

**MINUTES
CITY OF DEKALB
CITIZENS' COMMUNITY ENHANCEMENT COMMISSION
March 20, 2023**

The Citizens' Community Enhancement Commission (CCEC) held a regular meeting on March 20, 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 4:07 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 Melissa Beck, Jeanine Holcomb and Ellingsworth Webb were present. Commissioner Helen Umbdenstock joined the meeting at 4:12. Absent were: Commissioners Kenneth Brown and Aaron Robertson. Also present were City Manager Bill Nicklas and Danielle Casali.

B. APPROVAL OF AGENDA – ADDITIONS/DELETIONS

MOTION

Ms. Holcomb motioned to approve the agenda, seconded by Mr. Webb.

VOTE

The agenda was approved by unanimous voice vote.

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – JANUARY 17, 2023

MOTION

Mr. Webb 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

Chair Hoey introduced artist Danielle Casali to share the first draft of the mosaic mural she will be creating on the south exterior wall on City Hall. Mr. Hoey thanked Ms. Casali for taking the time to hold two public brainstorming

workshops last month to receive public input on the design. Ms. Casali said a visit to the DeKalb County Historical Society also informed her design.

In creating the design, Ms. Casali said she did not want to repeat DeKalb imagery already shown in other murals in the City, such as the historic DeKalb welcome sign seen in the Lincoln Highway mural.

Ms. Casali shared the draft, which includes native plants, hands and crops along the bottom, silhouettes of historic local buildings along the right edge, a large field with the Kishwaukee River running through it and a rising sun with geese flying at the top. She said she was inspired by the idea of community gardens since residents work together to contribute to these gardens while contributing to the community as a whole.

Ms. Casali then showed details of the mural. These included hands holding elotes and kabobs, hands representing multiple generations, a hand signing the word "belonging" in American Sign Language, constellations to represent the stars that guided those on the Underground Railroad and niches in the vines where people can stand to take a photo with the mural. She said quotes that have been incorporated were those popular in an online survey and the mosaic pieces will be the entire sunflower, river and select flowers and crops. She said pollinators will be added to the design for community members to create with mosaic and then recognize their contribution to the mural once it is installed.

Commissioners Beck, Holcomb and Webb complimented the design.

City Manager Nicklas said people may not recognize the food items at their current scale and that the historic building silhouettes felt tacked on. Ms. Casali said she felt obligated to include the buildings, and Mr. Nicklas said they may not be necessary since they are already represented in other artwork.

Chair Hoey agreed that the building imagery is already seen in other DeKalb murals. He said the subtlety of the design will lead people to discover something new each time they view the mural and that it was very representative of the community. Commissioner Umbdenstock complimented the brightness and color and said that should continue into the space where the historic buildings will be removed. Commissioner Webb said the piece is impactful and will be able to stand on its own without explanation. Ms. Casali said to fill in the space with the historic buildings, she will shift the remaining images and make them larger. Ms. Beck said she liked how the corn and barbed wire are in the rear of the design since that is the City's history. Chair Hoey said he hopes the mural inspires other public art and expects it to be a game changer. It was agreed a special meeting will be scheduled for March 27 for the Commission to review the design changes.

The Commission discussed soliciting volunteers to create the mosaics once the design is approved. Chair Hoey suggested reaching out to community groups

such as Club 55 and the Rotary Clubs. Ms. Casali said she would like to do three work sessions a week and she has talked with NIU about a work session at the Holmes Student Center. Chair Hoey said a news release regarding volunteering should be prepared for release after final approval of the design.

2. ILLINOIS ARTS COUNCIL AGENCY LISTENING TOUR RECAP

Chair Hoey said representatives from the Illinois Arts Council Agency provided valuable information during their March 8 visit to the Egyptian Theatre and received great feedback from the local attendees. Ms. Beck said it was clear the agency has funding available. Mr. Zak distributed a list of grants available through the agency and an overview of Urbana's public arts program, which receives agency support.

