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Arts Board will initiate new monuments, artworks, and historic markers that reflect the composition of our city as a whole, and affirm the values of justice, equity, and human rights; this initiative will engage public input as essential to the process by which new artworks are added to the city's collection.