



**Arts & Culture Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes
October 2, 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 – Present
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

III. ADOPT AGENDA

Chair Sonnek called for a motion to adopt the October 2, 2024, meeting agenda.
M/Nadeau, S/ Black
Motion carried 7-0.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Approval of September 4, 2024, Meeting Minutes

Chair Sonnek called for a motion to approve the September 4, 2024, meeting minutes.
M/Nadeau, S/ Yang
Motion carried 7-0.

V. MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

There were no public comments.

VI. PUBLIC HEARINGS

There were no public hearings.

VII. COMMISSION BUSINESS, ACTION ITEMS & RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Autumn Arts Festival Recap

Staff Liaison Xiong thanked the Commission and volunteers for their hard work and contributions, providing a brief recap of the Autumn Arts Festival. She shared feedback from volunteers, commissioners, and participants who completed a post-festival survey, noting that the majority of reviews were highly positive.

The Commission expressed their gratitude to city staff for organizing a successful event and recommended the following improvements for next year's festival:

- **Improve Signage:** Invest in clearer signage for better visibility of activities and schedules.
- **Bouncy House Adjustments:** Consider using a smaller bouncy house and provide better directional signage
- **Maintain Event Hours:** Keep event hours consistent despite vendor requests for earlier shutdowns.
- **Revise Vendor Application:** Require vendors to agree to stay for the entire event duration.
- **Volunteers for Vendor Breaks:** Assign volunteers to cover vendor booths during bathroom breaks.
- **Volunteer Duties:** Write up specific duties and responsibilities for volunteers.
- **Supplemental Entertainment:** Explore options for background music or other entertainment to keep the atmosphere lively, especially toward the end of the event.
- **Event Feedback Collection:** Continue gathering feedback from attendees and participants to identify areas for improvement and ensure the event evolves positively over the years.

B. Sub-Committee Updates

Mural Project

Staff Liaison Xiong discussed the proposed mural for the city-owned dumpster garage, highlighting the city's preference for a design that aligns with the area's historical aesthetic and complements nearby structures, particularly the newly built Article No. 7 building. She requested that the Commission connect with the building's owners to gather input on the mural design.

The Commission agreed to use the current list of artists on file and directed Ms. Xiong to provide contact information for artist Tiffanie Cannon, aiming to complete the mural this year.

Additionally, Ms. Xiong shared that the North St. Paul Historical Society Museum expressed interest in a mural collaboration, opening possibilities for a future project at that location.

Utility Box Wrap

Ms. Xiong updated the Commission on issues with the recent utility box wrap installation at North High School. Although the vendor reported that repairs had been made, Ms. Xiong's recent site inspection revealed that two sides of the utility box still require further attention. She will follow up with the vendor to ensure the repairs are fully completed.

VIII. REPORTS FROM STAFF

A. Budget Updates for 2024

Staff Liaison Xiong provided an update on the Commission's current budget balance following the purchase of Snowy trading cards.

The Commission agreed that a pop-up tent is needed for the art cart to protect materials from rain and directed Ms. Xiong to purchase one.

B. North Stars Podcast

Staff Liaison Xiong shared that North High School's North Stars Podcast reached out to the City for a collaboration and asked if the City would be interested in participating.

Chair Sonnek and Vice-Chair Nadeau volunteered to participate, and the Commission agreed it would be a valuable opportunity to discuss arts initiatives and promote the commission's vacant student position.

C. Events Calendar for 2024

Staff Liaison Xiong noted that two remaining paint night classes for 2024 each require a commissioner volunteer.

Commissioner Nadeau volunteered for the October 24 class, and Commissioner Strang volunteered for the November 15 class.

Commissioner Black mentioned that the Council Candidate Forum is also scheduled for October 24.

Ms. Xiong added that the Council Candidate Forum will be recorded and posted on the City's page for those who may miss it.

IX. REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Clark-Williams shared that this was her seventh meeting and remarked on how quickly the months had passed.

Chair Sonnek emphasized the importance of planning for 2025 events, particularly the Autumn Arts Festival, which may seem distant but will arrive quickly. He encouraged the

Commission to prioritize ideas in the coming months and suggested focusing the next meeting on setting plans for the upcoming year.

Mr. Sonnek also thanked City staff and the Commission for their contributions, noting how public art projects are brightening the community.

In response to Commissioner Yang's question about the 2025 Asian Night Market, Commissioner Black recapped the September 4 meeting discussion. She explained that Ava Griemert, Communications and Community Outreach Coordinator, suggested incorporating aspects of the Night Market into the Autumn Arts Festival instead of holding it as a standalone event. Ms. Griemert proposed using 2025 to plan for a dedicated Asian Night Market in 2026. Ms. Black further explained that Ms. Griemert would request Council approval for a dedicated budget line item to enable an additional event in 2025, potentially in spring or winter.

Staff Liaison Xiong added that Ms. Griemert will ask City Council at the second October meeting to approve a \$5,000 budget for this additional 2025 event. She recommended that the Commission discuss potential event types at the next meeting.

Chair Sonnek clarified the idea of adding an event during the colder months to spread activities more evenly throughout the year, possibly using an indoor location. He suggested that November's meeting focus on event planning, emphasizing that early preparation is key for larger events like the Autumn Arts Festival. He proposed using the next meeting as a workshop to discuss ideas and set priorities for 2025.

Commissioner Strang mentioned a recent article in the *League of Minnesota Cities* that featured North St. Paul's public art, sharing that these projects bring vibrancy and color to the community and reflect the Commission's dedication. She added that she feels honored to be part of such impactful work.

X. REPORTS FROM COUNCIL LIAISON

Council Liaison Wong expanded on the *League of Minnesota Cities* article, expressing pride in North St. Paul's recognition alongside other prominent Minnesota cities for its public art initiatives. She thanked the Commission and City staff for their dedication, highlighting the significance of this statewide acknowledgment.

Ms. Wong updated the Commission on several upcoming events and initiatives:

- **Booya Event:** October 6, 2024, at Casey Lake Park, starting at 11 AM.
- **A Ride to Remember Memorial Event:** October 6, 2024, at Hang Time Board Shop, from 10 AM to 1 PM.
- **Parks and Recreation Open House:** October 9, 2024, from 5 PM to 7 PM; and October 10, 2024, 6 PM to 8 PM, both days at Casey Lake Park.
- **City Council Candidate Forum:** October 24, 2024, at the American Legion, starting at 6 PM.

- **Water Efficiency Rebate:** Available for residents to upgrade appliances or toilets with funding from MetCouncil.
- **Public Safety Trunk-or-Treat Community Event:** October 27, 2024, at North Haven Church, from 4 PM to 6 PM.
- **Community Center Feasibility Study:** Six proposals have been received. Staff will review them using a scoring rubric and present their findings at the October 15, 2024, Council meeting.
- **Budget Discussions:** The 2025 city budget is balanced with no significant increases expected. Plans for a water tower upgrade are anticipated in 2028, and alternative funding sources are being explored.

Additionally, Ms. Wong reported that she will be out of town for the December 4 meeting, making November 6, 2024, her final Arts and Culture Commission meeting, as her City Council term concludes at the end of 2024.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Sonnek asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:40 PM.

M/Soto, S/Yang.

Motion carried 7-0.