



Capitol Hill Neighborhood Council
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August 3, 2026
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Capitol Hill Neighborhood Council
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August 3, 2026

State Capitol Preservation Board
% Dana Jones, Executive Director
Utah State Capitol Complex
350 North State Street, Suite 120
Salt Lake City, UT 84114

*Subject: Formal Complaint Regarding the May 6, 2026 Grand Liberty Arch Decision —
Circumvention of Process, Community Feedback, and Request for Public Input*

CC: Paul Tonks, Assistant Attorney General; Representative Jennifer Dailey-Provost

Dear Executive Director Jones,

The Capitol Hill Neighborhood Council writes to formally express our objection to the procedural manner in which the proposed Grand Liberty Arch Monument (GLAM) is being advanced. The Capitol Hill Neighborhood Council serves as the Recognized Community Organization under Salt Lake City Code Chapter 2.60 for the neighborhood adjacent to Utah's Capitol Hill Complex, which includes the parcel designated for the GLAM project. Consistent with our mandate to establish orderly means for representative public input and to foster open communication regarding proposals affecting our community, we submit this letter on behalf of our community residents.

At a duly noticed meeting of our membership on June 17, 2026, the residents in attendance voted unanimously to submit a formal complaint regarding the Capitol Preservation Board's (CPB) actions taken during its May 6, 2026, meeting. It is our understanding that CPB voted at that time to approve the GLAM project to move forward for installation on state property adjacent to the main Capitol grounds, contingent upon private funding being secured by the artist, Sabin Howard, and his fiscal sponsor, the National Monuments Foundation.

Our complaint centers on the circumvention of normal review processes for monuments on the Capitol Hill Complex and the lack of meaningful public engagement to date. We respectfully request that CPB implement comprehensive public input opportunities before this project is permitted to proceed. To that end, we have outlined our procedural concerns and a summary of the community feedback received thus far below for your immediate review.

1. Circumvention of the Established Review Process

CPB has a well-defined framework to ensure any additions to the Capitol grounds are thoroughly and equitably vetted. However, the initial approval of the GLAM project appears to have bypassed CPB's established process for major monuments. The Utah State Capitol

Grounds Commemorative Element Plan & Placement Guidelines (2025) detail a competitive, criteria-based process for adding a Large Commemorative Element. This is an opportunity generally afforded only once a century, though CPB voted in 2021 to allow the next element to be added in 2027. Following these guidelines, CPB's Large Commemorative Element Committee narrowed four proposals down to two finalists in December 2025: the Golden Spike Monument and Utah's Monumental Women.

According to CPB's draft May 6, 2026, minutes, both finalists were subsequently set aside for exceeding the spatial limits and tolerances of the locations identified in the grounds guidelines. However, the GLAM project—a larger work that was not one of the finalists—was approved that same day. The draft minutes indicate the GLAM project was treated as “situated off the main Capitol grounds” and “unrelated to the Large Commemorative Element selection.” Immediately thereafter, CPB voted to pause the established Large Commemorative Element process indefinitely “given the approval of the Grand Liberty Arch.”

The rationale that the designated parcel is distinct from the Capitol grounds cannot be reconciled with state statute or the property's ownership. Salt Lake County assessor records confirm the parcel is owned by the State of Utah. Furthermore, Utah Code 63O-1-101 and Utah Administrative Code R131-2-3 explicitly define the Capitol Hill Complex to include the “state-owned property within the area bounded by Columbus Street, West Capitol Street, and 500 North Street.” As state-owned land within these statutory boundaries, the parcel falls squarely within the Capitol Hill Complex that CPB stewards. CPB cannot simultaneously disclaim the parcel as outside its purview to bypass a competitive process, while also exercising stewardship authority to place a permanent monument upon it.

Even if the Commemorative Element placement guidelines are read to apply exclusively to “Capitol Hill proper,” they note that additions to surrounding land within CPB's control will be “handled independently by the [Capitol Preservation] Board.” We therefore ask what independent, objective process governed this decision—and whether any process beyond the single May 6 vote was followed.

