

APPROVED
MINUTES OF
THE VILLAGE OF ARLINGTON HEIGHTS
ARTS COMMISSION MEETING
HELD IN THE COMMISSIONS ROOM
OF THE VILLAGE HALL
MARCH 4, 2026 AT 6:30 P.M.

Members Present: Mary Seitz-Pagano, Arts Chair
Kristen Walter
Erika Cutlip
Brian Wolf
Kate Schwarz
Sara Altieri
Gretchen Grassl

Members Absent: Leena Joshi
Carla McAleer

Also Present: Michael Lysicatos, Assistant Director of Planning and Community Development

Arts Chair Seitz-Pagano opened the meeting at 6:30 PM.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

COMMISSIONER WALTER MADE A MOTION, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER CUTLIP, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM THE FEBRUARY 4, 2026 ARTS COMMISSION MEETING. ALL WERE IN FAVOR. THE MOTION CARRIED.

CULTURAL ARTS AWARD

Chair Seitz-Pagano led a discussion of the Arts Award presentation held at the February 17th Village Board meeting. The commission confirmed that the 2027 solicitation would be announced on April 15th (World Art Day) with a last call deadline on January 31st (National Art Day), and final deliberation would ideally be done at the February Arts Commission. The commission also confirmed their intent to include language in the solicitation a preference for previous non-winners. Staff would update the document and circulate to the commission. The process for applying would remain the same as previous years with a fillable pdf to be posted on the website. The solicitation document will be completed and reviewed at the next meeting which would be scheduled for April 8th. Staff will work with the Integrated Services department to share on social media.

DOWNTOWN PUBLIC ART PLAN

The Commissioners discussed the status of the Public Art Plan. No updates were made since the last meeting. The staff Liaison asked the members to share any information on the mural project in order to be prepared to discuss in more detail at future meetings. The Commissions discussed developing the plan, which was assigned to the Arts Commission by the Village Board as part of the Strategic Priority process, alongside their regular process of identifying projects to complete as part of their annual activities and budget. The plan differs from this regular process as it represents a multi-year process that utilizes art to focus attention in the downtown and act as an economic driver. This effort represents a new opportunity to be part of a larger strategic plan that address goals of the Village Board. At the same time, the commission does not want to lose the opportunity to apply for grants this year, while the plan is being developed, that could be a first phase of implementation.

The Staff Liaison discussed including the goals, priority projects, events, suitable sites, and history of success as an avenue for the Arts Commission to outline a larger framework that defines public art and communicate priorities between the commission and the Village Board. The document could also be used in grant applications. The Arts Commission members offered to send information on past efforts to the Staff Liaison to provide more context on these ongoing efforts.

MURAL ORDINANCE

The Staff Liaison circulated the latest version of the draft ordinance to the members. Commissioner Altieri updated the Arts Commission on changes to the document focus on the suggested edits at the last meeting. The use of words in mural installations was clarified to only include artistic elements and not commercial elements. Currently the ordinance only addresses murals and not 3-dimensional art, such as sculptures. It was recommended that Section A be amended to treat non-profits and businesses the same under commercial activity. Concerns were raised in Section B about electronic components and does not speak to permanency. The Arts Commission discussed maintenance enforcement in regards to initial installation timeframe and the possibility to add language for the Village to take action after a duration of time (such as 30 days). Provisions to appeal these requirements were discussed. The Arts Commission emphasized that art murals should avoid reproduction of other art so any mural that is put up speaks to the purpose of art tailored to Arlington Heights and not infringe on copyrights. Lastly, the Arts Commission discussed updating the ordinance language to prohibit Artificial Intelligence (AI) generated art and the federal rights act. Commissioners Altieri and Wolf would work as the point persons on updates to the ordinance.

The Chair set the goal for completing the ordinance at the May or June meeting. The final draft would be sent to Village Counsel before consideration by the Village Board. Staff would coordinate on updates.

SIDEWALK CHALK ART

Commissioner Cutlip opened the conversation on this topic. The Commission discussed coordination with the downtown business association, and requested the Staff Liaison to confirm the point person for the organization. The Commissioner discussed the possibility of finding a professional artist to complete a chalk art piece to welcome people to Arlington Alfresco that could function as a call to artists for the larger chalk art event. The possible location of the event was a main point of discussion. Staff provided that the concept for the event was brought up with communications team and there may be a need to further coordinate with the Special Events Commission. A recommendation was made to consider the Farmers Market and the road closure associated with the event. The event could possibly also be associated the Swing into Spring or Autumn Harvest due to the Art Commission and Special Events Commission association with the Park District with both events. The potential partnership would involve getting permissions from the Park District and discussions about potential road closures.

The structure of the chalk art event was discussed with reference to previous events run/experienced by the members. The commission discussed the merits of an online pre-registration (through a google form or other means) organized into groups (such as professional artist, amateurs, and children). The size of the area available for the event and number of registrants would help determine the size and number of "squares" assigned to each group. Groups could also be assigned through their affiliation to art groups, schools, or participating businesses and utilize the online registration to assign a box number. The timing of the event was discussed with the Commission favoring an early morning so it would not conflict with other events while retaining as much visibility as possible. The distribution of chalk could be organized through participating businesses similar to the Santa Run. The quality of the chalk was an additional consideration discussed as it would impact how long the art would last. The possibility of offering prizes was discussed although the early focus would be to get people involved, with the competitive element focused on the professional artists. The concept of hiring a food vendor could provide potential fund raising for the professional artist prize.

The goal is to narrow location suggestions at the April 8th Arts Commission meeting. Any coordination with the communications staff or Special Events Commission can be done through the Staff Liaison.

ARTWORK AT METROPOLIS

Chair Seitz-Pagano is still awaiting word from Tiffany on timeframe to coordinate with the group on next steps.

NEW BUSINESS

Commissioner Altieri introduced the topic of a Percent for Arts Ordinance. This is a policy of setting aside funds as part of the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) scheduled for June. The timing of the CIP development provides an opportunity to discuss long-term planning before projects are finalized to align art planning with infrastructure planning. Generally, anywhere from .5 to 2 percent of CIP dedicated to public art in these programs. Staff provided information on the CIP process and will pass the information as the CIP development moves forward as a discussion item. The proposal would likely be voted on as a commission. Commissioner Altieri requested the item be added to the agenda next meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

ADJOURNMENT

COMMISSIONER WALTER MADE A MOTION, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER CUTLIP TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 7:32PM. ALL WERE IN FAVOR. THE MOTION CARRIED.