CRYSTAL LAKE PUBLIC ARTS COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 8, 2025
HELD AT THE CRYSTAL LAKE CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS

The meeting was called to order by Ms. Patti Noble at 8:04 a.m.

ROLL CALL

Members Patti Noble, Kathy Hajdrowski, David Bradburn, Nancy Merkling, Brynn Jeffries, Michael Littrell, and Joy Neal were present. No commissioners were absent.

Kathryn Cowlin, Director of Community Development, and Nick Hammonds, Deputy City Manager, were present.

MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 13, 2024 PUBIC ARTS COMMISSION MEETING

Ms. Hajdrowski made a motion to approve the November 13, 2024 Public Arts Commission meeting minutes as presented. Ms. Merkling seconded the motion. On roll call, all members voted aye. Motion passed.

PUBLIC PRESENTATION

None.

CONGRESS PARKWAY/EXCHANGE DRIVE ROUNDABOUT REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP) UPDATE – DISCUSSION ITEM

Ms. Noble introduced the discussion of the Congress Parkway roundabout sculpture project. Ms. Cowlin stated that the City has budgeted $50,000 for Fiscal Year 2025, and the proposal from Carrie Fischer totals $86,000. Ms. Cowlin stated that, if the City moves forward with the proposal, the Commission will need to undertake fundraising efforts to make up the difference. She inquired the Commission to discuss potential fundraising avenues.

Ms. Merkling stated that it is concerning that the whole budget for the year would be spent on one project, with additional fundraising needs attached. She stated that there are Fourth Friday events each month for local artists and supporting arts in the community. The Commission could have a table at the events. Ms. Merkling asked if the Commission has compiled a list of people in the community who would be willing to donate. The Commission agreed that this has not been completed.

Ms. Hajdrowski asked if the Community Foundation has received any donations for art. Ms. Cowlin stated that the City established a donation fund, however, no donations have been received at this time. Ms. Noble asked if donations are required to go through the Community Foundation. Ms. Cowlin stated that the City can also accept donations directly.

Mr. Littrell discussed how the budgeted funds for 2025 could go a long way towards a few smaller projects instead of just one project for the sculpture. Ms. Jeffries stated that the timeline of the project means that

it will likely finish towards the end of the year, if not into 2026. The Commission discussed public feedback regarding the project while considering the concept and cost.

Ms. Merkling asked if any of the Commissioners have been involved with fundraising in the past. Ms. Noble, Ms. Neal, and Ms. Jeffries stated that they have had experience with fundraising. Ms. Jeffries stated that taking advantage of existing events to coincide with the Commissions efforts would be effective in sharing the mission, potential fundraising, and identifying artists. She mentioned the Johnny Appleseed Festival and how the Commission had a great time with the artists and conversing with people interested in the Commissions efforts.

Ms. Jeffries discussed the importance of the Commission building momentum outside of the monthly meetings. Ms. Merkling agreed, stating that the Commission cannot just be quiet and pop up every once in a while. Ms. Jeffries stated that the Commission needs to get projects completed to build momentum and get the name out regarding the Commission.

Ms. Merkling discussed ways to engage people in the community with the Commission, finding local artists, and hosting events. Mr. Littrell stated that he has a contact with IMEC, and economic development organization, to see if there are opportunities for the Commission to work with businesses to seek donations. Ms. Hajdrowski asked about grants available. Ms. Cowlin stated that Richmond recently received a National Endowment for the Arts grant.

OPEN DISCUSSION

Ms. Neal stated that she recently attended the Illinois Main Street conference in Batavia. There was a building in their downtown where hanging murals were presented that can be switched out. This would allow for multiple artists to contribute instead of a long-term mural on a wall. The program linked a local artist with a nonprofit organization to display the mural and post a plaque recognizing the artist. Ms. Jeffries discussed the proposal received by the Commission last year with a similar concept for the Raue.

Ms. Cowlin stated that the hanging panel concept will be in place at Water's Edge in the public park. Ms. Jeffries asked if there is a timeline on the completion of the park and the panels. She stated that the Commission should start planning now so that we are ready to go once the panels are available.

Ms. Noble discussed the Depot Park discussion at a recent City Council meeting. She asked if the Commission can be advised of upcoming projects that could involve the Commission. She further discussed the need for cohesive concepts for artwork. The Commission discussed the importance of allowing expression and creativity by artists. The artists cannot be pigeonholed on projects, and the Commission does not want all art to look the same.

Ms. Neal stated that she can assist with coordinating events once there is a plan in place. Ms. Cowlin stated that the Commission will have an agenda item at the next meeting to discuss an annual plan for the year. Ms. Neal discussed a potential mixer event, possibly held at the meeting room at the Crystal Lake Brewery. The Commission agreed to plan on February 27th at the Brewery pending approval by the City. The event will be promoted in the City newsletter and social media upon approval.

Ms. Noble and Ms. Neal agreed to meet to spearhead the plans for the event. Ms. Cowlin discussed the layout for the event, surveys, tables, and idea collection. The event will be an opportunity to meet artists, people interested in art, and identifying potential projects.

Ms. Merkling discussed the importance of posting plaques to recognize artists for their work. The Commission discussed bike racks and benches as potential art projects with plaques to recognize the artist. Ms. Noble discussed how the Commission can work on getting this project going.

Mr. Bradburn inquired about the status of the mural program. Ms. Cowlin stated that City staff is coordinating with City legal counsel to create a draft mural program for review at an upcoming Public Arts Commission meeting.

Ms. Noble stated that the discussion today was productive and the Commission is making substantial progress going into the new year.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Bradburn made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Merkling seconded the motion. On voice vote, all members voted aye. The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 a.m.