



**Arts & Culture Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes
September 4, 2024
6:30 PM**

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Sonnek called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

II. ROLL CALL

COMMISSION

Tom Sonnek, Chair – Present
Carey Nadeau, Vice-Chair – Present
See Yang, Commissioner – Absence Excused
Amanda Black, Commissioner – Present
Sharon Clark-Williams, Commissioner – Present
Laura Strang, Commissioner – Present
Raquel Soto, Commissioner – Present

STAFF/LIAISONS

Lisa Wong, City Council Liaison – Present
Mai Xiong, Staff Liaison – Present
Ava Griemert, Communications and Community Outreach Coordinator - Present

III. ADOPT AGENDA

Chair Sonnek called for a motion to adopt the September 4, 2024, meeting agenda.
M/Nadeau, S/ Black
Motion carried 6-0.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Approval of August 7, 2024, Meeting Minutes

Chair Sonnek called for a motion to approve the August 7, 2024, meeting minutes.
M/Nadeau, S/ Strang
Motion carried 6-0.

V. MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

John Baker, the attorney who helped establish the North St. Paul Veteran's Park Committee as a nonprofit, shared a brief history of the Veteran's Park and its ongoing partnership with the city. He noted the responsibilities of the nonprofit, which maintains the memorials, while the city handles the park's grounds. Baker advised the Arts and Culture Commission to collaborate with both groups for any future projects.

VI. PUBLIC HEARINGS

There were no public hearings.

VII. COMMISSION BUSINESS, ACTION ITEMS & RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Arts & Culture Commission Appointment

Chair Sonnek mentioned that Arts and Culture Student Commissioner Soto has been appointed by the City Council as a regular Commission member with voting rights. Staff Liaison Xiong noted that there is now a vacancy for the Student Commissioner position as a result of this appointment.

B. 2025 Events Budget Discussion

Ava Griemert, the Communications and Community Outreach Coordinator, explored various possible events aimed at enhancing community engagement and cultural celebration for 2025. She suggested continuing with the Guided Art Nights and potentially expanding the types of classes offered to attract more participants.

Ms. Griemert proposed organizing a Vintage Swing Dancing Night, featuring swing dance lessons and an open-floor dance session, tapping into the strong swing dancing culture in Minneapolis. Additionally, she suggested hosting winter-themed events, including snowman-building competitions, a Fire and Ice event, and a European Holiday Market to encourage family participation during the colder months.

Instead of organizing a separate Asian Night Market, Ms. Griemert proposed incorporating Asian cultural activities and food into the Autumn Arts Festival. This idea would celebrate Asian culture without the logistical challenges of hosting a large event, as the festival already attracts a significant audience. By adding Asian-themed elements, the community would have the opportunity to experience and appreciate Asian culture while also gauging interest for future events. This approach aims to boost attendance and participation, making it easier to plan a larger Asian Night Market in 2026.

Furthermore, Ms. Griemert mentioned that larger-scale events like the Asian Night Market should be scheduled for spring or early winter and held indoors. This strategy would help prevent competition with summer festivals and allow for better coordination and planning.

Ms. Griemert stated that she would add a new line item in the 2025 budget for an event separate from the Guided Art Nights and the Autumn Arts Festival. She plans to propose this addition to the Council for their approval, so that when the Arts and Culture Commission decides which event they would like to hold, they will have the funds available to make it possible.

C. Fall Round Up Parade

Ms. Griemert shared that the parade will take place on September 19 at 6 PM, and both Commissioners and Council members are encouraged to attend. The group will have two decorated pickup trucks, one featuring a sign reading "North St. Paul Commissions," and candy to hand out. Ms. Griemert added that the exact lineup time and location details will be emailed to the Commission soon.

D. Snowy Trading Cards

Chair Sonnek expressed concern about the name "Kenny" listed on the Giant Snowman's card. The Commission agreed to remove the name since there is no official record of it being listed anywhere.

Staff Liaison Xiong explained that the Snowy trading cards will not be exactly holographic, as the Commission had hoped. However, the vendor offered to print them on a foil or metallic base. If these options do not meet the Commission's expectations, the vendor can outsource the cards to another business that could print the Giant Snowman trading card in holographic form.

The Commission directed Ms. Xiong to proceed with ordering the metallic base print or one that closely resembles a holographic image, ensuring it arrives in time for the Fall Roundup Parade.

