Meeting Minutes: Public Art Advisory Committee

Date: Tuesday, October 13, 2026
Minutes prepared by: Teresa Mitchell
Location: Lebanon Hills Visitor Center – 860 Cliff Road, Eagan, MN 55123

Attendance

- Cheryl Caponi (virtual)
- Bob Erickson (virtual)
- Mike Todaro
- JuliAnne Jonker
- Cindy Gehrig
- Beth Landahl, Dakota County Parks
- Teresa Mitchell, Dakota County Public Services & Revenue Division
- Heather Stephenson, Dakota County Library

Agenda

- Approval of Agenda / Chair / Approval or Modification
- Approval of Minutes / Chair / Approval or Modification
- Per Diem Requests / All / Member Signature
- Presentations
- Project Updates
  - Public Art Blueprint: Teresa Mitchell
- Unfinished Business
- New Business
    - Burnhaven Library Remodel Sculpture Update: Heather Stephenson
    - 2027 PAAC Workplan
- Announcements

Next Meeting

Date: November 10, 2026,
Time: 6:00 pm
Location: TBD

Meeting Notes

Call to Order

- Vice-Chair Mike Todora called the meeting to order. Attendance was confirmed and introductions were made for in-person and virtual participants.

Agenda Approval

- Agenda was reviewed and approved with a motion by JuliAnne and second by Cindy. All members in favor.

Approval of Past Minutes

- Motion by JuliAnne and second by Cindy received; September minutes approved.

Presentations - None

Project Updates

Public Art Blueprint Update

- Teresa provided an update on the Dakota County Public Art Blueprint:
- Committee members were asked to submit any final edits to Lil Leatham by November 16.
- After edits, the document will be prepared for County Board review and approval for public release.
- Public review and engagement will follow Board approval.
- Anticipated timeline:
    - January 5, 2027: Board presentation and invitation for committee members to attend.
    - Public review: Early 2027
    - Final adoption: March 2027, pending public and board feedback
- The Blueprint has taken roughly 18 months to develop and includes an inventory of public art and long-term implementation guidance.
- Committee discussed a desire to present a unified set of review comments and to use the document as a foundation for stronger committee relevance and engagement.

Unfinished Business – None

New Business

Burnhaven Library Outdoor Sculpture Project

- Heather and Cheryl provided updates.
- RFQ resulted in only two applicants, but both had potential and invited them to submit full proposals.
- Proposals are due in early November and the committee can be updated again at their November meeting.
- Committee expressed mild concern about the low number of applicants but agreed to move forward.
- Library renovation is ahead of schedule; opening may occur in early spring, though artwork installation timing may differ.
- Discussion included how and when to reopen the call if proposals do not meet expectations.

2027 Work Plan Review

- Teresa introduced the first draft of the 2027 Public Art Committee Work Plan, both a version with tracked changes from the 2026 workplan and a clean 2027 draft were distributed. Major topics:
- Complete and implement the Blueprint

- Student Art Contest - Staff time cost is extensive and hard costs are approximately $2,500 per year.
    - Committee extensively discussed whether the contest aligns with mission priorities.
    - Majority sentiment favored discontinuing the contest due to not aligned with purpose and roles of committee and blueprint, limited participation, redundancy with school and library shows, discontent with judging the artwork of youth, etc.
    - Art contest will be removed from the workplan for 2027.
- Burnhaven Library Exterior Art and Lake Byllesby Park Storm Shelter Mural included as a new work plan items.
- R&D Support Role
    - Committee expressed interest in being available to help departments explore early-stage art ideas.
    - Committee desired to be more involved early—rather than as a "box-checking" step.
    - The blue print includes a workplan process that will bring departments to meetings of the committee early in the year to discuss ideas for R&D for the following year's workplan.
- Public Art Inventory of greenway art is considered complete because of the focused Greenway Pilot included in the blueprint.
    - Dakota County Inventory exists and is part of the Blueprint appendix.
    - Future work includes determining where and how the inventory will be publicly accessible.
    - Future commissioning process - Committee recommended adding requirements for documentation such as artist intent statements, videos, and descriptions.
- Discussion around the workplan item of learn from and building relationships with local organizations
    - Discussed that convening regional arts partners/Annual Arts Summit is included in the plan to share opportunities and collaborate and be a convener/connector.
- Bylaw Revisions - Committee noted these must be updated following Blueprint adoption; item will be added to workplan for Q1 2027.
- Potential Funding and Grant Opportunities
- Beth briefed the committee on a Met Council Equity Grant application: Dakota County Board approved applying for up to $390,000 for "Belonging by Design," focused on Greenway enhancements (pavement murals, tunnel murals, welcome signage).
    - Grant application due end of November; award decisions are expected in February.
    - This project aligns with Blueprint goals and would likely be added to the 2027 work plan if funded.
    - Committee acknowledged grant-funded public art as increasingly important given budget constraints.

Announcements

County Budget / Levy Update

- Teresa provided an update
- 2027 maximum levy set at 18.5%, with 17% going to operations and 1.5% dedicated to rebuilding reserves.
- Significant countywide cuts have impacted non-mandated services including Parks, Libraries, and some Social Services programs.
- Hiring freeze selectively applied; mandated and essential services prioritized.

Public Art Coordinator position (Sarah's replacement) is approved to move forward

- Hiring process for the new coordinator will occur through October with hopes of an offer made by November.

Burnsville has recently authorized creation of a new Arts Advisory Committee.

- Committee discussed potential collaboration with Burnsville and other city-level art committees.

Meeting Adjourned