

WILLIAM PEDUTO  
MAYOR



ANDREW DASH, AICP  
DIRECTOR

CITY OF PITTSBURGH  
**DEPARTMENT OF CITY PLANNING**  
JOHN P. ROBIN CIVIC BUILDING

September 1, 2021

City of Pittsburgh Art Commission  
200 Ross Street  
Civic Building, Fourth Floor  
Pittsburgh, PA 15219

Dear Art Commission,

In October 2017, following a robust public process and special hearings, the Pittsburgh Art Commission voted to remove the 1900 statue, “Stephen Foster,” by Giuseppe Moretti from public property and public viewing. The City of Pittsburgh agreed to store the monument in a City facility until an appropriate location—including proper contextualization and interpretation—could be identified.

[LAXART](#), a non-profit visual art space in Los Angeles that focuses on addressing the key social and political issues of our time through the lens of contemporary art, contacted the City in early 2021 to discuss the potential loan of Pittsburgh’s Stephen Foster monument to an upcoming exhibition.

MONUMENTS, co-curated by Hamza Walker, Executive Director of LAXART, and internationally known artist [Kara Walker](#), will display de-commissioned Confederate monuments in the museum’s galleries alongside works of contemporary art in order to question the geographically-specific context for these statues and the role they play in conversations about race, censorship, and American history.

The Los Angeles exhibition is scheduled to open to the public in fall 2023 at the Museum of Contemporary Art. Additionally, scholars, artists, and politicians will be invited to contribute essays to an accompanying publication in order to provide greater insight into the history and impact of this unique category of public art.

Though he is not a Confederate figure, Walker asserts that Foster played a pivotal role in constructing a romantic vision of the Old South and perpetuated the “happy slave” narrative that is a central tenet of the Lost Cause. Moretti’s monument reinforces the centrality of blackface minstrelsy to both Foster’s career and the history of American music. Please see the July 16, 2021 loan request letter from LAXART, attached.

Lending Pittsburgh’s Stephen Foster monument to this important exhibition benefits the public both at a national and a local level. In addition to ensuring that all administrative, crating, shipping, and insurance costs are covered by the exhibition organizers, the City of Pittsburgh has an opportunity to create a condition of loan approval by which LAXART would agree to facilitate and arrange for the exhibition artist responding to Foster, to participate in Pittsburgh-based public programming around our monument, and the role it plays in race, censorship, and American history.

The Department of City Planning supports this loan request and recommends Art Commission review and approval as outlined in [Chapter 175.04](#). We recommend that this loan request be placed on the September 22, 2021 Art Commission

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meeting agenda. Following Art Commission approval, staff would work with LAXART on the details and conditions of the loan.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Andrew Dash". The signature is stylized, with the first name "Andrew" written in a cursive-like script and the last name "Dash" in a more blocky, capital-letter style.

Andrew Dash, AICP  
Planning Director

cc: Sarah Minnaert, Public Art & Civic Design Manager



CITY OF PITTSBURGH, DEPARTMENT OF CITY PLANNING  
**ART COMMISSION**

September 23, 2021

Sarah Minnaert  
Department of City Planning  
200 Ross St, 4th Floor  
Pittsburgh, PA 15219

**Re: Stephen Foster Loan**

Dear Ms. Minnaert,

I am writing to confirm that on September 22, 2021, the City of Pittsburgh Art Commission granted Conceptual and Final Approval of your proposal for the loan of the Stephen Foster statue, with the condition that a statement by the Commissioners be included in the exhibition materials.

Please note that after receiving Art Commission approval, any necessary building permits, certificates of occupancy, or other city approvals are still required. At this time, please proceed with these and any other permits or City permissions that you may need.

Should you need any assistance from my office in the interim, or would like clarification on any advice given by the Commission, please do not hesitate to call or email.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tony Cavalline".

**Tony Cavalline**

Arts, Culture, and History Specialist  
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**200 ROSS STREET | JOHN P. ROBIN CIVIC BUILDING**

ED GAINES  
MAYOR



JAMIL BEY, PH.D.  
DIRECTOR

CITY OF PITTSBURGH, DEPARTMENT OF CITY PLANNING  
**Public Art & Civic Design Commission**

<b>APPLICATION</b>	Stephen Foster statue loan to LAXART
<b>APPLICANT</b>	City Planning and LAXART
<b>PROPERTY</b>	--
<b>PROPERTY OWNER</b>	--
<b>PROPOSAL</b>	Loan of statue
<b>DATE</b>	February 26, 2025

**Decision**

That the Public Art Committee of the Public Art & Civic Design Commission of the City of Pittsburgh **AMENDS** the September 22, 2021, Art Commission decision to grant Conceptual and Final Approval for the loan of the Stephen Foster statue, with the condition that a statement from the Commissioners be included in the exhibition materials, with the following condition:

1. *The Public Art Committee will not submit a statement to be included in the exhibition materials*

Please note that after receiving Public Art & Civic Design Commission approval, any necessary building permits, Certificates of Occupancy, Encroachment Permits, or other City approvals are still required. At this time, please proceed with these and any other required permits or City permissions.

Sincerely,

**Kevin Kunak**  
*Assistant Director*  
*Public History, Art, and Design Division*  
*Department of City Planning*  
*City of Pittsburgh*