

**MINUTES
CITY OF DEKALB
CITIZENS' COMMUNITY ENHANCEMENT COMMISSION
May 15, 2023**

The Citizens' Community Enhancement Commission (CCEC) held a regular meeting on May 15, 2023, in the Second Floor Training Room of the DeKalb Police Department, 700 West Lincoln Highway, DeKalb, Illinois.

Management Analyst Scott Zak called the meeting to order at 4:02 p.m.

A. ROLL CALL

Roll call was recorded by Management Analyst Scott Zak and the following members of the CCEC were present: Commissioners Melissa Beck, Kenneth Brown, Helen Umbdenstock and Ellingsworth Webb. Absent were: Chair Brad Hoey and Commissioners Jeanine Holcomb and Aaron Robertson. Also present were Mayor Cohen Barnes and Seventh Ward Alderman John Walker.

In the absence of Chair Hoey, Mr. Zak asked for a motion to nominate a temporary chair for the meeting.

MOTION

Ms. Beck motioned to nominate Mr. Ellingsworth as temporary chair, seconded by Ms. Umbdenstock.

VOTE

Mr. Ellingsworth was made temporary chair by unanimous voice vote.

B. APPROVAL OF AGENDA – ADDITIONS/DELETIONS

MOTION

Ms. Beck motioned to approve the agenda, seconded by Mr. Brown.

VOTE

The agenda was approved by unanimous voice vote.

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – MARCH 27, 2023

MOTION

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

VOTE

The minutes were approved by unanimous voice vote.

D. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No public comments were received.

E. NEW BUSINESS

1. MEMORIAL BENCH

2. MENTORING PROGRAM

The Commission discussed items E-1 and E-2 together. Ms. Umbdenstock said she would like to see a memorial bench created to honor Gracie Sasso-Cleveland, a 15-year-old who was killed in May, and encourage mentoring. She said the bench would encourage parents to know where their children are and serve as a place for children to go to know the community cares about them. She said she would like to see the community do more to support children.

Alderman Walker said mentoring children comes with challenges. He has mentored through sports but not all children enjoy sports, and he said reaching parents can be difficult because many want to move back to Chicago, finding the pace of life too slow here. He agreed the bench would tell children there are people who care and said there are many great mentors, but help is needed to bring them together.

Ms. Umbdenstock said while the bench would represent mentoring, a space is needed where children can be mentored. Mayor Barnes said conversations are happening on how to engage children, and while the City and City Council would help support such efforts, he did not think the Commission would be able to run them. Ms. Umbdenstock agreed, and the Commission discuss ways the community could facilitate mentoring. Mr. Webb said the YMCA may be able to help engage children. Mr. Barnes said Meta is a major contributor to STEM activities involving youth. Alderman Walker said high school students need to hear from more speakers to whom they can relate. Mr. Webb said there are mentoring opportunities related to art including art therapy and block parties with food trucks and craft making.

The Commission supported the bench proposal and discussed possible locations for installation. Commissioners agreed DeKalb High School would be an appropriate location. Alderman Walker suggested a phone number could be included on the bench that children could contact for assistance.

Ms. Umbdenstock will bring back more information at the next meeting.

3. VETERANS MURAL BUDGET UPDATE

Mr. Zak reviewed the T-Mobile Hometown Grant budget, which has \$8,500 remaining for the Veterans Mural. The American flag and military seal design that the Commission had been considering has a proposed budget of more than \$15,000. An artist who was referred to the Commission was provided with the proposed site on Plaza DeKalb and was asked if she could create a mural for the remaining funds available. After some research, the artist said it could not be done, noting the cost of the aerial boom to access the two-story site alone would take up much of the budget.

Since the cost of the initial proposal is out of reach, the Commission revisited the design for the Veterans Mural, reviewing examples with more symbolic imagery. Mayor Barnes said an example design showing empty military boots representing a fallen soldier was powerful. The Commission agreed to pursue a more symbolic design.

The Commission also discussed ways to make the mural more affordable. Ms. Beck suggested painting the mural on a panel that could then be mounted. Mayor Barnes suggested enlarging a painting into a vinyl wrap. The ideas will be investigated.

F. OLD BUSINESS

1. PLUGS AND BOXES

Mr. Zak reviewed this year's plan to create vinyl wraps for up to four utility boxes with the total production cost estimated at \$1,700. Artist incentives of up to \$150 each will be offered, while no incentive will be offered for Paint-A-Plug this year. Four downtown utility boxes have been selected next to McCabe's, at Third Street and Lincoln Highway, on Locust Street near the entrance to Van Buer Plaza and First Street in Memorial Park. The Memorial Park box could be veterans themed; however, it would need to be repaired or replaced first since it has rust corrosion. A news release will be distributed after the templates are completed for the artists to complete the utility box designs.

2. CITY HALL MURAL

Mr. Zak shared artist Danielle Casali continues to hold work sessions with volunteers to create the mosaic mural for City Hall. So far, 17 sessions have been held with volunteers signing up for 193 two-hour slots.

3. ANNIE GLIDDEN ROAD MURAL

The Commission discussed power washing bids ranging from \$2,800 to more than \$6,000 and agreed to accept the low bid. This will leave room in the budget for the "Huskie Nation" lettering in the design.

4. MOVE TO THE MUSIC

Ms. Umbdenstock shared the owners of the Ellwood Fish and Steak House and Nancy Proesel with Safe Passage are interested in participating. She said she would like to start by providing music at outdoor events to begin the program.

5. DOWNTOWN PLANTERS

Ms. Beck shared community planting day is coming up on May 20. Public Works has replaced the top six inches of soil in preparation.

6. OTHER UPDATES

Mayor Barnes remarked on the successful Cinco de Mayo event held downtown, and the Mayor and Commission agreed they would like to see more events in the City.

G. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION

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

VOTE

The motion was approved by unanimous voice vote, and the meeting was adjourned at 5:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Scott Zak
Management Analyst

Minutes approved by the Citizens' Community Enhancement Commission on July 10, 2023.