

**ARTS COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
August 25, 2026
City Hall, Ron Edinger Room**

Attendees: Chairman Mary Lee Ryba, Commissioner Charlotte Doutriaux, Commissioner Chuck Ethridge (via audio call), Commissioner Lindsey Sichelstiel, Commissioner Sally Shortridge, Commissioner Cynthia Newkirk, Commissioner Duncan Menzies, Commissioner Nora Crabtree, Parks & Recreation Director Adam Rouse, and Parks & Recreation Administrative Assistant Melissa Brandt

GUESTS: Tony Mills, Jake Garringer

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order by Chairman Ryba at 4:07 pm.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATION:

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: MOTION: Motion by Commissioner Sichelstiel seconded by Commissioner Crabtree to approve the July 28, 2026, meeting minutes. **Motion carried.**

APPROVAL OF FINANCIAL REPORT: Chair Ryba provided a brief overview of the July 2026 financial report, noting accrued interest was not available. She noted that Fund 076 (Public Art Fund – ignite) had no expenditures. Fund 074 (Public Art Fund – 1%) had an expenditure of \$120 for the Café Subscription Renewal. Fund 077 (Maintenance) had expenditures of \$26.80 for feather artwork electricity on NW Blvd and \$50.04 to replace lighting at Fallen Heroes Plaza with a total of \$76.84.

MOTION: Motion by Commissioner Menzies seconded by Commissioner Sichelstiel to approve the July 2026 Financial Reports. **Motion carried.**

COMMISSIONER/ STAFF COMMENTS: None

BRONZE SCULPTURE ON SHERMAN AVENUE NEAR 2ND STREET: Tony Mills presented a proposal to install a large bronze elk sculpture in front of the Blackwell Gallery near Hudson's on Sherman Avenue. The sculpture would be similar in scale to the grizzly bear sculpture currently located in Riverstone, which was donated to the City by Dan Pinkerton. Mr. Mills explained that the proposed elk sculpture is approximately 9 to 10 feet tall and would be placed within an existing open area of the sidewalk. He noted that the location provides approximately 16 feet of space and that the sculpture's footprint would fit within the available area without extending beyond the existing sidewalk envelope. Garco has indicated it could assist with placing the sculpture during nearby construction activities. Commission members discussed the artistic value of the piece and expressed support for adding another significant public sculpture downtown. Director Rouse noted that the primary consideration would be ensuring compliance with ADA accessibility requirements and maintaining adequate pedestrian circulation along Sherman Avenue. Because of the location near existing street furnishings, including a light pole, bench, and garbage receptacle, review by the City's Streets and Engineering Department would be necessary before any approval could move forward. The Commission also discussed how the sculpture might fit within existing public art programs. One option would be to

include the piece as part of the ArtCurrents program through a long-term loan arrangement. Commissioners discussed a potential three-year loan period, consistent with the ArtCurrents cycle, after which the arrangement could be reevaluated. Unlike the Dan Pinkerton grizzly bear sculpture, which was donated to the City, the proposed elk sculpture would remain owned by the artist under a loan agreement. Director Rouse agreed to consult with Streets and Engineering regarding site suitability, ADA requirements, and installation considerations. If the location is deemed appropriate, staff will meet with the artist to review dimensions, foundation requirements, installation logistics, and potential participation in the ArtCurrents program. Commission members expressed enthusiasm for the proposal and appreciation for the opportunity to expand the City's public art offerings. Director Rouse will set up a meeting with Tony Mills and the Streets and Engineering Department to discuss site viability and approval. No formal motion was made.

RE-STRUCTURING SUBCOMMITTEES: Chair Ryba presented a proposed reorganization of the Commission's subcommittee structure. She explained that several existing committees have overlapping responsibilities and that consolidating them into broader categories would improve efficiency, streamline meetings, and provide clearer leadership and accountability for Commission initiatives. The proposed structure would reduce the number of standing subcommittees and organize activities in five primary areas:

Governance and Administration: Manage applicant review, budget oversight, new commissioner orientation, and Commission policies and procedures. These responsibilities are primarily administrative in nature and support the overall operation and effectiveness of the Arts Commission.

