

Hastings Arts & Culture Commission Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, February 14, 2024 – 6:00 PM

Hastings City Hall – Volunteer Room

1. Call Meeting to Order

Meeting called to order at 6:06 p.m.

Present: Commission Chair Hollenbeck; Vice Chair Read; Commissioners Humphrey, McCoy, Tribe, Wagner; Staff Representative Lee

Absent: Commissioner Maner

Others Present: Brandy Wentzler, Pleasant Hill Library

2. Approval of Agenda

Vice Chair Read motioned to approve; Commissioner Humphrey seconded.

Motion carried.

3. Approval of Minutes – January 10, 2024 Regular Meeting

Commissioner Tribe motioned to approve; Vice Chair Read seconded.

Motion carried.

ADMINISTRATIVE TASKS

4. Swearing in and Introductions

New commissioner Sue Wagner was sworn in, and introductions were made by all in attendance.

SPECIAL PRESENTATION

5. Dakota County Garden Project at Pleasant Hill Library

Brandy Wentzler, Senior Information Assistant at Pleasant Hill Library, was invited by Commissioner Humphrey to present information on the project and to see how the Arts and Culture Commission could potentially lend assistance.

Wentzler said the proposed garden project is in its very early stages. The idea will be an expansion of the current small pollinator garden located on library grounds, where events like a scavenger hunt for flowers and critters have been a big success. With management support and funds that can be tapped into, there is higher level approval. The next step is navigating government since the library sits on both county and city property, as shown on maps she presented. There are agreements between city and county over who manages what. One consideration to keep in mind is that county library property is irrigated, while city property is not. Wescott Library installed a prairie garden, and they work with the Dakota County Parks for maintenance.

Project brainstorming includes an expanded pollinator prairie, natural walkways through the prairie, possibly a story walk (like that currently done along the river), reading garden, places to hang hammocks, sacred and medicinal plants (indigenous advised), healing garden, natural seating, play space, theater, story time programming and music, educational placards, meditation space, audio wind features, potential for evening and after hours programs by electric candlelight/light of some

sort, work in conjunction with county parks, county land and conservation, raised beds, weather station, solar powered station, and year-round interest. The vitality of a maintenance plan is going to be important as well, with the idea to work in conjunction with county parks and county land and conservation departments (which she has personally worked with).

Wexler said because the library is meant to be a place that is very public, open, and educational, this expands opportunities to do those things. A new patio has been installed since the latest remodel, which will become a reservable space as of this spring for meeting or personal use. There is currently a Dale Lewis sculpture set up between the patio and pollinator garden.

Hollenbeck said she appreciates learning about the potential project, though is not sure at what capacity the commission can be involved. She said the garden sounds amazing, she foresees art, and the commission can assist at some point.

Tribe asked if they could use the entire area, since it's owned by both city and county, and if it will just be the irrigation piece that's the big question. Wentzler said yes and no, that it depends on where things are planted and how things are laid out because the need for irrigation could potentially be eliminated. She stated that it's about the maintenance more than anything and is not sure how that contract would be negotiated and worked with between county and city. She added that maintenance would not be the same as traditional landscaping, though there would be a measure of traditional lawn for programming purposes.

Humphrey said she's excited and sees potential for art, art benches in the garden, and aspects of indigenous culture.

Vice Chair Read asked Wentzler to keep the commission in the loop and see how we can work together. She acknowledged the project will move at the speed of government, though there is library and county support. She added that there may be opportunities for public input at some point too.

Commissioners thanked Wentzler for all the information and ideas.

OLD BUSINESS

6. Subcommittee Updates

a) Policy & Procedures

Hollenbeck said she would like to get this subcommittee going again and add Commissioners Maner and Wagner to work with her on policies and procedures.

She suggested one project would be creating a formal process/policy for when the city accepts donated art, so there is consistency in cataloging and inventory for easy and accurate tracking. She believes the donation process should begin with the commission accepting art,

cataloging it, and then discussing with the Pioneer Room volunteers where it would go. She stressed the commission needs to be informed when art is donated to the city.

Another project is creating a Policy on Private Use in Public Places (PUPP), which would be needed if someone wanted to put art in Levee Park, for example. They will use Red Wing's policy as a guide.

b) Finance & Fundraising

Subcommittee has not met. Hollenbeck suggested this be an ad hoc committee as needed. Commission can revisit this when looking at funding for the civic arena mural.

c) Outreach & Communications Update by Humphrey and Tribe

Humphrey reported that Tribe reached out to Parks and Recreation Director Jenkins about the Lake Rebecca Master Plan that he presented at our last meeting. Jenkins updated them and said he had been in touch with the Prairie Island community to work with their environmental team.

