CRYSTAL LAKE PUBLIC ARTS COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 11, 2025
HELD AT THE CRYSTAL LAKE CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS

The meeting was called to order by Ms. Patti Noble at 8:03 a.m.

ROLL CALL

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

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

MINUTES OF THE MAY 14, 2025 PUBIC ARTS COMMISSION MEETING

Mr. Bradburn made a motion to approve the May 14, 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.

BENCH PROJECT

Ms. Noble introduced the topic for discussion: the downtown bench project. She stated that she and Mr. Bradburn met with Jeff Brown with Fire and Feast Outdoor Products to move the project along. The Commission reviewed the costs for the project, including $72.55 for double-sided vinyl wrapping from Eby Graphics, $500 per bench, a $200 commission to artists. The Commission agreed to charge $1,500 for sponsorship from businesses to have a plaque on the benches.

Mayor Haleblian asked how long the benches would be in place. Ms. Cowlin stated that they estimate the benches will be out for at least one year. However, there are opportunities to move the benches to other areas in town. Mayor Haleblian asked how many benches and locations there would be. Ms. Noble stated that they are starting with six benches. Mayor Haleblian stated that he would prefer to have the benches displayed in open and visible areas such as Downtown.

Mr. Littrell asked about the graphics from companies for vinyl, including whether the art would be the wrap, or if there would be a separate plaque. Ms. Merkling stated that artists could include the sponsorship information within the wrap instead of having a separate plaque on the bench. Mr. Bradburn suggested that the Commission provide the artist with a template for them to build in the plaque information without impacting their artwork. Ms. Jeffries stated that the artwork they receive may be ‘already-made’ and may not fit well with the sponsorship information included.

Wendy Guss discussed an art program in Cary where artists are putting vinyl wraps on utility boxes. She stated that students from the local schools participate. She suggested District 155 and local students could participate in the bench program.

Mayor Haleblian asked if sponsors will choose the locations for the bench. Ms. Neal suggested that it could be a first come-first served basis. Ms. Noble asked how to get the word out to local artists and sponsors. Ms. Cowlin stated that the Commission has a mailing list from the Crystal Lake Brewing event, and the City will use the newsletter and social media. Mayor Haleblian suggested that the Commission attend a Chamber of Commerce meeting to promote the program. Ms. Jeffries stated that she can attend a Chamber meeting to provide a promotion. Ms. Neal stated that she can disseminate information to the businesses Downtown.

Ms. Merkling inquired about the dimensions of the inserts for the artwork. Ms. Cowlin stated that Jeff Brown will provide the dimensions once he creates the first bench. Ms. Noble stated that she and Mr. Bradburn will contact Jeff Brown to get the benches started.

2025/2026 PUBLIC ART PRIORITIES DISCUSSION

Ms. Cowlin introduced the topic for discussion: priority items for next fiscal year. Ms. Cowlin stated that the City Council has requested that the Arts Commission attend the August 5th City Council meeting to provide an update regarding the Commission's accomplishments and proposed projects for 2026. The goal is to have a few Commissioners attend the meeting to communicate future projects for the City Council to consider at the fall budget workshop.

Mayor Haleblian explained how the Library attend one Council meeting per month to provide an update at public presentation. Ms. Jeffries stated that she can attend the August 5th City Council meeting. She discussed the current projects in progress. Ms. Neal suggested that the Commission rank the priority projects that were discussed at the February arts workshop.

Ms. Jeffries stated that murals should be one of the priorities, specifically the Route 14 pedestrian underpass. Mr. Bradburn discussed the downtown train station and flower beds. Ms. Cowlin stated that there will be space for art with the new Depot Park project.

Ms. Cowlin asked the Commissioners for thoughts on where a mural could be placed on public property. Ms. Merkling discussed how 1776 Restaurant and Crystal Lake Brewing are interested in participating in a mural program. They would need to raise their own funds for the projects. Mr. Bradburn discussed how people could apply for art grants for these projects once the Commission starts to build up funds from the bench program sponsorships.

Ms. Cowlin stated that the Water's Edge development will include the mural panels for art installations. Ms. Neal stated that there are locations Downtown that could accommodate temporary vinyl art placements. She also discussed the potential for an art or film festival. The Commission discussed locations to put up a screen to show films. Ms. Noble stated that a film festival would be unique and would help Crystal Lake to stand out.

Mayor Haleblian stated that the City has an advantage with the Raue, restaurants, Williams Street, and the Downtown in general. He proposed that the Commission work on getting the film festival started, getting interest from the community, and take it from there.

Wendy Guss stated that the banners on light poles could be used for art as well. Chalk painting on sidewalk squares are a low cost option. She also discussed Dole Avenue and the potential for temporary placements along the July 4th parade route.

GARDEN PARTY / PRIDE EVENT RECAP

Ms. Jeffries discussed the garden party and the intense wind that day. She stated that the canopy was acting like a sail, and the tables and flyers were floating away. Ms. Noble asked if the Commission could get a tablecloth. Ms. Cowlin stated that she is looking into getting the Commission a tablecloth.

Ms. Jeffries stated that the Pride Walk event was a success and the rock painting was a hit. Ms. Neal stated that the event went well overall. She stated that there will likely be a separate Pride Walk committee created for next year. She also stated that there may not be a garden party event next year since the weather in early May has been unpredictable.

Ms. Noble stated that the rock painting is inexpensive and draws people in. The sidewalk chalk has been attractive to draw in event attendees to participate as well.

HAIKU PROJECT

Ms. Jeffries stated that she will drop off the Haikus that comply with the requirements. Ms. Cowlin stated that the City's summer interns could take it from there. Mr. Littrell inquired if the Haikus could be put on the benches. Ms. Neal stated that she views the benches as fitting more with a small mural concept.

OPEN DISCUSSION

Ms. Noble discussed the Lakeside Fest and having a table for an artist to create live art. Ms. Merkling stated that she spoke with a few artists. The going rate would be $300 per day to have an artist at the table. Ms. Merkling stated that she has one artist who would be interested in being there for two days, $300 per day, but he is only available on Saturday and Sunday.

Ms. Cowlin discussed interactive art opportunities to draw people in. She proposed a blank board where people get a small section that they can paint or draw on.

The Commission discussed the days of the Fest to staff the table with Commissioners, volunteers, or an artist. Ms. Cowlin proposed Saturday for the artist to attend from noon to 5:00 p.m. She proposed Sunday could be the interactive art day, or Thursday or Friday. Ms. Noble stated that Thursday is the busiest day for Crystal Lake attendees.

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 9:23 a.m.