

**DATE:** September 15, 2020

**TO:** Colonel Matthew C. Langer  
Chief, Minnesota State Patrol

**FROM:** Captain Eric Roeske  
Commander, District 4600

**PHONE:** 651-201-6970

**SUBJECT: COLUMBUS STATUE DAMAGE AFTER ACTION**

### **General Overview**

On Wednesday, June 10, 2020, a group of demonstrators led by Michael Forcia came to the State Capitol complex to protest the presence and attempt the removal of the Christopher Columbus statue. As information about the event evolved, additional troopers from the east and west metro patrol districts, as well as Special Response Team troopers, were called in to assist. The State Patrol engaged the assistance of DPS Tribal Liaison Nigel Perrote in an attempt to inform Forcia and others about the process to pursue removal of the Columbus statue through engaging with the Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board. After attempts to dissuade Forcia and others from forcibly removing the statue were unsuccessful, the troopers were summoned from the Capitol to stop any attempt to topple the statue. As troopers deployed, Forcia and the other demonstrators put two ropes around the statue and almost immediately toppled it. After the statue was toppled, troopers moved in, protected the statue from being removed and facilitated removal of the statue for transportation to a secure location. The incident ended without use of force by troopers or injury to anyone involved. The incident remains an active criminal investigation.

### **Incident Timeline**

- 1128 (11:28 a.m.) Facebook information received shows event originating in Minneapolis at 1700 hours. It should be noted that this information proved to be inaccurate. The group arrived directly at the State Capitol.
- 1333 (1:33 p.m.) Updated information showing number had grown to 98 going, 690 interested
- 1414 (2:14 p.m.) Planning response and staffing requests made.
- 1542 – 1700 (3:42 – 5:00 p.m.) Troopers arrive to admin building for staging.
- 1620 (4:20 p.m.) Two protesters and several media observed on security cameras at statue.
- 1633 (4:33 p.m.)
  - Nigel Perrote and Captain Roeske arrive at the statue, engage with Forcia.
  - Forcia is provided copy of Minn. Stat. Chap. 15B from the Department of Administration and instructed on process.
  - Forcia is informed he would be arrested if he attempted to topple the statue.
  - This conversation went on to see if there was any other resolution to this issue and he said no.
  - During the time of the engagement, additional protestors arrive.

- 1656 (4:56 p.m.) Information relayed that the situation would not be resolved by conversation and we will need to deploy troopers to stop it from happening and it would likely require use of force, chemical weapons or less lethal munitions to stop the action. It did not appear the number of people present or the rope on premise would be sufficient to topple the statue. It was anticipated it would require a vehicle, thicker rope or both to pull it down.
- 1659 (4:59 p.m.) Leader and unidentified person climb on statue, throw ropes around neck. Command for troopers to respond given.
- 1701 (5:01 p.m.) The statue topples.
- 1701 (5:01 p.m.) As the crowd had gathered around the toppled statue, kicking it and spitting on it. Contact is again made with Forcia. He is advised the crowd will have to move away from the statue while troopers secure the area as the statue is removed. Forcia says he will help keep the peace while arrangements are made to have it removed.
- 1701 (5:01p.m.) Troopers deploy from the Capitol and secure the area around the statue without using force, chemical or less lethal munitions.
- 1808 – 1847 (6:08 – 6:47 p.m.) Tow trucks arrive and clear the scene with the statue and broken pieces of the base.
- 1849 (6:49 p.m.) Troopers clear the scene and return to the Capitol.

#### **After Action Findings**

- The unannounced change of location from Minneapolis to the State Capitol greatly compressed the timeline for preparation. The first two protesters arrived at 1620 hours, further compressing preparation/response time.
  - Recommendations:
    1. Continued diligent scouring of open source protest information is necessary.
    2. Skepticism as to the accuracy of information (crowd size, times, intent, etc.) must be considered with resource allocation and response.
- The Columbus statue was toppled easier than anyone expected.
  - Recommendation:
    1. Request that the Department of Administration review the structural integrity of all remaining monuments to ensure adequate safety margins are in place.
- Movement of troopers from the Capitol to the statue took time.
  - Recommendations:
    1. Research ways for security staff to move around the complex more expeditiously when compared to on foot.
    2. Err on the side of having security staff on site earlier than necessary; not every protest event will take time to develop momentum.
- Continue with firm and fair policing of the Capitol complex to ensure individual safety and prevent the destruction or theft of property, while also protecting 1<sup>st</sup> Amendment rights.
- Continue necessary surges in security staff within budget appropriations in order to adequately respond to future events.

cc: Lt. Colonel Rochelle Schrofer  
Major Sean Meagher