

Duluth Public Arts Commission

MINUTES 2/26/2025

Call to Order and Roll Call

Meeting started at 4:02 PM

Commissioners: Shari Marshik, Christina Woods, Amanda Hunter, Tammy Underwood, Amy Demmer, Scottie Gardonio, Wendy Durrwachter

Present: Shari Marshik, Christina Woods, Tammy Underwood, Amy Demmer, Scottie Demmer, Wendy Durrwachter

Absent: Amanda Hunter

Staff: Angie Stier, Natalie Lavenstein, Ben VanTassel

Approval of Minutes

Approval of October, 2024 Meeting Minutes

Approval of January, 2025 Meeting Minutes

Gardonio made a motion to approve October and January meeting minutes with a second by Woods.

Staff updates (Angie Stier)

- Penny Perry not able to attend. Perry will prepare a report on cleaning, concerns, etc.
- Paul Hanson requested information regarding the improvement of old signage in downtown. Paul may provide a proposal to DPAC.
- We have received 4 applications for commissioner seats. We will work to review these and potentially set interviews.
- Indigenous Commission is aware that DPAC has reviewed the proposal and will be moving forward soon.

Discussion Items

- **DPAC Status**

- Introduction from Director of Planning and Economic Development, Ben VanTassel. Expressed concerns from staff and commission members regarding the commission's capacity and future. Staff capacity is limited. The Mayor is supportive of public art and its contribution to vibrancy.
- VanTassel: If the City is unable to support DPAC how will the existing public art be taken care of and the vision of DPAC achieved? What is most effective for public art in Duluth?
- Woods: Are these questions coming up because the commission is going away or is the commission just scaling back?
- Durrwachter: We can look at other models for staffing public art commissions. St. Cloud is an example.
- Woods: Keep in mind we have artwork outside of the building that needs conservationist level expertise. The City will not get away from the responsibility of caring for existing art. There are deaccessioning processes, artist rights, and statutory requirements.
- Gardonio: We are doing a lot of this conservationist work for free. Or hire contractors.
- Marshik: DPAC has faced many hurdles: lack of funding, no funding source, and not able to look for new funding. The commission model has been limiting in what DPAC can accomplish. Art helps accomplish the City's economic development goals.
- Demmer: DPAC provides the art expertise that the City alone does not have. Duluth has a need for an art ecosystem which DPAC can provide.
- Woods: DPAC is the community facing touch point for art. This is an asset for the City.
- VanTassel: What does a city commission accomplish vs a nonprofit?
- Gardonio: Art is political. If the City were to step away, it would send a significant message.

- Demmer: Art should be tied into the planning division. Art increases livability and vibrancy. DPAC needs a dedicated planning staff member.
- VanTassel: Will look at systems and efficiencies.
- Durrwachter: The City could view art as an economic tool. DPAC should have 45K coming in soon because of 1% from new public road infrastructure.
- Gardonio, Woods: DPAC has enough funding to continue with the cleaning work for existing art for a few more years. The repair and deaccessioning are not funded as well. This is a liability for the city because of statutes.
- Woods left the DPAC meeting at 5:55 PM
- Durrwachter: DPAC could be a much better tool for economic development.
- Marshik: An art nonprofit can not be the new DPAC because it will increase the competition for grants. This will be damaging for the art community.
- VanTassel: Will have an internal staffing conversation, review watershed plan, and research digital systems for DPAC data and communication.
- Demmer: We don't want to add 5 new commissioners all at once. We need to create a better onboarding system i.e buddy system. We are different than other commissions in that we have a budget.
- **2025 Budget**
 - No change at this time.
- **Election of Officers**
 - Demmer's last meeting today 2/26/2025.
 - Gardonio new commission chair starting 2/27/2025.
- **Skate Park Mural**
 - The image on Tim Cortez's art will be removed. Will wait to approve the art until DPAC is aware of what the final art will look like. Cortez may be at March DPAC meeting.

- **Sub Committees**

- No updates at this time.

- **Adjournment**

- Motion by Marshik to end, second by Woods. Meeting adjourned at 5:27.