3. COMMUNITY ART PROJECT FOR 2023

4. PLUGS & BOXES FOR 2023

Agenda items E-3 and 4 were discussed together. Mr. Zak said as part of the T-Mobile Hometown Grant, around \$2,100 a year is available for a community art project and shared a proposal, developed with Chair Hoey, for Boxes and Plugs. The program would provide \$1,400 for the production of vinyl wraps for three additional pieces of utility box artwork, three stipends of \$150 each for the utility box artists and supply reimbursements of \$50 each for nine Paint-A-Plugs. Commissioner Umbdenstock shared she would like to donate \$750 to the program which could be used for larger utility box stipends and additional Paint-A-Plug reimbursements. Chair Hoey thanked Ms. Umbdenstock for her generosity. The Commission discussed how residents could donate leftover paint after finishing a hydrant, and it was decided residents will be asked if they have left over paint and that information will be shared with future applicants.

F. OLD BUSINESS

1. VETERANS MURAL

Mr. Zak shared that John Pappas has been contacted and remains willing to have the Veterans Mural created on the north exterior wall of Plaza DeKalb, and that while he like options one and five of the current design, Mr. Pappas insists the Commission make the final decision on the design.

As requested, Mr. Zak contacted Don Gratzke, the artist of the proposed design, to gain additional information on his team's experience. In response, Mr. Gratzke said the three team members all have experience in multi-story murals and that intricate emblems in the design would be created by using a project to photo map the images on to the wall and then painting them.

Mr. Zak shared only \$8,500 of the T-Mobile Hometown Grant remains for the Veterans Mural while the submitted budget is over \$15,000. He said additional funding may become available if the underpass mural comes in under budget or a grant submitted for the underpass mural is received.

The Commission discussed a community member's suggestion that the design be revisited. Chair Hoey noted the Commission has spent several months vetting the current design, and Mr. Webb said the more elaborate designs that have been suggested could cost more than the over \$15,000 budget submitted for the current proposal. The Commission agreed that while it will not solicit new designs, it will consider a new design if it is submitted to the Commission along with a budget and possible funding source if the cost is more than the City can provide. Mr. Webb said any new design should be submitted by June in the event that the mural can be done this year.

2. ANNIE GLIDDEN ROAD MURAL

A mockup was shown of a design for the underpass mural developed in response to graffiti concerns and supported by the Commission at its previous meeting. For the design, the underpass walls and center pillar will be painted red, a Huskie image will be stenciled on the pillar, Huskie flags will be mounted on the top of the walls and the word "Huskie" will be painted on the west wall while the word "nation" will be painted on the east wall. Mr. Zak noted this design will be easier to fix if vandalized than the vinyl wraps first discussed and would cost less. Vinyl wraps can also be added in later years. The Commission supported the design.

3. LET'S MOVE TO THE MUSIC

Ms. Umbdenstock shared she will be scheduling a meeting with the owner of Blumen Gardens about participating in the program and noted the Ellwood Steak and Fish House has tried out having live music. She added she will contact the Illinois Arts Council Agency about possible funding support.

4. DOWNTOWN PLANTERS

Ms. Beck said last year's pilot program was successful in attracting community volunteers to plant the planters; however, the plants did not do well. It was agreed more needs to be done to plan which types of flowers should go where and to prep the soil. Second Ward Alderwoman Barb Larson, who planted and tended the Egyptian Theatre's garden, will be asked to join the planning group and a meeting of that group will be scheduled.

5. OTHER UPDATES

Ms. Beck shared that a fundraiser called Art for the Mart is being planned for the Barb Food Mart in early August. Participants who make a donation will get to do chalk art in Palmer Court.

G. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION

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

VOTE

The motion was approved by unanimous voice vote, and the meeting was adjourned at 5:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Scott Zak
Management Analyst

Minutes approved by the Citizens' Community Enhancement Commission on March 27, 2023.