Hollenbeck said that communications to department heads need to go through the commission chair. She reminded that Jenkins asked us to craft a memo with our recommendations on that project, and that is our immediate goal since it has a March deadline. This appears as an item further on the agenda.

Humphrey said she and Tribe would like to volunteer on the Pleasant Hill library project and will report information back to commission. Read said he would like the commission to find a way to help and believes the biggest question is the mixing of county and city funds.

Humphrey reported that she sent an email to the Hastings Public House regarding the Creative Convergence event in May, and it sounds like they are okay with it. She followed up with questions regarding a fee for space and bringing food and is waiting to hear back on that.

Hollenbeck shared she had an opportunity to ask the Director of Sales at the Confluence if she would be open to hosting the Creative Convergence, and she expressed interest. Hollenbeck will provide details so the space can be reserved. Hollenbeck suggested that once the reservation is confirmed, the commission can continue to craft a strategic plan on how to get people to attend.

Humphrey created and shared (on Google drive) a project timeline tracking sheet, a basic document of when things are happening, when to contact people, etc. to track of events. The sheet's right side shows when events are happening, while the left side tracks when we should be reaching out. Commission members are encouraged to add things as needed.

Tribe said she reached out to Bert Casperson at the high school about events we've discussed for painting projects. He advised he is not the art teacher for painting, but he provided

information for the new painting teacher. Tribe has emailed that teacher and is waiting for response.

She also reached out to Estrella from BR4R and asked if they could meet to see what BR4R is planning for Juneteenth and what would be a good fit for the commission. They will set up a meeting in March.

7. Updates from Commissioner Liaisons with City Commissions

Hollenbeck is going to rework how the commission handles this. She said as we saw with Jenkins when he presented at our January meeting, many of the things that the commission needs to be involved with tend to happen earlier than the items appear on the agendas for the other commissions. She will work with City Administrator Wietecha and staff member Lee to figure out how we can dovetail with other city departments before items get to their respective commissions. Moving forward, we won't have the liaison component, but members can still keep tabs on other the commissions.

8. Update on Google Calendar

Commissioner McCoy said the official calendar is posted online and ready to go live. To keep it cohesive, he matched graphics to the commission pages on the city's website. He asked if the commission wants to have a mission statement for project or keep it simple, a topic that can be approached in the future. He hasn't had a chance to finish the procedure of who's involved, and he has not yet connected with city's IT manager. To share, each participating arts organization can post the calendar link to its website and social media channels. He encouraged commission members to promote the calendar and encourage arts organizations to post events.

9. Recap of City Hall Tour – January 20th –Barb

Hollenbeck shared the event was a huge success and pointed members to the copy of an article published in the local newspaper that was included in the meeting packet. This article will also be posted on the city webpage without paywall restriction.

She said approximately 125 people attended the event, with two tour groups brought through city hall per hour. Because of the huge interest, those involved are considering another tour event in May for Historic Preservation Month since city hall itself is historic. Commissioner Tribe suggested including the exterior of the building on the spring tour as well.

NEW BUSINESS

10. Craft a memo to Parks and Recreation Director Chris Jenkins

a) Lake Rebecca Master Plan

This item is continued from the Jenkins presentation at last month's meeting. Hollenbeck said there is a correct way to convey commission recommendations in our own words of what we envision for the cultural aspect of this project to include in the master plan document. The

commission needs to craft a paragraph to describe what it wants—commissioners will discuss, then Lee will create a draft and give to Hollenbeck for review.

Vice Chair Read recalled commissioners talked about doing an interpretive trail that conveys the historical significance of the Lake Rebecca area to the historic and Native populations who used that area, including the bend in the Mississippi River. The group also discussed doing naturalist interpretation of that area with explanation of what this meant for those populations. The two are obviously connected.

Hollenbeck suggested including education on the native plant that those peoples came here to harvest. There was not settlement here, as it was always a passing place between two different areas where they came to collect the plant. She said Jenkins has tapped the Minnesota Indigenous Affairs Commission and Prairie Island for interpretive and cultural work.

The following recommendation was made:

The Arts and Culture Commission recommends a trail that interprets cultural indigenous people who made their mark here and the historical significance of their presence, as well as naturalist interpretation of environmental impacts of Lake Rebecca and its species. One way this could be accomplished is through kiosks that show native plants and their descriptions and historical significance.

