

Columbia City Arts Commission Meeting Minutes

April 7, 2026

I. Call to order

Commission Chair April Frazier called to order the regular meeting of the Columbia City Arts Commission (CCAC) at 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, April 7, 2026, in the Common Council Chambers of Columbia City Hall, Columbia City, Indiana.

II. Roll call

The following people were present: Greg Hockemeyer (member), Connie Boggs (member), April Frazier (member), Mike Thomas (member), Doug Egolf (member), Jennifer Romano (member), Taylor Ford (member) and Chip Hill (staff).

III. Approval of minutes from the last meeting

Doug Egolf moved to approve the March 3, 2026, meeting minutes as presented; seconded by Connie Boggs. The motion was carried by voice vote.

IV. Open issues

Artists' Studio Tour – Greg asked if there was anything that needed to be planned regarding on-site electric. Chip confirmed that he would take care of any arrangements and confirmed that there was on-site electric. The date is set for September 12, 2026, in Baker Park in Columbia City. This year, the event will bring all artists to one location with live music.

2026 Calendar Project – Discussion continued about featuring one form of art on this year's calendar. After some discussion, the commission decided to do photography that featured images of performing arts, theater and dance in Columbia City. Greg suggested that local photographers will be invited to submit 3-7 images that we can choose from. We can also look at the photographers on our membership list and invite them to submit images from the last year or two.

Promotions – The members discussed the possibility of using a shorter-term run to promote the Artists' Studio Tour. Greg suggested working with the videographer to get a snippet from the longer studio tour video to promote the Baker Park event this summer. We are looking for short term promotion there. April will get quotes on a short-term advertising at Bones Theatre would cost us.

Jennifer reported that there was nothing new to add regarding the WJHS promotion. Doug and Jennifer commented that the commission is getting a lot of air time on WJHS 91.5 FM which has been great for getting the word out about the Arts Commission and its activities, including opportunities to volunteer and the calendar.

America 250 Collaboration – At our March meeting, the commission approved the expenditure of up to \$475 to support the traveling mural project through the purchase of 3 canvases with one designated for each Columbia City, Churubusco and South Whitley and a stipend of \$250 to be awarded to the artist selected to paint Columbia City's "Pursuit of Happiness" Mural. Jennifer agreed to work with clerk/treasurer Leslee Robinson to facilitate the purchase of the canvases. Jennifer will also work with April to review artist submissions for the Columbia City portion of the event. We hope to choose an artist in May and follow the timeline Jennifer created for the project. We are excited to collaborate with the Whitley County America's 250 Committee to bring the project together.

Arts Pantry – Tabled.

Baker Park – Tabled.

Infrastructure Displays – Chip said he would bring information to the next Arts Commission meeting regarding placement of art on utility boxes in Columbia City.

WCCS Creates (f/k/a Spring Fling) – Judges for the student art show portion event included Doug Egolf and Mike Thomas. There was a huge turnout this year for the event which features artists and entrepreneurs at Columbia City High School. The event got a new name this year – WCCS Creates – and an art show was added this year as well. There were a lot of students involved. Taylor commented on how excited kids were to have their art on display. Doug said he got thanked for the Arts Commission's involvement in and financial support of the event. Our financial gift will be used to support scholarships. "It was a good deed done in that donation," April said.

V. Other Business

Caricature Artist at First Fridays -- Mike Thomas noted that Columbia City Connect plans a circus-themed First Fridays event in August this year. He said First Fridays would like to hire an artist from Fort Wayne to do 5-minute caricatures and wanted the Arts Commission to pay for it. The commission agreed it was a fun idea, but Jennifer voiced vocal opposition to the idea that the Columbia City Arts Commission would fund an out-of-community artist with our funds when there are likely local artists who could and would want to do this. Additionally, there were concerns about spending funds on an event that doesn't involve/include the Arts Commission. The matter was tabled so that commission members could seek out local artists who might have an interest in doing this if the commission decides to go forward with supporting this financially.

Poles & Hardware Issue – We are still dealing with an issue regarding the poles and hardware needed to use the flags we purchased from Espich Printing last year. April reported that she has been to visit Mark Espich at Espich Printing and has made him aware that we still do not have the poles or hardware that we paid for. Jennifer said she felt strongly that Mark needs to make this right – by either getting the poles and hardware that we paid for or getting a refund for all of it. Commission members feel this has not been handled well – we bought something we didn't get.

Artist Meet & Greet – April suggested the idea about hosting a meet and greet type event for local creatives in our community. She thought this could possibly be hosted in May. Commission members also talked about hosting a donut and coffee event immediately prior to the opening of the Art Event in Baker Park on September 12. We could get donuts and carafes of coffee for this. Jennifer and April agreed to plan something.

VI. Adjournment

Greg Hockemeyer moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Connie Boggs, and passed by voice vote. The meeting adjourned at 5:52 p.m.

APRIL 7, 2026, MEETING MINUTES APPROVED BY THE MEMBERSHIP

THIS 7th DAY OF April 2026.

April Hoyer vice - chair

