CRYSTAL LAKE PUBLIC ARTS COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 9, 2025
HELD AT THE CRYSTAL LAKE CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS

The meeting was called to order by Ms. Patti Noble at 8:08 a.m.

ROLL CALL

Members Patti Noble, Kathy Hajdrowski, David Bradburn, Nancy Merkling, and Brynn Jeffries were present. Commissioner Michael Littrell was absent.

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

TELEPHONIC ATTENDANCE

Ms. Jeffries motioned to allow Joy Neal to attend the meeting telephonically due to her attendance at a work conference. Mr. Bradburn seconded. On roll call, all members voted aye. Motion passed.

MINUTES OF THE MARCH 12, 2025 PUBIC ARTS COMMISSION MEETING

Ms. Hajdrowski made a motion to approve the March 12, 2025 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 – ACTION ITEM

Ms. Cowlin introduced Mr. Blome to discuss his proposed art sculpture for the roundabout. Mr. Blome provided a brief overview of his experience as a teacher and artist. He discussed the sculptures he has created for various organizations in 28 states and abroad. Mr. Blome stated that he is a local artist and has a workshop and foundry in Woodstock where he creates his artwork.

Mr. Blome stated that the sculpture he proposed for the roundabout is similar to a sculpture he created for the Mount Prospect library in 2000. He stated that the sculpture represents peace and a globe appearance holding up the world. He stated that the sculpture is transparent and circular, which fits well in a roundabout as drivers are circling around the artwork. Mr. Blome stated that he adapted the sculpture to have specific references to the history of Crystal Lake by incorporating the fish elements. He wanted to make something beautiful with a mixture of realistic elements with abstraction. He stated that he can also provide cleaning services annually for the sculpture.

Ms. Jeffries stated that she loves the proposed sculpture. Ms. Merkling stated that she likes the energy of the art piece and having an element of "a moment caught in time." She stated that the globular concept fits perfectly in the roundabout, whereas other sculptures may have a front facing view where the backside does not work well at certain angles within the roundabout.

Ms. Cowlin inquired about the material proposed for the sculpture. Mr. Blome stated that the globe would be stainless steel. All other elements would be bronze. Mr. Blome offered for the Arts Commission members to visit his foundry when he pours the molds.

Ms. Jeffries asked for the proposed height of the sculpture. Mr. Blome state that he is proposing 13 to 15 feet tall. The base will be made of stone, potentially limestone or an aggregate cement to withstand weathering and salt in the winter. He stated that he will need a crane to install the sculpture. It will be mounted and bolted to the base.

Mr. Bradburn asked if there will be lighting for aesthetics. Mr. Blome stated that lighting helps to deter graffiti artists. Ms. Cowlin stated that electric is available in the roundabout for lighting. Mr. Blome also stated that keeping the sculpture waxed will prevent damage from graffiti.

Ms. Cowlin explained the next steps in the process for approval of the sculpture. Mr. Blome stated that he anticipates the project will take one year from approval to completion. The Commission thanked Mr. Blome for his time.

Mr. Bradburn motioned to recommend Mr. Blome's proposal for the roundabout for City Council consideration. Ms. Jeffries seconded. On roll call, all members voted aye. Motion passed.

BENCH PROJECT – ACTION ITEM

Ms. Noble introduced the topic for discussion: the downtown bench project. She stated that Mr. Bradburn met with Jeff Brown with Fire and Feast Outdoor Products. Mr. Bradburn stated that the open question right now is about the wrap concept. He stated that they are unsure whether to use plastic for the benches if they are going to be wrapped with vinyl. Mr. Bradburn stated that wood would be the best, but it does not stand up to the weather over time.

Ms. Merkling stated that the bench could be a sculpted design or a bench with a wrap. She stated that, artistically, a bench with a design feels more common, and she would like to see bold concepts. Mr. Bradburn stated that Mr. Brown could make the benches, and then an artist comes in to paint them. Ms. Noble stated that she agrees it needs to stand out. She does not want to see an in-lay bench only.

Ms. Noble discussed the price for sponsorships for the benches. She stated that the Commission should have the bench program finalized by next month's meeting to get the project in action.

No action was taken on the agenda item at this time.

HAIKU PROJECT – DISCUSSION ITEM

Ms. Jeffries introduced the topic for discussion: a Haiku project. She stated the classes at Husmann would participate in a Haiku project and it seems to be an easy project to get started. She proposed to start with 20 signs, $200 to $300 total to purchase. Ms. Merkling asked if the signs will be placed at private homes. Ms. Jeffries stated that she would like to see them everywhere.

Ms. Cowlin discussed limitations with the sign code. Ms. Merkling proposed to place signs in planters downtown or along pedestrian paths. Ms. Jeffries stated that the Commission could start with the signs

and place them in pedestrian areas, just to get the project moving and garner interest from the public. Ms. Noble suggested to motion for the approval of the project with the caveat that they will work with staff.

Ms. Merkling motioned to approve the Haiku project, with the caveat that they will work with staff on signage placement. Mr. Bradburn seconded. On roll call, all members voted aye. Motion passed.

OPEN DISCUSSION

Ms. Cowlin discussed the upcoming garden party on May 17th and asked if the Commissioners are available to attend. Ms. Neal stated that the event is from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Ms. Jeffries, Ms. Hajdrowski, Ms. Noble and Mr. Bradburn stated that they are available to attend. Ms. Noble suggested that the Commission contact the Crystal Lake Brewing event attendees to participate.

Ms. Noble stated that the Lakeside Festival Committee asked if the Arts Commission would like a table at the events. Ms. Jeffries stated that it is a great idea. Ms. Noble stated that the group does not need to staff the table all four days of the fest. Ms. Noble stated that the Commission has until mid-May to decide.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Merkling made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Jeffries seconded the motion. On voice vote, all members voted aye. The meeting was adjourned at 9:06 a.m.