Furthermore, any attempt to classify the GLAM project outside the scope of a Commemorative Element does not absolve CPB of procedural obligations. Under Utah Administrative Code R131-7, the Executive Director is required to prepare a 20-year Master Plan for all existing and planned capital facilities and modifications on the Capitol grounds, which CPB must review annually or when considering project funding. If the GLAM project is not governed by the Commemorative Element Guidelines, it is undeniably a significant modification to the grounds governed by this Master Plan. There is no public record indicating the Master Plan was appropriately updated, reviewed, or funded in accordance with R131-7 to account for this project prior to its sudden approval.

These procedural discrepancies raise significant concerns regarding the integrity of the process and the suitability of the GLAM project. Selectively applying guidelines to fast-track a specific proposal undermines public trust in CPB's oversight. Regardless of whether the GLAM project is privately funded, the land is publicly owned, and CPB and its processes are intended to serve the public. While we represent the residents who will be most proximate to the monument, this is a matter that affects all Utahns and deserves to be treated as such.

2. Absence of Public Participation and Unaddressed Community Impacts

Given the scale and permanence of a monument like the GLAM project, public engagement is an essential component of the planning process. Yet, there were no public engagement opportunities or community hearings prior to CPB's May 6 vote.

Since the project's sudden announcement, the Capitol Hill Neighborhood Council has been inundated with community feedback reflecting near-unanimous opposition. Our Transportation, Infrastructure, and Planning (TIP) Committee has reviewed extensive public commentary, including at least 22 written objections from residents. During an informal poll at our May neighborhood meeting, attendees demonstrated strong opposition (12 opposed, 1 in favor, with the remaining 22 attendees undecided or requesting more information). Furthermore, as recently reported by The Salt Lake Tribune, Representative Jen Dailey-Provost noted that out of nearly 100 responses she received regarding this project, zero expressed support. This community frustration has also spilled over into the public sphere, resulting in multiple articles in The Salt Lake Tribune and KSL highlighting neighborhood opposition.

The recurring concerns raised by residents regarding the monument's impact on the neighborhood include:

- **Loss of Established Greenspace.** The proposed footprint will bisect the parcel, significantly decreasing heavily utilized lawn space in favor of a crushed granite pathway and pavement. This will necessitate the removal of at least five mature trees, inflicting irreparable environmental harm on the local tree canopy and community greenspace that cannot be adequately mitigated by simply planting new saplings.
- **Traffic, Parking, and Pedestrian Safety.** The designated parcel sits west of the Capitol, separated by a busy highway. Residents have expressed concerns about pedestrian safety, as current signalized crosswalks may not safely accommodate increased foot traffic. Furthermore, because the parcel is located on the far opposite side of the Capitol from the complex's main parking facilities, it is likely that visitors will instead overwhelm the already strained residential street parking adjacent to the site.
- **Content and Message of the Work.** Residents have raised serious concerns regarding the monument's historical narrative and its alignment with a modern, diverse community. Specifically, feedback centers on the exclusionary nature of the proposed artwork, noting a lack of authentic representation for women of color and the reliance on historical tropes or purely allegorical depictions of women and indigenous peoples. Residents emphasize that permanent public art on state-owned land should reflect a balanced, inclusive, and historically accurate narrative.

We believe that more transparency, consistency, and public input should be required before a project of this magnitude proceeds. We request that CPB provide meaningful public participation opportunities prior to any further approvals, including a noticed public hearing directed specifically to residents of the affected neighborhood. We note and support Representative Dailey-Provost's stated intention to present a community feedback report at CPB's next meeting, and we formally request that CPB receive and consider this community input before taking any further action.

As the Recognized Community Organization for this area, the Capitol Hill Neighborhood Council desires to be a collaborative partner with the Capitol Preservation Board. However, the circumvention of normal review processes to fast-track the Grand Liberty Arch Monument—coupled with the complete absence of public engagement—has strained that relationship and eroded public trust. A monument of this scale, placed on publicly owned land, demands an inclusive, transparent process.

To restore integrity to this process and appropriately address the overwhelming community opposition, we respectfully request that CPB:

1. Immediately pause progression of the GLAM project.
2. Initiate a formal public comment period, including a community hearing specifically directed to the residents of the affected Capitol Hill neighborhood.
3. Commit to fully reviewing community feedback at CPB's next meeting prior to taking any further action on this project.

We encourage CPB to uphold a commitment to transparent, equitable governance, and we look forward to your prompt response to this complaint.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Bruns, Chair
Capitol Hill Neighborhood Council