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Updated: Special Announcement Regarding the Shawnee Indian Mission State Historic Site

1 message

City of Fairway <nnogelmeier@fairwaykansas.org>

Fri, Jan 19, 2024 at 11:53 AM

Reply-To: nnogelmeier@fairwaykansas.org

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House Committee Hearing Scheduled on HB 2208

**The previous announcement omitted the Hearing date at the bottom of the email.
The Hearing date is Wednesday, January 24, 2024 at 9:00 a.m.**

On Wednesday, City Officials learned that one of two bills introduced into the 2023 Kansas Legislative session regarding conveyance of the Shawnee Indian Mission from the State of Kansas to one of three present day Shawnee Tribes in Oklahoma has been given a hearing date in the current 2024 legislative session. The Shawnee Indian Mission is a Kansas State Historic Site and the only National Historic Landmark in Johnson County. Last January, the city released several announcements about the legislative efforts of the Shawnee Tribe and the likely consequences should conveyance occur. To read those announcements, [click here](#).

The greatest concerns surrounding conveyance center around three key points:

1. Loss of history – Should the site be conveyed, the Shawnee Tribe, now or later, could extinguish the public's ability to visit the site and learn about its long and significant history not just for the 22 tribes who sent children to the school, but also for those who inhabited the land before the Shawnee arrived, for the beginning of Kansas Statehood, Bleeding Kansas, the Trails West and the Civil War. These are just a few examples of the countless pieces of history that come together to create the Shawnee Indian Mission.
2. Future use of the land – Chief Barnes and the Shawnee Tribe today cannot commit or guarantee what tribal leaders, now or in the future, will decide what to do with the land if it is conveyed to them. Case law is clear. There are pathways for the Shawnee Tribe to attempt to immediately or in the future claim the land as sovereign. In doing so, both the State of Kansas and the City of Fairway could lose jurisdictional authority over how the land is used.

3. Loss of comprehensive, fact-based educational opportunities for future generations – In addition to the loss of physical history, the Mission would no longer serve as a fact-based educational institution. Generations of Kansans and beyond have visited the site to learn of its historical significance not just to First Americans, but also its significance in westward expansion, the Civil War and the early stages of Kansas history. If the Kansas Legislature gives the site away, they are giving away educational opportunities for generations to come.

Chief Barnes has spared no expense on lobbyists, public relations firms, architecture groups, campaign contributions, mass mailings full of misinformation and more. Based on credible information from Shawnee Tribal members, one must only look at the still closed Shawnee Cultural Center at their Tribal Headquarters to see the lack of commitment Chief Barnes places on the history and culture of his Tribe.

The consequences of a potential conveyance of the Shawnee Indian Mission State Historic Site and National Historical Landmark would be immediate and likely, everlasting. Your voice on this matter may never be as important as it is right now.

Here's how you can make your voice heard...

The Hearing will take place in the House Federal and State Affairs Committee. It is scheduled for 9:00 a.m. on **Wednesday, January 24, 2024** in the Kansas State Capitol Building.

All written testimony MUST be received by 9:00 a.m. on Tuesday, January 23rd. Testimony must be provided in PDF format and MUST include a [cover sheet](#). Testimony should be emailed to H.Fed.State.Affairs@house.ks.gov. If you need assistance converting your testimony to PDF please respond to this message and the City can convert it and return it to you for submission.

If you would like to provide oral testimony, you must still submit written testimony by 9:00 a.m. on Tuesday, January 23rd and include your request to provide oral testimony. Oral testimony should be a summary of your written testimony not read verbatim.

For a list of all committee rules and rules for those providing testimony as well as a sample cover sheet, visit our website by clicking [here](#).

If you would like to email the committee members individually, you may do that as well. Email addresses and phone numbers for the committee members are available [here](#).

We will continue to provide community updates as appropriate.

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