Public Art: This committee will direct ArtCurrents, the City's public art collection, mural projects, and bus shelter design initiatives. Given the scope and complexity of public art projects, the committee will serve as the central body for reviewing and managing future public art proposals, installations, and maintenance considerations. Commissioner Sichelstiel agreed to serve as Chair of the Public Art Committee. Vice Chair Light will continue to provide leadership on mural-related projects. Chair Ryba noted that formal project process documents are being developed for major initiatives, including ArtCurrents and mural projects, to provide clear guidance regarding project timelines, responsibilities, and approval procedures.

Community Outreach and Events: Oversees the Coeur d'Alene Arts Awards, Arts and Humanities Month activities, the CACHE initiative, film festival partnerships, and other community collaborations. Consolidating these activities under one committee will allow for greater coordination among outreach and public engagement efforts.

Arts Programming: This committee will combine responsibilities previously divided between visual arts and performing arts programming. Responsibilities include scholarship programs, Spotlight CDA, the Poet Laureate Program, and other special arts initiatives. Commissioners discussed that consolidating these areas may simplify administration and reduce duplication of effort.

Marketing and Communications: Manage marketing, social media, public relations, website content, promotion of Commission programs, and podcast or media initiatives. Commissioner Ethridge agreed to serve as Chair, with Commissioner Newkirk serving as Vice Chair. Commissioners expressed support for the restructuring and agreed that a more streamlined committee structure would improve coordination and allow members to focus their efforts more effectively.

MOTION: Motion by Commissioner Newkirk seconded by Commissioner Doutriaux to approve the

proposed subcommittee restructuring and implementation of the revised committee structure. **Motion carried.**

SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES:

Coeur d'Alene Arts Awards: Chair Ryba provided an update on preparations for the annual Coeur d'Alene Arts Awards event. Several key components of the program have been secured, including: Commissioner Adam Kroeger has agreed to serve as Master of Ceremonies. Max Mendez will perform the National Anthem and may participate in additional event programming. A professional auctioneer has been secured for the live auction component. Commissioner Menzies is coordinating a themed photo booth utilizing props from Lake City Playhouse. Commissioner Doutriaux is redesigning the printed program while maintaining the event's established visual identity and overall format. Commission members discussed the need to continue securing both silent and live auction items. Potential contributions from local arts organizations, businesses, restaurants, and other community partners were identified as priorities. Chair Ryba also noted that fundraising discussions remain somewhat limited pending additional legal guidance regarding the proposed arts endowment initiative.

ArtCurrents: Commissioner Sichelstiel reported that renewal notices were distributed to participating artists whose works are currently included in the ArtCurrents Program. While sculptures remain on display for a three-year term, annual correspondence is required to confirm participation and authorize stipend payments. The committee also revisited a proposal first introduced at the previous meeting to expand ArtCurrents into the Atlas Waterfront area. Chris Meyer has identified three to four potential sculpture sites along the developing trail corridor extending from Heritage Health toward Mill River. The trail is anticipated to be completed later this year, providing an opportunity to expand the City's public art inventory into a growing area of community development and recreation. Commissioners discussed issuing a separate call for artists later this year, with installations potentially occurring in the spring due to winter construction limitations. Members expressed enthusiasm for the opportunity to expand public art access and increase the visibility of sculpture installations throughout the community.

Visual Arts/CDA Arts & Cultural Alliance: Chair Ryba gave a brief update in Commissioner Walker's absence regarding the Spotlight CDA program. Three applications were reviewed by the subcommittee. Following evaluation and voting, one applicant was selected for participation. Notification letters have been distributed to applicants.

Marketing & Technology: Commissioner Ethridge reported that committee activities will resume in the coming weeks as members begin preparations for several major fall initiatives. Areas of focus include: Coeur d'Alene Arts Awards promotion; Arts and Humanities Month marketing efforts; social media outreach and public engagement strategies; coordination with local arts organizations and community partners. A committee meeting will be scheduled to develop a comprehensive communications plan supporting upcoming Commission events. Chair Ryba emphasized the importance of coordinated marketing efforts, particularly given the number of major arts-related events occurring during the fall season.

Mural Projects: Chair Ryba reported that she and Vice Chair Light are scheduled to meet later in the week to continue development of mural program procedures and future project opportunities. Additional updates and recommendations are expected at a future meeting.

