

**MINUTES  
CITY OF DEKALB  
CITIZENS' COMMUNITY ENHANCEMENT COMMISSION  
June 13, 2022**

The Citizens' Community Enhancement Commission (CCEC) held a special meeting on June 13, 2022, 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 4:04 p.m.

**A. ROLL CALL**

Roll call was recorded by Management Analyst Scott Zak and the following members of the CCEC were present: Melissa Beck, Jeanine Holcomb, Helen Umbdenstock and Ellingsworth Webb. Absent were: Commissioners Aaron Robertson and Kenneth Brown. Also present were Mayor Cohen Barnes and City Council Liaison Scott McAdams.

**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 – MAY 16, 2022**

**MOTION**

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

**VOTE**

The minutes were approved by unanimous voice vote.

**D. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

No public comments were received.

**E. NEW BUSINESS**

**1. PAUL KASSEL, NIU DEAN OF COLLEGE OF VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS**

Chair Hoey said Mr. Kassel has shared an idea for creation of a public arts piece where piping and tubes would be used to create the shape of Huskie. The public

would then be able to put new skins on the sculpture from time to time. Multiple sculptures could be created and perhaps placed at the City entrances.

Mayor Barnes said he liked that the sculpture would be permanent but at the same time, could be re-created regularly.

Chair Hoey told Mr. Kassel he believed the Commission would be receptive to the idea.

## **2. NEA GRANTS**

Chair Hoey said a National Endowment for the Arts grant could be used to extend the public arts program that is being launched with the Call for Artists for public mural proposals the Commission is releasing.

The Commission considered two grant opportunities from the National Endowment for the Arts. The Our Town grants supports creative placemaking that integrates arts, culture and design into local efforts to strengthen community. The grant amount is \$25,000 to \$150,000, and the first deadline is Aug. 1. The Grants for Arts Projects are the NEA's principal grant program supporting a broad range of artistic areas. The grant amount is \$10,000 to \$100,000 with the first deadline on July 7. Both grants require a local match. Given the later deadline, the Commission concentrated on the Our Town grants.

Mr. Webb noted it was stated in the recent NEA grant webinar that working with multiple organizations is helpful for an application. Commissioners suggested working with NIU, the Kishwaukee Valley Art League, the DeKalb School District and the DeKalb Public Library.

Mayor Barnes said an application that incorporated so many partners would be a heavy workload for City staff to complete. It was agreed that instead the application would be an extension of the public arts program described in the successful \$50,000 T-Mobile Hometown Grant application.

Mr. Kassel joined the meeting at 4:35 p.m. He shared that it takes an expert around 20 hours to write a NEA grant and that a member of his staff has been assigned to write one. Mr. Kassel said the Huskie sculptures Chair Hoey described earlier would be 20-feet high and 30-feet long, making them a photo destination. He said the sculptures alone should be recognizable as Huskies and then they would be decorated by different groups, perhaps chosen through a competition.

It was agreed to put aside the idea to pursue an NEA grant to extend the public arts program funded by the T-Mobile grant and instead partner with NIU to pursue a grant for the Huskie sculptures. Mr. Kassel noted part of the local grant match can be labor.

Mayor Barnes said he would like to do a public arts project as part of the downtown improvement project now under construction. It would be a mosaic mural of water in the sidewalk in front of the Bandit's Castle building at 230 E. Lincoln Highway.

Chair Hoey said the Commission was receptive to the sidewalk mosaic mural idea when making recommendations on the downtown project and that it was the type of project the Commission envisioned while discussing the Lincoln Highway lane reconfiguration. The Commission gave its support to the mosaic mural project.

## **F. OLD BUSINESS**

### **1. VETERNAS MURAL UPDATE**

Chair Hoey shared a proof from an artist that Commissioner Robertson is working with for the Veterans Mural on the north wall of the Plaza DeKalb building. The proof depicts an American flag with the seals of the military service branches. Mr. Hoey noted the design is not final.

The Commission supported the proof. Ms. Umbdenstock said the design was subtle and beautiful. Chair Hoey said he would share the feedback with Mr. Robertson and encourage him to move forward with the application process.

### **2. MURAL CALL FOR ARTISTS**

The Commission reviewed the penultimate draft of the Call for Artists for public mural proposals. Since progress is already being made on the Veterans Mural, it was agreed that the north wall of the Plaza DeKalb building should be removed from the possible City-owned mural sites listed in the Call. Mr. Zak will create a webpage of the City's website for the Call for Artists and a fillable form for the application.

### **3. UTILITY BOX ARTWORK CALL FOR ARTISTS**

The Commission reviewed the penultimate draft of the Call for Artists for utility box artwork proposals. Mr. Zak shared that Jon Kuhn of Banner Up Signs has agreed to create the utility box templates that artists will use to propose their designs and then in the production of vinyl wraps. Mr. Zak shared the Call for Artists may be changed to reflect information learned through the template creation process.

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

Ms. Umbdenstock said she will be talking with groups who have expressed interest in providing a donation to have NIU students perform at their businesses.

She will also be reaching out to larger entities to seek support and local radio stations for promotion.

## **5. PEDESTRIAN PASS THROUGH**

The Commission supported a proposal to use a portion of the T-Mobile grant to hire a contractor to mount the wire grid that will support art installations in the pedestrian pass through between Van Buer Plaza and Lincoln Highway. Community members will then create the art installations. The Commission also supported adding outdoor lights to the grid to replace the holiday lights in the passthrough, which were popular but mostly no longer work.

## **6. DOWNTOWN PLANTERS PROGRAM**

Ms. Beck said good publicity was seen from the flower planting in downtown and people are already asking about joining the program next year.

Ms. Beck said the flower beds in the median of South Annie Glidden Road between Fairview Drive and Lincoln Highway need attention. Chair Hoey said it would be beneficial to address those before the start of next school year. Mr. Zak will ask Assistant Public Works Director Andy Raih how the Commission could help improve the flower beds.

Chair Hoey noted that since the Commission moved to holding regular meetings every other month, special meetings have been needed because of the pressing work before the Commission. Chair Hoey suggested and the Commission agreed to recommend the Commission return to holding regular meetings monthly beginning in 2023.

## **G. ADJOURNMENT**

### **MOTION**

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

### **VOTE**

The motion was approved by unanimous voice vote, and the meeting was adjourned at 5:41 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Scott Zak  
Management Analyst

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Minutes approved by the Citizens' Community Enhancement Commission on July 18, 2022.