CRYSTAL LAKE PUBLIC ARTS COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY, MAY 14, 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, Joy Neal, Brynn Jeffries, and Nancy Merkling were present. Commissioner Michael Littrell was absent.

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

MINUTES OF THE APRIL 9, 2025 PUBIC ARTS COMMISSION MEETING

Ms. Jeffries made a motion to approve the April 9, 2025 Public Arts Commission meeting minutes as presented. Ms. Neal seconded the motion. On roll call, all members voted aye. Motion passed.

PUBLIC PRESENTATION

Ms. Neal stated that she invited the new owners of Valor Art Gallery on Railroad Street to attend the meeting and speak at public comment. The owners did not attend the meeting. Ms. Neal stated that the new business features artists' displays and is open from now until July. There are six artists currently occupying the space. She stated that there will be a final show around July 12th featuring local artists.

BENCH PROJECT – ACTION ITEM

Ms. Noble introduced the topic for discussion: the downtown bench project. Jeff Brown with Fire and Feast Outdoor Products attended the meeting to provide material samples for the benches. He stated that he is proposing a solid panel back to allow for a flat surface for the vinyl artwork. Mr. Brown provided color swatch samples and stated that neutral colors are more cost-effective. He stated that is not proposing to do anything art-wise to the seat. He wants to make sure the benches are also comfortable to sit on.

Mr. Bradburn asked if the artists will pick the colors for the benches, or will the Commission decide? Ms. Noble suggested that the Commission select a neutral color for the benches. Mr. Brown stated that neutral colors will hide dirt and scratches better than black or white paint. Mr. Brown stated that placing orders in batches is preferred over piece-meal orders. He stated that ordering in bulk will be more cost-effective.

Ms. Jeffries stated the idea is to switch the artwork periodically over time. The vinyl can be switched, but the benches should be durable. Ms. Neal asked to clarify whether painting the benches is completely out of the question. The Commission agreed to proceed with the vinyl wrap. Mr. Brown stated that he will build a prototype and put on a vinyl wrap to show how the artwork will display.

Ms. Cowlin asked the Commission to discuss the timeline for implementation. Mr. Brown stated that he will obtain a quote from Eby Graphics for the vinyl wraps. Ms. Jeffries stated that the Commission should reach out to businesses once all the costs are known, then the Commission can post a call for artists. Ms.

Noble stated that the Commission should place the order for the benches now and go from there. She also stated that getting sponsorships from businesses that support the arts is more important that businesses selecting their preferred art to display on the benches.

Ms. Cowlin stated that the goal is to have the benches out when it is still warm outside. Mr. Brown stated that constructing eight benches will take approximately eight weeks. Ms. Jeffries stated that it would be ideal to have the benches on display by the Johnny Appleseed festival.

Ms. Merkling asked if the artists' commissions are built in to the overall program cost. The Commission discussed a $200 stipend for the artists. Mr. Brown stated that the cost per bench is $500. He just needs a color chosen and he can proceed with placing material orders.

Ms. Cowlin reviewed the program plan and timeline. There will be one artist submission per bench. She asked for a volunteer to assist with creating the call for artists. Ms. Noble volunteered. Ms. Cowlin stated that the goal is to finalize everything by the first week of June.

The Commission agreed to proceed with six benches to start. The Commission will review artist submissions to narrow down to six awardees. Ms. Noble stated that artists who are not selected will be saved in the roster for future art projects.

HAIKU PROJECT – DISCUSSION ITEM

Ms. Jeffries introduced the topic for discussion: the Haiku project. She stated that Husmann Elementary has created over 20 Haikus so far. The plan will be to print them and rotate them out.

Ms. Noble stated that each Haiku will have the same font and font size. Ms. Hajdrowski stated that the signs will include the name and age of the contributor. Mr. Cowlin stated that the signs will be on a shepherds hook and placed in planters downtown.

Ms. Noble asked how many the Commission will be doing to start. Ms. Cowlin suggested starting with 20. Ms. Jeffries stated that she will work on getting all the Haikus printed so that they can be placed on a sign.

GARDEN PARTY TABLE – DISCUSSION ITEM

Ms. Cowlin discussed the upcoming garden party on May 17th and asked if the Commissioners are all set. Mr. Moore stated that there are eight total slots, and only one vacancy left. Ms. Neal stated that she is running the event, so she is not available to fill the open slot. Ms. Cowlin stated that the banner, rocks, paint, and cards are ready. Ms. Jeffries will bring a table and canopy. Mr. Bradburn stated that he can assist with setup.

Ms. Neal stated that the event will be located in the Brink Street parking lot. The locations for each attendee will be available this week. Ms. Noble stated that she can fill the open time slot from 12:30 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.

OPEN DISCUSSION

Ms. Hajdrowski discussed available grants that the Arts Commission may be qualified for. She stated that she will send the information to Ms. Cowlin.

Ms. Neal stated that the Pride event is coming up, but there is limited space. She stated that she will ask the event committee if the Arts Commission can participate.

Ms. Noble discussed the Lakeside Festival and whether 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. Neal stated that the events are not really arts related. Ms. Noble stated that the Commission still has some time to decide whether to attend.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Bradburn made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Hajdrowski seconded the motion. On voice vote, all members voted aye. The meeting was adjourned at 9:14 a.m.