

**MINUTES  
CITY OF DEKALB  
CITIZENS' COMMUNITY ENHANCEMENT COMMISSION  
January 17, 2023**

The Citizens' Community Enhancement Commission (CCEC) held a regular meeting on January 17, 2023, in the Second Floor Training Room of the DeKalb Police Department, 700 West Lincoln Highway, DeKalb, Illinois.

Chair Brad Hoey called the meeting to order at 4:03 p.m.

**A. ROLL CALL**

Roll call was recorded by Management Analyst Scott Zak and the following members of the CCEC were present: Chair Brad Hoey and Commissioners Jeanine Holcomb, Aaron Robertson and Helen Umbdenstock were present. Commissioner Ellingsworth Webb joined the meeting at 4:06. Absent were: Commissioners Melissa Beck and Kenneth Brown.

**B. APPROVAL OF AGENDA – ADDITIONS/DELETIONS**

**MOTION**

Ms. Holcomb motioned to approve the agenda, seconded by Ms. Umbdenstock.

**VOTE**

The agenda was approved by unanimous voice vote.

**C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – SEPTEMBER 19, 2022**

**MOTION**

Ms. Umbdenstock motioned to approve the minutes, seconded by Ms. Holcomb.

**VOTE**

The minutes were approved by unanimous voice vote.

**D. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

No public comments were received.

**E. NEW BUSINESS**

**1. CITY HALL MURAL**

**A. POSSIBLE WORKSHOP DATES**

The Commission discussed possible dates for two public workshops for artist Danielle Casali to give a presentation on the City Hall mural project and hear the

community's ideas for imagery to be included in the artwork. It was agreed the workshops should be held on different days and times to give community members more opportunities to attend. Selected as the first-choice dates were Saturday, Feb. 11 and Wednesday, Feb. 22, with Saturday Feb. 18 and Wednesday, March 1 selected as backups. Both workshops will be held at the DeKalb Public Library and posted as Commission meetings.

Along with publicizing the workshops through a news release and social media postings, the Commission agreed to send invitations to the Belonging Council, DeKalb School District art teachers, service organizations, the NIU College of Visual and Performing Arts, OC Creative, KVAL, Opportunity DeKalb, the Stage Coach Theatre and the Greek Row community.

## **B. WORKSPACE LOCATION IDEAS**

Mr. Zak shared that space in the basement of the library is being explored as the location for Ms. Casali to work with volunteers to create the mural's mosaic panels. The Commission discussed other possible locations, and Ms. Umbdenstock said she would contact some downtown landlords.

## **C. SOLICITING VOLUNTEERS**

The Commission brainstormed ideas for soliciting volunteers to help create the mural. Contacting NIU's Student Involvement and Leadership Department, applicants to the Call for Artists, the Family Service Agency and NIU Athletics teams were suggested.

## **2. MALTA MURAL BY NORA BALAYTI**

Nora Balayti has recently completed a mural in Malta. Chair Hoey said Ms. Balayti, an NIU alumni, would love to do a project in DeKalb and is another interested artist that the Commission can contact as the public arts program moves forward.

## **3. NEXT INITIATIVES & GRANTS**

The Commission discussed projects they may like to pursue as grants become available. Ms. Umbdenstock suggested a calendar featuring local art, and Chair Hoey shared that some communities host festivals where several murals are done in one weekend. Ms. Umbdenstock suggested installing a pergola in the pedestrian passthrough from Lincoln Highway to Van Buer Plaza. Chair Hoey said the pergola could extend into Palmer Court, and Ms. Holcomb said it could be part of a larger Van Buer Plaza beautification project. Ms. Umbdenstock said a project could be done to better tie in the Agora Tower and Grove Street areas into the downtown. Ms. Holcomb suggested recreating the historic DeKalb welcome sign in a public lot.

## **F. OLD BUSINESS**

### **1. VETERANS MURAL**

The Commission discussed the merits of five options for the mural design submitted by Don Gratzke and his team and examples of their work were shown. The Commission agreed to ask for input on the designs from the owner of Plaza DeKalb, on which the mural will be created. Mr. Gratzke will also be contacted for information on the artists' experience with large, two-story murals and how the intricate emblems included in the design will be created. Mr. Zak reminded the Commission there is a funding issue that still needs to be resolved, noting the submitted budget for the mural was \$15,000 while only around \$10,000 in T-Mobile grant funding remains for the third mural.

### **2. ANNIE GLIDDEN ROAD MURAL**

Mr. Zak shared there are staff concerns about the cost to repair the vinyl wraps included in the underpass mural design should they be vandalized by graffiti. While the wraps are still being considered, a second option has been developed in which the underpass walls and center support would be painted red, an NIU Huskie would be painted on the south end of the center post and NIU flags would be mounted on the top of the underpass walls. The Commission agreed they support either option.

### **3. VACANT CITY LOT AT FORUTH STREET & LINCOLN HIGHWAY**

No additional information was shared here.

### **4. LET'S MOVE TO THE MUSIC**

Ms. Umbdenstock shared the owners of Ellwood Steak and Fish House remain interested in participating in the program, and Ms. Beck will join a meeting with the owner of Blumen Gardens.

### **5. UTILITY BOX ARTWORK UPDATE**

The Commission viewed the final designs for the vinyl wraps that will cover three downtown utility boxes. Mr. Zak shared the designs are ready to be installed as soon as the weather warms up, likely in April.

### **6. PAINT-A-PLUG REVIEW**

The Commission viewed the 13 hydrants that were painted during the 2022 Paint-A-Plug season.

### **7. OTHER UPDATES**

Mr. Zak shared the Commission was split when asked if they should seek a return to monthly meetings and noted more City commissions are moving to

meeting ad hoc or every other month. The Commission agreed they will continue to meet every other month.

**G. ADJOURNMENT**

MOTION

Ms. Holcomb motioned to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Webb.

VOTE

The motion was approved by unanimous voice vote, and the meeting was adjourned at 5:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Scott Zak  
Management Analyst

Minutes approved by the Citizens' Community Enhancement Commission on March 20, 2023.