

City of North Saint Paul
Arts & Culture Commission Meeting Minutes

September 6, 2023

6:30 PM

I. Call to Order

Chair Sonnek called the meeting to order at 6:32 PM

II. Roll Call

Tom Sonnek, Chair

Carey Nadeau, Vice Chair

Stacy Maher, Commissioner

Lisa Ritchie, Commissioner

Emily Haeg Nguyen, Commissioner

See Yang, Commissioner

Amanda Black, Commissioner

Cecelia Goracki, Student Commissioner (non-voting)

Lisa Wong, Council Member (non-voting)

Staff

Sara Lang, Commission Secretary

III. Adopt Agenda

On motion by Commissioner Nadeau, seconded by Commissioner Ritchie, with all present voting aye (7-0), motion carried to approve the agenda as presented.

IV. Approval of Minutes

A. Approval of the 08/02/23 Meeting Minutes

On motion by Commissioner Nadeau, seconded by Commissioner Black, with all present voting aye (7-0), motion carried to approve the minutes as presented.

B. Approval of the 08/23/23 Joint ACC and Park Commission Meeting Minutes

On motion by Commissioner Nadeau, seconded by Commissioner Yang, with all present voting aye (7-0), motion carried to approve the minutes as presented.

V. Meeting Open to the Public

There was no public input.

VI. Public Hearings

There were no public hearings

VII. Commission Business, Action Items & Recommendations

A. Certificate Presentation for Public Art

Chair Sonnek presented a Certificate of Appreciation for Public Art to Madison Dornfeld, age six, for her painted rock snake project. Madison painted the head of a rock snake and due to public participation has 58 rocks and arranged them in a snake as a piece of public art. She also read a poem she wrote about her rock snake, named Slithers. This rock is currently located in her yard and is visible to the public.

A-1 Placement of Snake Rock Discussion

The Commission brainstormed possible public locations for the rock snake to be placed and continue to grow. Suggestions included several parks, along the Gateway Trail, the Historic Trail, the Library or Casey Lake. It was also suggested that the poem be displayed. Commission Secretary Lang will work with Public Works to see if there are any locations that may work.

B. Updates from Sub-committees

B - 1 Project Snowy

Commissioner Yang reported they met as a group and finished drafting the call for artists. Next steps will be to accept applications and follow up on purchases of the Snowy statues. She said the Snowy that is in place is showing cracks in the arm, possibly because it was never sealed. It was noted that it may be worth reaching out to Tivolito about the cracks. They also met with Roseville on their rose project and got a lot of information. Roseville took a different approach in that they selected artists first and had the items painted and then gave businesses the opportunity to select a finished rose. They had a shorter timeline but also had paid full-time staff on the project. Roseville recommended vetting artists to make sure they could do the project and would follow through as they had a couple that needed to be redone. There was a discussion of the cost and method for having the Snowy statues clear-coated and the possibility of having Public Works do this.

B - 2 Mural Project

Sonnek reported the mural at Silver Lake is finished and the project actually went very fast. The street-facing side is a light tan and should be painted a complimentary color to the mural. Then the mural artist would wrap the grass motif from the mural around that side. They will talk to Public Works about painting the base coat on the back side.

Public reaction to the mural on the three sides of the building has been positive. The artist is still on board to lead a birdhouse painting project at the Arts Festival.

B - 3 Utility Box Project

Commissioner Yang said the next step for the subcommittee will be to look at the next set of utility boxes to be wrapped and determine which designs would work best on each box. There is still a potential to wrap two more this fall. The next two are located at 2nd St and 7th Ave and will be nature themed.

B - 4 Art Cart

Commissioner Ritchie reported there was another rock painting activity for the Art Cart. The rocks are now spread out near the Snowy in front of City Hall. The last event of the season for the Art Cart will be at the Autumn Arts Festival. The Art Cart was at each of the Music in the Park events and also at the Car Show. This year was called a successful year for the cart.

B - 5 Paint and Sip

Student Commissioner Goracki reported the last Paint and Sip was well-attended and very successful. This project can go all year and they hope to find an October date, but Commissioner Ritchie recommended in the future participation be limited to 16 persons. Advertising should include the actual image that will be painted. It was noted that some of the people who participated in the last activity were new to Arts and Culture Commission events. Commission Secretary Lang will look for dates available at Casey Lake and will send those to Commissioner Ritchie to schedule the next event.

B - 5 Autumn Arts Festival

Commissioner Black said all is set to go for the Autumn Arts Festival on Sept. 16. More volunteers are needed and can still sign up for two-hour shifts. It was decided to send the request out to high school students like the National Honor Society. The time is 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. with events all day including bird house painting, bingo and from 2 to 6 p.m., performers. There will be up to six food trucks. There will be a map and schedule created by Commissioner Black. The City will be asked to do another promotional email before the event and reach out again to performers with the schedule.

C. Culture in ACC Projects

Commissioner Haeg-Nguyen said the subcommittee has been brainstorming and decided their action item for next month would be for each of them to do some research on DEI (Diversity, Equity and Inclusion) and consultants. The next step would be getting quotes for a consultant. Commissioner Yang said they also connected with the League of Minnesota Cities and other cities on how they approach DEI work. The full Commission could also come together in a workshop, possibly inviting other city staff and volunteers, to talk about how to incorporate more diversity in arts work with the purpose of building and engaging community. It could be framed to the City Council that way and be used as a template for larger DEI, City-wide projects. It was

acknowledged that what the City chooses to do in the area of DEI would be outside of the scope of the Commission. The Commission noted again the members are not fully representative of the members of the community and acknowledges that they don't know what they don't know. The subcommittee said they would have more the next month.

VIII. Old Business

Commissioner Black raised the idea of spreading out projects and not necessarily having everything done yearly. She suggested a five-year plan.

IX. Reports from Staff

A. Parade Updates

Commission Secretary Sara Lang gave the Commissioners the details for their participation in the community parade in mid-September. The Commission will have a vehicle for all Commissions and a loudspeaker. There is candy to hand out and pencils were ordered. There are also bookmarks with the Fall Festival event on them and pop-its/slap bracelets. The Commission decided to save the pencils for the Autumn Arts Festival.

B. Art Submission

Commission Secretary Lang said the City website now has a spot where people can submit public art they see around the City.

X. Reports from Commissioners

Chair Sonnek reported there is a product that could be put on the new mural at Silver Lake as a protective coating that would make it easier to clean in the event of graffiti. Commissioner Ritchie said she will reach out to the muralist for more information and have that for the next meeting.

XI. Reports from Council Liaison

Council Member Wong reported it is budget season. The City Council had a budget workshop the previous meeting and will be voting on a maximum levy at the next Council Meeting. The preliminary levy is generally set at maximum because the Council cannot go higher than that when the final levy is adopted in December. The Council is looking at a 5.5 percent levy which basically keeps the status quo. A proposed slight increase in the pay for paid-on-call fireman impacts the levy. Future issues include the need for money to be set aside for maintenance of roads and buildings. Commissioners asked questions and discussed how property taxes relate to the levy. A ribbon cutting was held at Blue Nile for their Grand opening and there was the groundbreaking at the new apartment site, where the old Lille Building was located.

XII. Adjournment

On motion by Commissioner Nadeau, seconded by Commissioner Ritchie, with all present voting aye (7-0), motion carried to adjourn.

Chair Sonnek adjourned the Arts & Culture meeting at 8:17 PM

The next regularly scheduled Arts & Culture Commission meeting is Oct. 4, 2023