

February 8, 2022

Hello House Legacy Committee Members,

I'm writing to you regarding MN Historical Society's use and administration of Legacy funds. Kent Whitworth will be delivering an overview of the nonprofit's management of more than \$20 million of public tax dollars.

I have been watching MNHS for nearly five years in connection with the nonprofit's use of bonding funds via the Historic Fort Snelling Revitalization construction project. For 3 ½ years, I have watched MNHS's actions as a federal signatory to the project federal Section 106 Process. Sadly, even the change in MNHS's directors has not curbed what I consider to be gross negligence and fraud of public funds.

A few comments will support my view.

MNHS's Legacy report states all grants are up to date on the website Legacy.mn.gov. This statement is polarizing. Not only are grants not up-to-date, MNHS staff states there is generally a one year lag time between the grant end date and what is shown on the website (email to me from MNHS). Further, grants more than 5 years old still are not completed. Still. For example, a 2015 grant for a Shakopee and Medicine Bottle event still reads "In Progress" on the website; while only \$5,000, the event created an intimidating organization, the Dakota Community Council (DCC); <https://www.legacy.mn.gov/projects/shakopee-and-medicine-bottle-event>. As with regional grant offices, MNHS needs to exclude applicants from competing for grants until the applicant has completed all previous grants; MNHS included!

Transparency continues to be put in the limelight at MNHS's choosing. MNHS's report page 6 singles out transparency and MNHS's dedication to it. That is not the case and hasn't been for at least 4 years. I have asked for grant materials, including applications, comments and closing requirements such as receipts and have been repeatedly denied access. MNHS says it is a nonprofit and therefore is not required to show proof of anything, including publicly funded programs. Ask to see a detailed list of its "partners."

If you read the current Legacy Amendment, MNHS is awarded over \$6 million to do with as it pleases. No where does MNHS has to provide detailed accounting,

list its “partners” or give an accounting for dollar amounts given to “groups.” State statute Chapter 13 protects nonprofits even with public funds are involved.

A case in point is the DCC, Dakota Community Council, created specifically to design the Shakopee and Medicine Bottle Memorial, Place of Remembrance, and other significant areas of the Fort Snelling Revitalization project. In MNHS’s 2020 report *Ninety Percent Design Description and Preliminary Assessment of Effects*, a report submitted to the federal government and created using funds appropriated under 2018 bonding, reads the “area is approached via a circular walkway to encourage thoughtfulness and respect for the memory of Wakanozanzan and Sakepan (Medicine Bottle and Shakopee).” The two were convicted and hanged at Fort Snelling for crimes against humanity; intentional murder of a single group of people, in this case unarmed American (white) civilians. The report clearly connects the dots of what “partners” means to MNHS, a nonprofit.

Fast forward to November 2021, 6 years later, and MNHS held a Native American Indian Community Day. The event was advertised as Legacy funded according to signage on site prior to and on the day of and according to several websites. However, MNHS claimed the event was not Legacy funded when I asked for a copy of the grant application materials. Coincidentally, the lunch given was from a company owned by an MNHS Executive Council member. This leans more to a conflict of interest than transparency.

Also, within the 2022 Legacy report, I noticed a very important missing piece – exclusion - entire cultures are being ignored. The feature story of the Chert quarry misses the mark. The process is continuing to exclude vital tribes from the planning process. The Oneota culture was declared an enemy of the Dakota and all remaining Dakota tribes in Minnesota. The Oneota tribes spoke a completely different language. Any signage being developed by an existing Minnesota tribe will be unbalanced and untrue because it is not reflective of the descendants of the Oneota people – of which are the Ioway, also a federally recognized tribe. MNHS’s support of this “partnership” without inclusion of the direct descendants of the Oneota culture is a travesty and only extends the erasure of those tribes from the Minnesota landscape, a landscape the Ioway called homeland until forcibly erased by war declared by the Dakota.

The Ioway people have also been erased in the Pilot Knob/Oheywahe project mentioned in the report. Also not mentioned is a key member of the “partner” Pilot Knob Preservation Association (page 46) is the spouse of a key employee of

MNHS. In 2012, the same pair funneled nearly \$100,000 of Legacy funds to craft a book that is now being scrutinized for its false claims against early Minnesota residents. By the way, that 2012 grant was a one year grant, but it is listed as “ongoing” a decade later via the legacy.mn.gov website.

<https://www.legacy.mn.gov/projects/us-dakota-war-1862-publications>

Finally, an element that needs to be addressed in legislative methods is the Statewide Survey segment of ACHF Legacy. Surveys are used for National Historic Register nominations and updates. While they can be used for other documentation, a survey is necessary for Register preparations, initial and revision. Minnesota’s Department of Administration now controls the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) whose job is to maintain the State’s Register, statewide and national. SHPO has only recently moved to the Dept. of Admin from MNHS, the nonprofit. There is no longer reason for MNHS to administer this segment of funding nor control any aspect of Statewide surveys unless it is interested in its own nonprofit ventures. Therefore, this is a technical change that needs to be updated within Legacy and budget. When Legacy was developed, SHPO was part of the nonprofit MNHS. Due to the move, the funds need to move as well. This requires a bill to make the change.

This is a lot to digest and I am available to help answer any questions. I have no professional relationship or financial gain to profit from in writing to you. Rather, I have become invested in MNHS’s activities as a result of their access denial to reports crucial to the Fort Snelling Revitalization program. MNHS refused me access under their nonprofit classification. After creating a group and applying for inclusion as a federal signatory in the federal processes associated with construction, I was given access to the reports. If you are not permitted access to those reports, please contact and I will see you get them.

On a final note, page 39 of the Legacy report reveals \$63,000 for Veterans Relations. I have never heard of any special group for veterans. No veterans group is listed as a Consulting Party in the federal Section 106 Process. Dakota Community Council, developed and led by paid MNHS employees is listed. I have been involved in the Fort Snelling project for 4 years with a focus on veteran and military representation and have never been invited to or consulted about veteran needs, focuses, or programming. My family’s military history dates to the Revolutionary War.

Thank you for your time and changing how a nonprofit administers public tax dollars,

Stephanie Chappell
District 18B
Glencoe, MN
320-864-6066
fussy@hotmail.com