

December 1, 2022

To the Berkeley Landmarks Preservation Commission,

Dear Commissioners,

I have been involved with advocating for the Turtle Island Monument since the early 1990's when I approached Mayor Shirley Dean and suggested that something be done about the dead fountain in the heart of Civic Center Park. Mayor Dean responded to this by creating the Civic Center Park Planning Committee, a diverse group of a couple of dozen citizens who met for two years. The process culminated with a unanimous approval of the concept of the Turtle Island Monument. I continued to advocate for the project which remained stalled following the passage of Measure S, which was meant to fund the monument as well as the other improvements for the Park

Over the past five years, Deb Durant, David Snippen, and I worked together to try and get the City to finish the project. Our team has met with the relevant City Commissions including the LPC, Parks and Waterfront, Public Works, Civic Arts, and Disability Commissions, The Mayor, Council Members, Staff, and most importantly local and indigenous community members to get their input into the design of the monument. We also were awarded a UC Chancellors Grant and collaborated with world renowned landscape architect and Macarthur Genius Grant awardee, Walter Hood, to incorporate all of the concerns and feedback we received in our many meetings and outreach.

I want to note here that the first commission we visited was the LPC whose members were very explicit in stating that the existing landmarked structure of the fountain could not be changed because of its landmarked status and that in fact, they would prefer a full restoration of the original fountain. While we were told by City staff members that the later would not be possible due to budgetary, maintenance and climate considerations, we based our design on a respect for the LPC's strict directive to maintain the existing structure of the fountain.

So, it was, to say the least, surprising to hear the instructions we were given at the two day "start from scratch" design charrette, where the current plan originated, that our input was not welcomed and that the participants should

“dream big” without any considerations for budget, landmark status limitations, safety and maintenance considerations, or previous community input which were repeatedly impressed upon us as critical elements of any design. We were also very concerned that planning team was now talking about a phased project. Suddenly, the current budget was not to be considered and the completion of the monument could be put off until further monies were raised. This was déjà vu all over again.

We have worked so hard to actually finish this project without another further delay and we are now very concerned that the almost \$1,000,000 which we were instrumental in raising along with the City, will now be spent on repairs to the Peace Wall and paving surrounding an unfinished monument.

Here is our simple ask of the LPC. We are urging the adoption of a plan that meets the LPC’s as well as the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation requirements to maintain the existing landmarked structure of the fountain as well as a plan that can be completed on time within the current budget.

Thank you for your consideration and for the work you do to protect Berkeley historic character.

Sincerely,

Elyce Klein