CRYSTAL LAKE PUBLIC ARTS COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 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, and Joy Neal were present. Commissioner Michael Littrell was absent.

Mayor Haig Haleblian, Director of Community Development Kathryn Cowlin, Assistant City Planner Darrell Moore, and Nick Hammonds, Deputy City Manager, were present.

MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 12, 2025 PUBIC ARTS COMMISSION MEETING

Ms. Hajdrowski made a motion to approve the February 12, 2025 Public Arts Commission meeting minutes as presented. Ms. Merkling seconded the motion. On roll call, all members voted aye. Motion passed.

MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 27, 2025 SPECIAL PUBIC ARTS COMMISSION MEETING

Ms. Merkling made a motion to approve the February 27, 2025 Special Public Arts Commission meeting minutes as presented. Ms. Hajdrowski 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 – ACTION ITEM

Ms. Cowlin stated that this item will be tabled to the next Arts Commission meeting. The Commission discussed Mr. Blome's proposal and agreed that a decision will be made after he meets with the Commission in April.

BENCH PROJECT – ACTION ITEM

Ms. Noble introduced the topic for discussion, the downtown bench project. She stated that, given the low price, we can go with Fire and Feast Outdoor Products. Ms. Hajdrowski asked if the benches will be permanent or temporary. Ms. Noble stated that the program can evolve over time. She stated that a demo bench can be placed to garner interest and attract businesses to sponsor the benches. Mayor Haleblian stated that he supports the project.

Ms. Hajdrowski stated that having temporary benches that rotate out will keep the designs fresh. This will allow for new artists to participate and create new themes. The Commission discussed placing benches downtown, then moving them to Three Oaks or other areas in town.

Ms. Neal discussed fundraising for the project. She asked what the funds would be used for. Ms. Cowlin stated that the funds could go towards a grant earmarked in a fund specifically for art. Ms. Hajdrowski stated that artists will also need compensation, in addition to the costs for art supplies.

Ms. Jeffries stated that the benches will need to stand the weather and potential vandals. The Commission discussed the different material options as proposed by Jeff Brown with Fire and Feast. Ms. Noble stated that the next step is to contact Mr. Brown to get orders going.

Ms. Merkling discussed the amount of money needed to cover costs. She proposed $1,500 or $2,000 for a business to get a plaque on the benches. This would cover the cost of the bench and provide a stipend to the artist.

Ms. Cowlin reviewed the overview map showing potential locations to place benches. Ms. Merkling asked if there is flexibility in deciding where to locate benches. She would like to see the benches placed all around the downtown area to garner interest in the program.

Mr. Bradburn discussed the vinyl wrap option for the benches. He stated that vinyl wraps could be placed on electrical boxes and garbage cans. Ms. Merkling stated that the Commission can inquire with Fire and Feast about the longevity of the wraps. Ms. Noble stated that the Commission will find out about the wraps and place the order for a few benches to get the program going. She stated that the program can expand as popularity grows.

Ms. Cowlin inquired who would like to contact Mr. Brown. Ms. Jeffries stated that the wraps on the benches could be swapped out instead the entire bench with new artwork. Ms. Merkling stated that the person making the wraps will also need to know the surface of the bench.

Ms. Neal stated that she can start designing a brochure to seek sponsorships from businesses. Ms. Noble discussed the next steps, including contacting Mr. Brown.

Ms. Cowlin stated that the Commission will have an action item at the April meeting to approve the brochure, wrap details, and the program concept. Then the Commission start publicizing the program later in the month. Mayor Haleblian inquired about the timeline for the benches. Ms. Cowlin stated that, per Mr. Brown, the benches take 30-60 days to build, however materials may take up to 90 days to deliver. Mayor Haleblian suggested the Commission can contact Wendy Guss. Ms. Noble stated she will contact her.

TAP INTO CREATIVITY – INSPIRING PUBLIC ART IN OUR COMMUNITY PUBLIC EVENT THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2025 – DISCUSSION ITEM

Ms. Noble asked for the Commissions thoughts and takeaways from the event. Ms. Jeffries stated that the roundtable went very well. Ms. Neal discussed categorizing the ideas brought up at the event, and how to put these ideas into action moving forward. She suggested the Commission can categorize and rank each idea.

Ms. Cowlin stated that the Commission should approach these ideas with the intent to make them public. This provides the Commission the opportunity to show that the community asked for these projects.

Ms. Noble stated that she will update the link to the community sign-up. The Commission discussed items on the sign-up form that can be adjusted.

Ms. Merkling stated that she felt the meeting went very well. She stated that there will be people who are against the ideas brought forth by the Arts Commission. The Commission agreed that you cannot please everyone with every piece of artwork.

Ms. Neal stated that she agreed the meeting went well. Her friends who attended said they felt excited for the what is on the horizon. Ms. Cowlin stated that some of the ideas can be done at the Johnny Appleseed Festival. Ms. Neal stated that the Garden Party on May 17th could have an Arts Commission table. Ms. Neal stated that the event will be in the Brink Street lot due to the Depot Park project.

OPEN DISCUSSION

Ms. Cowlin stated that she will be sharing the Open Meetings Act (OMA) training with the Commission. She reviewed the legal requirement for all elected and appointed officials to complete the training.

Mayor Haleblian discussed the block lettering for the Depot Park sign. He stated that the City Council was in agreement regarding the change in font. Ms. Noble and Ms. Jeffries discussed their agreement with the font change, stating that the block letters are timeless and easier to read than cursive.

Ms. Noble stated that the Commission could fundraise by having mosaic tiles available to paint for $5 a piece.

Ms. Neal inquired if the Commission is focused on new art, or promoting art already in place. She stated that the Commission could promote new art while capturing what is currently going on in town. Ms. Cowlin stated that the Commission's strategic plan addresses this topic.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Jeffries made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Merkling seconded the motion. On voice vote, all members voted aye. The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 a.m.