MINUTES
The City of Crystal Lake
PROCEEDINGS OF THE YOUTH COMMISSION AND CITY COUNCIL
May 14, 2026 Special Meeting
Aaron T. Shepley City Hall, 100 W. Woodstock Street, Crystal Lake, IL

1. Call to Order

Commissioner Johnston called the meeting to order at 4:05 p.m. Thursday, May 14, 2026.

2. Roll Call

Commissioners Ella Hutchins, Theo Johnston, Charlie Benton, Andrew Cioper, and Jackson Lisle were present. City Councilmember Denise Smith, Assistant to the City Manager Ryan Oates, and Deputy City Manager Nick Hammonds were also present.

3. Approval of Minutes from the April 9, 2026 Meeting

Commissioner Benton moved to approve the minutes of the April 9, 2026 meeting. Commissioner Cioper seconded. Upon voice vote, motion passed.

4. Public Presentation

Scott McClain, emeritus board member with the Community Foundation, attended the meeting to gain insights into the Crystal Lake Youth Commission formation and functions. He is researching to potentially start a youth commission through the Community Foundation. Amy Hernon, Executive Director, provided the history of the Community Foundation. She stated that the organization is a funder in McHenry County since 2001, which accepts donations and grants money to nonprofit organizations. The Community Foundation is interested in involving the youth population with the Foundation, building civic engagement and encouraging community.

5. Civic Engagement & Voter Education

The Commission discussed the event held at MCC on Thursday, April 23rd where the group handed out information cards, provided information regarding voting, and promoted the Youth Commission.

6. 2025-2026 Year-End Term Discussion

Mr. Hammonds asked the Commission for their feedback regarding the Youth Commission's goals, objectives, and direction. Commissioner Cioper stated that having a more defined objective to start the year was helpful. He stated that the Commission is making progress, although the voter education could have gone faster.

Commissioner Benton suggested holding two meetings per month instead of one. She stated that the guest speakers in the first year were great, but having been on the Commission for two years she has heard the same presentations twice. She suggested to reduce the number of guest speakers, or have one meeting of the month highlighting a guest speaker and the second meeting focused on a Commission project.

Commissioners Benton and Johnston asked to be on the July 4th parade float. Commissioner Benton stated that she enjoyed participating in community events, such as the Chamber of Commerce clean-up day. She asked for the Youth Commission to receive an email when opportunities arise.

Commissioner Cioper stated that having more people from the public attend certain meetings, like the Park District or the State's Attorney, could help the Commission connect with more people. Councilmember Smith stated that Cathy Cagle with the Park District contacted her to inquire about working with the Youth Commission to assist with programming. Councilmember stated that the Commission's efforts have been getting more recognition and they can see the impact of the work they have been doing. This item will be a focus topic to start the 2026-2027 term.

Councilmember Smith stated the City is currently evaluating 200 E. Congress Parkway. She stated that, if the Council proceeds with purchasing the property, the Youth Commission would be involved with providing feedback and direction on youth/teen spaces in the facility. Commissioner Lisle stated that he has written a paper about potential uses of the property. Commissioner Cioper stated the same. The Commissioners were appreciative of this concept and look forward to being involved if possible.

7. Adjourn

There being no further business, Commissioner Benton moved to adjourn the meeting at 4:40 p.m. Commissioner Cioper seconded the motion. On voice vote, all present voted yes. Motion passed.