New Member Training/ Policies: Chair Ryba reported there are no applications for Commission membership were presented for review. She did share that there has been increasing community interest

in Arts Commission membership. Although all current positions are filled, several individuals have expressed interest in serving should future vacancies arise. Commissioners viewed this as a positive indication of growing public engagement with the Commission's work and initiatives.

Poet Laureate: Chair Ryba shared the Poet Laureate is scheduled to participate in two public presentations during October: Coeur d'Alene Arts Awards; and City Council meeting. Staff and committee members will coordinate scheduling details and review the planned presentations in advance of the events. Commissioners noted the value of the Poet Laureate Program in promoting literary arts and enhancing public engagement with the creative community.

Filmmaking & Film Festival Support of NoID: Commissioner Doutriaux reported that the No Boundaries Film Festival is scheduled for September 24 through September 26. Programming decisions and promotional activities are currently underway. The festival will feature a combination of local, regional, and nationally recognized filmmakers, with screenings occurring throughout the event weekend. Additional discussion focused on opportunities for Arts Commission participation during opening events, screenings, and networking activities. She also indicated that details regarding kickoff events and venues would be provided as plans are finalized.

Commissioners expressed support for attending festival activities and continuing collaboration with the organization as a valued arts partner.

CDA October Arts & Humanities Month: Chair Ryba shared ongoing planning efforts associated with October Arts and Humanities Month. The committee is exploring the possibility of hosting a launch event at the Pinkerton Wildlife Museum. Chair Ryba reported that conversations with museum representatives are ongoing, and additional follow-up is needed to confirm availability and interest. Discussion also included the possibility of involving prior Arts Award recipients in program activities. Dan Pinkerton, recipient of a previous Arts Award, may be invited to participate in this year's programming and assist with award presentations. Commissioners agreed that securing a prominent venue and strong community participation will help elevate the visibility and impact of Arts and Humanities Month activities.

Northern Journeys Publication: Commissioner Newkirk provided an update regarding development of the upcoming Northern Journeys publication. Work continues in partnership with the Theatre Alliance and other arts organizations to compile event listings, feature stories, and promotional content. Plans include dedicated coverage of Theatre Alliance activities, organizational updates, performance calendars, and community arts programming. The publication is expected to include expanded regional arts coverage and a comprehensive calendar of events throughout the fall and winter seasons. The current submission deadline is September 8, with publication anticipated at the end of September. Commissioners expressed appreciation for the collaborative effort and noted that the publication serves as an important marketing and outreach tool for the regional arts community.

Endowment for the Arts & Humanities (CACHE): Chair Ryba reported on recent discussions with City Attorney Randy Adams regarding the proposed Coeur d'Alene Arts, Culture, and History Endowment (CACHE). The City Attorney advised that as a public entity, the City must remain neutral and cannot appear to exclusively endorse or partner with a single private foundation or organization. As a result, the current proposal involving the Idaho Community Foundation requires additional review and possible restructuring. Alternative approaches are being explored to determine whether the endowment can move forward through a different governance or organizational model while maintaining compliance with City policies and legal requirements. Discussion included questions regarding whether similar programs exist in other municipalities and whether alternative charitable or community

foundation models might be available. Currently, the initiative remains under review pending further legal guidance and recommendations.

Bus Shelter Design Competition: Chair Ryba deferred discussion regarding the bus shelter design initiative until Commissioner Yost's return. Commissioners noted that opportunities may exist to coordinate public art enhancements with upcoming transportation and infrastructure projects. The Committee will revisit the project at a future meeting and determine next steps regarding design opportunities and implementation timelines.

ADJOURNMENT: Chair Ryba reminded the commission that the September meeting takes place on the 8th to discuss and go through the CDA Arts Awards nominations. She mentioned that several additional nominations are anticipated prior to the submission deadline. Recent media coverage and press releases have helped increase public awareness of the nomination process. Commission members were encouraged to continue promoting nominations within the community and to submit any remaining nomination materials before the deadline. Staff reported there are at least five nominations; their names and categories will be shared with Chair Ryba via email this week.

MOTION: Motion by Commissioner Menzies seconded by Commissioner Sichelstiel to adjourn the meeting. **Motion carried.**

The meeting ended at 4:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Melissa Brandt
Administrative Assistant