Additionally, the commission puts forth the recommendation to honor this history through art by commissioning indigenous artists to create a bench or threshold that educates people on the past and includes the present.

b) Malcolm Trail

The commission was also tasked with making recommendations for the upcoming Three Rivers/Malcolm Trail Project. Hollenbeck noted the Three Rivers population is underserved, and she would like to do something to create a stronger connection. She suggested installing benches for the purpose of reflection or to take time away from the day for peace and solitude.

Vice Chair Read raised funding concerns and said he could start writing a Request for Proposal as soon as he gets detail on what the budget is.

11. RFP for Civic Arena Mural

Commissioners agreed it would be ideal to have the mural project done by the Hockey Day Minnesota event in January 2026. Hollenbeck said we should start working on Request for Proposal (RFP) for public art. Read said before we can do an RFP, we need a budget to determine and identify

the scope of the project for inclusion in the RFP. He informed of a current RFP in St. Michael as an example.

Commissioner McCoy suggested establishing a timeline of steps that need to be taken:
Start conversation—Now (meeting for input/vision; budget discussions with Parks; stakeholder input)
Publish RFP—Summer (ideally) or Fall 2024
Artist chosen—Spring 2025
Artist work—4 to 6 months
Installation goal—Fall 2025

Read suggested he and Hollenbeck meet with Jenkins in March to talk about the civic arena budget and any available funding assistance for the mural project. Hollenbeck will coordinate that meeting.

12. Fall Music Event (musicians in a park) needs a name, site selection, date, and artists

Though a name was not determined, commissioners chose Saturday, September 28 from 1:00-3:00pm as the date and time. Location is yet to be determined; considerations include an area with a loop and environment to accommodate plein air painting.

Regarding performing artists, commission consensus was to keep it local. McCoy will contact Travis at the Arts Center for collaboration since this event was initially his idea. Tribe added that she will continue to reach out to the painting teacher at the high school for a response.

Hollenbeck reminded the commission will need to send artist lease to City Council for approval.

13. Book the Classical Actors Ensemble for June 30th (Vermillion Falls Pavilion is reserved)

Read confirmed we are penciled in with the Classical Actors Ensemble for June 30th. He will work with Joe from that organization to scout locations for the event. He is not sure what the production is, as it has not yet been announced. The cost is reasonable at \$1,100 and Read will ask them to send a contract for City Council approval. Commissioners then discussed concerns about the Vermillion Falls location.

14. Creative Convergence: Create a strategy or marketing plan for attendees

Hollenbeck said it would be nice to have a big showing and suggested the commission have a better strategy and marketing plan to get people to show up. Ideas included reaching out to various arts and culture groups, using the calendar to notify people/send a message to contacts to bring their groups, and personally invite people. Read views the event as a place to hold the commission accountable to present the things they are working on and to capitalize on the wealth of information attendees can share. There will be a captivate audience for polling people, so commissioners need to figure out what questions to ask and what activity to do to get people to work together and talk to each other.

Hollenbeck suggested Black Dirt as the host organization for this event. McCoy agreed. The Confluence will work with the group on refreshments and other details. Hollenbeck will reach out and reserve the venue from 6:00-8:30, with set up at 5:30 and will also ask what setup would involve.

The attendance goal for this event is 50 people.

Group reviewed the post-it note activity from the last Creative Convergence to revisit ideas provided by attendees at that event.

15. Announcements

- In celebration of Black History Month, BR4R is hosting an event on February 25th from 2:00-4:00 at St. Luke's Episcopal Church
- Improv events held on the 2nd and 4th Fridays of the month through April have been selling out
- Auditions were held for middle school show, which is a parody of Harry Potter
- Tribe attended the Native American Parent Advisory Council event and said it is a great opportunity for the commission to get involved and partner with schools
- Hastings Reads just held very successful events at the Arts Center and high school, with more events to come
- McCoy participated in coffee concert at Arts Center and said it was one of the biggest crowds they've had
- River Valley Band will perform a concert on Saturday, March 2nd
- Concert Association event is coming in March
- High school winter play is happening this weekend

16. Adjourn

Commissioner McCoy made a motion to adjourn at 7:50 p.m. Seconded by Vice Chair Read. Motion carried.

The next Arts and Culture Commission meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 13th at 6:00pm in the Volunteer Room at City Hall.