Commissioner Soto suggested distributing the Arts and Culture pencils at the Fall Roundup Parade, and the Commission agreed.

E. Sub-Committee Updates

Autumn Arts Festival

Staff Liaison Xiong provided a brief overview of the planning progress for the Autumn Arts Festival. She noted that it would be held on Saturday, September 14, from 11 AM to 6 PM at Casey Lake Park. She shared that the roles for the event coordinator, food vendor coordinator, craft vendor coordinator, and MC have been filled; additionally, the event map has been completed.

Ms. Xiong continued to discuss the challenge of insufficient volunteer interest from the community but remains optimistic that interest will increase once school resumes and high school students look to complete volunteer hours for class.

Commissioner Black mentioned that the Community Craft project at the Autumn Arts Festival would consist of painting mini canvases and piecing them together at a later time. Additionally, the Art Cart project will involve creating stamps using wood blocks and cut-out shaped foam.

Project Snowy

Staff Liaison Xiong announced that the missing carrot nose on the Snowy figure outside City Hall has been successfully repaired. The artist, Gino, was contacted, and he promptly came to paint the Snowy a new nose. The Commission expressed their gratitude for his quick assistance and kindness.

Utility Boxes

In response to Commissioner Yang's email about the utility box wrap recently completed by North High School, Staff Liaison Xiong reported that she visited the site to inspect the quality. It was confirmed that the design on the utility box was already peeling, even though it hasn't been a full month since its installation. The vendor has been notified of this issue, and Ms. Xiong is now awaiting a response.

Commissioner Strang shared that the Heart Hands-shaped utility box wrap at Casey Lake Park is currently underway with the vendor, Scott from FTC Graphics.

Commissioner Clark-Williams noted that the Veterans Park committee expressed support for a utility box wrap design in the park. They are excited about having it ready by the 10-year anniversary on August 16, 2025. The committee is open to using stock images or hosting a design competition for high school students. They prefer patriotic themes without military branches or violent imagery, favoring symbols like stars, stripes, and eagles. They requested to review the design before it's applied to ensure it aligns with the values of veterans.

Mural Project

Council Liaison Wong shared that City Manager Brian Frandle mentioned a potential city-owned building available for a mural to be displayed at the dumpster garage on Seppala Blvd.

Commissioner Clark-Williams suggested that painting smaller structures, like garages and bathrooms, with murals could introduce the community to the concept of murals. She added that once these smaller projects gain acceptance, they might encourage interest in larger mural projects in the future.

Paint Night

Vice-Chair Nadeau reported that she recently participated in a paint night event taught by the artist Jeremy. She shared that she had a wonderful experience thanks to the upbeat instructor and the other class participants.

Art Cart

Commissioner Soto highlighted the success of the Art Cart's participation at the last Music in the Park event on August 15, 2024. However, she does not recommend including the mosaic art project in the future, as it was time-consuming, left parents confused, and made children impatient. While the event was successful overall,

continuing this specific project may not be advisable.

Staff Liaison Xiong asked for guidance on what to do with some canvases found in the Art Cart from previous projects. She consulted the Commission, and they decided to use the canvases where appropriate. If not, they could be repainted and reused for future projects.

VIII. REPORTS FROM STAFF

A. 2024 Budget Updates

Staff Liaison Xiong provided an update on the Commission's current budget balance after the installation of the utility box wrap at North High School and the addition of another paint night class with Swetha, scheduled for November 15, to the calendar of events. Additionally, she asked Commissioner Strang to include her in the utility box wrap plans for the heart-shaped hand project so that she could update the Electrical Department as well.

IX. REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Black notified the Commission of some personal matters at home that she is currently dealing with and apologizes for any delayed response time.

Commissioner Strang noted exciting news about her parents moving from Memphis, Tennessee, to Woodbury, Minnesota.

Chair Sonnek wished Commissioner Strang a belated birthday.

X. REPORTS FROM COUNCIL LIAISON

Council Member Wong provided an update on the following items:

1. Follow-up discussions with Public Works about potential installation methods for sidewalk poetry in 2025.
2. City budget updates and proposals for 2025.
3. Capital improvement plans for 2025.
4. Union negotiations with six different unions.
5. Construction project updates.
6. Candidates for City Council.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Sonnek asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:19 PM.

M/Nadeau, S/Soto.

Motion carried 6-0.