DRAFT

CRYSTAL LAKE PUBLIC ARTS COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11, 2026
HELD AT THE CRYSTAL LAKE CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS

The meeting was called to order by Ms. Katie Cowlin at 8:09 a.m.

ROLL CALL

Members Patti Noble, Nancy Merkling, David Bradburn, Joy Neal, Brynn Jeffries, and Kathy Hajdrowski were present.

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

MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 7, 2026 PUBIC ARTS COMMISSION MEETING

Mr. Bradburn made a motion to approve the January 7, 2026 Public Arts Commission meeting minutes as presented. Ms. Jeffries seconded the motion. On roll call, all members voted aye. Motion passed.

PUBLIC PRESENTATION

None.

WATER'S EDGE ART PARK MURALS – STATUS UPDATE

Mr. Moore stated that the agreement has been sent to the selected artist. Ms. Cowlin stated that the developer is handling the purchase of the vinyl and the City will pay the stipend to the artist. She stated that the City is working on the placement of a plaque recognizing the artist. Mr. Bradburn suggested placing a small sign with a QR code. Ms. Jeffries suggested placing a plaque on the corner of the panels stating "curated by the Arts Commission, funded by Heartland Real Estate, art created by artist name." Ms. Noble suggested a free standing sign that can be switched out when the art panels are changed.

Ms. Cowlin stated that a ribbon cutting is scheduled for May 14th in the evening. The event will feature a band and the developer is seeking potential bands to play. Ms. Neal stated that she may have some interested musicians available. Ms. Cowlin asked for the Commission to provide band suggestions.

EXCHANGE DRIVE ROUNDABOUT ART – STATUS UPDATE

Mr. Hammonds provided a status update regarding the Congress Parkway and Exchange Drive roundabout sculpture. The installation is on pace for June 2026. Ms. Cowlin provided photos of the sculpture in progress.

DOWNTOWN CRYSTAL LAKE ART-FOCUSED EVENT

Ms. Neal stated that the Downtown Association has created a subcommittee that is working on executing an art event. They held a meeting a few weeks ago to brainstorm ideas. The big vision is to have a cross-town art event, incorporating the Downtown, the Dole, the Raue, and other historic sites. The goal is for a weeklong art event.

Ms. Neal discussed the goal to potentially start with a third Thursday event Downtown in June, July, and August. Some of the Committee's ideas include an art fair at Depot Park and art at dusk, similar to the setup of a farmer's market.

Ms. Hajdrowski discussed an art fair with multiple artists. Ms. Neal stated that they should keep the focus on art, instead of a craft fair type event. Ms. Noble stated that she is interested in attending the next Downtown art subcommittee meeting.

DOWNTOWN BENCH PROJECT – ROUND 2

Ms. Cowlin stated that there is plenty of space Downtown to keep the existing benches and to add six more this year. The current benches are holding up very well.

Ms. Neal asked if previous submissions would be automatically added to the new call for artists. Ms. Merkling stated that it is hard to track new submissions and use previous submissions. Ms. Cowlin stated that there would be a new call to artists for the next round.

Ms. Jeffries stated that artists must be required to properly scale their artwork. Ms. Merkling offered to assist with the call to artist language clarifying the crop ratio and scaling requirements.

Mr. Bradburn asked if Jeff Brown will be creating the benches again. If so, it would be wise to get his timeline and then work off of his availability for the next call to artists. Ms. Noble asked if staff will be contacting Jeff. Ms. Cowlin stated that staff will contact him.

LAKESIDE FESTIVAL

Ms. Noble stated that Lakeside reached out to her again to see if the Arts Commission wanted a table at the festival. Ms. Jeffries stated that she is interested and encouraged others to attend.

Ms. Neal asked if the live painting was working and if the Commission should bring this back. Ms. Noble suggested the Commission just has a table and offers crafts and rock painting again. She suggested to forego the live artist and stick to crafts and communicating with event attendees.

Ms. Cowlin stated that the group can update the promotional flyer. Ms. Noble suggested the Commission should update the handout cards. Ms. Jeffries stated that we should keep the volunteers updated regarding the status of Commission items and projects. This will keep people engaged, and prevent the volunteers from feeling like the Commission only contacts them when something is needed.

OPEN DISCUSSION

Ms. Jeffries asked about the haikus. Ms. Cowlin stated that all the haikus were put out last year. Ms. Jeffries stated that she will reach out to the schools again.

Ms. Neal suggested the addition of a community creation experience at the potential future art event. She discussed a tile concept where people can create their own tile, which is used for a future collage or mural. Ms. Noble stated that there could be a theme and potential sponsors. Ms. Merkling stated that she loves the idea. It gets people to contribute and say that their contribution is part of the final product.

Ms. Jeffries stated that she would like the Commission to focus on the above-ground portion of the Route 14 underpass. Ms. Cowlin provided the timeline for inspection of the underpass in 2026 and construction

in 2027. Ms. Jeffries suggested the Commission should focus on this in 2027 when construction is completed.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Bradburn made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Neal seconded the motion. On voice vote, all members voted aye. The meeting was adjourned at 8:49 a.m.