

Columbia City Arts Commission Meeting

July 7, 2026 at 5 p.m.

City Council Chambers - City Hall

Roll Call:

Present: April Frazier, Connie Boggs, Mike Thomas, Jennifer Zartman Romano, Greg Hockemeyer, Chip Hill (staff)

Absent: Doug Egolf, Taylor Ford

Approval of Minutes from June 2, 2026, meeting:

Greg noticed a typographical error in the minutes where Blue River Digital appears twice. With changes made, Connie made a motion to approve the minutes from the June 2, 2026, meeting of the Columbia City Art Commission. Mike provided a second. The motion carried unanimously.

Open Issues

Artist Studio Tour - Baker Park on September 12, 2026, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

After some discussion, the commission decided to change the name to "Baker Park Studio Art Tour."

Next steps:

April reached out to Sunny Sips to set up a drink trailer and they said they would love to attend. Taylor reached out to Janie's Donuts, but hasn't heard yet. She will follow up with them.

April discussed beverage tickets for the attendees. We can also check with Brew'ha.

Advertising/marketing - Jennifer and April will discuss. We now have a big list of local artists to invite to attend and participate. April mentioned the importance of having new artists. Jennifer mentioned we will want to also get people there to visit with the artists and to shop their booths.

There is electricity in the park already. Chip will check into the electric availability. Mike agreed to look into getting performing artists to do two different shifts of two hours each. He said a sound guy would also be needed.

Greg made a motion to authorize the expenditure of up to \$250 each plus \$500 for a sound engineer for the day. April seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous. Jennifer stated she felt it was important that Mike try to secure Whitley County artists.

Call for artists - Jennifer will do this.

Jennifer will check with Matt Heiden re: reserving the park.

Greg made a motion to approve a \$100 stipend for each artist to participate not to exceed 15 artists. Seconded by Connie Boggs. The motion carried unanimously.

Jennifer and April will meet to discuss details.

April mentioned letting artists know as they confirm that they will receive the stipend.

Calendar - Jennifer had nothing new to add to this. Jennifer will check with local photographer Rachael Hartman about any photos she has of local performing groups/events since she often attends and photographs these events in the community. April said that photographer Valerie Gipe might also be a resource for photos. Jennifer also mentioned adding a little bit of information about the groups photographed as well in the content for the calendar this year.

The goal is still to try to have this potentially by September. April remembered that it took 2-3 weeks to get them back. Jennifer will look into cost of getting them printed ourselves considering that local printers would be outsourcing as well. Jennifer will be contributing the graphic design for the calendars again this year.

Public Art Initiatives - Any updates on infrastructure from Chip – now that we have dimensions and quotes. April got a quote from 46 Graphics for \$491.52 for all installation and prep.

Greg got a quote from Blue River Digital was going to charge \$820 each. Doing at least six would cost \$775 each. Their quote did not include any prep work. After discussion, it sounds like 46 Graphics would be the better vendor to consider for this project cost-wise.

If we want to do it, we now know what it costs. April suggested incorporating it into the art tour in some way. Greg suggested maybe using the art tour as an opportunity to jury applicants for the boxes.

Mike said we could get the design selected in a month and we could have it done in a month. He suggested checking with Bret at 46 Graphics to see what the turnaround time is.

Greg said the request for submissions is a good idea. We will need a form and a forum. We might want to do this now. Jennifer can tweak our request for submission paperwork. April can provide the format to Jennifer to include on it. Greg wondered if we should offer a stipend for the artists who have work selected. Greg wondered if a \$100 prize would be nice per artist. Greg made a motion to authorize the secretary to seek submissions for designs on signal boxes to jury at a later date, with two winning designs to be selected and the artists of those designs to receive a \$100 prize. Connie provided a second. The motion unanimously carried.

Artist Meet & Greet events - Nothing new on this, but will continue to think about it.

OSD Coloring Contest - There were no entries this year for the Old Settlers Day coloring contest that is jointly presented by the Columbia City Arts Commission and the Whitley County Historical Museum. We can certainly do it again next year. Maybe we need to get an earlier start on it next year. Greg thinks the OSD will want to do it again. Maybe we also take some of the papers to the library and YMCA, the pool, etc. We might want to get those around in May. They can also be printed off.

Somewhat related, Greg said Mike Christie has retired from being the official artist. The OSD is now looking for a local person who does caricatures for no pay. One would apply for this opportunity, but Greg is currently unsure what the process will be for this. Keep this in mind and Greg will report back. Drawings are black and white and more like caricatures. Jennifer will share some of Mike Lude's work with Greg for consideration.

OSD Art Out Update - We had six artists come out for this event this year for the event. Due to weather worries, we held it indoors. It turned out really neat because all of the artists were working with a different medium and they were able to talk about what they were doing, etc. All of the artists mentioned an interest in future "Art Out" activities where they can get together, network, and work on art together periodically. The museum is happy to host this, but other locations are open for consideration as well.

Art @ The Museum - Jennifer said that the Whitley County Historical Museum is accepting up to 3 pieces per artist this year and artists are invited to bring in pieces between now and July 20. She also noted that the display pieces are jointly owned by the museum and the Arts Commission and to use them this year (and in

the future), we will need to fix them with new coverings and hardware to support hanging artwork. Contingent upon us having the funds, Greg authorized Jennifer to spend up to \$1000 to buy materials to cover rolling art display panels and add art hanging systems to them as soon as possible. Seconded by Connie Boggs. The motion was unanimously approved. The goal is to have these ready by the end of July.

SPARK update - Spark Arts Camp happened the week of June 22-25 and there was an art show on June 26 in the evening. 18 children participated. Children were included from Park Terrace, Babe and Trail Ridge Apartments. April planned to reach out to Mission 25, but we reached capacity before that happened. The children learned to make self-portraits, explored their interests into things they liked displayed visually. They had a theme of kindness. They had lunches, transportation, art supplies and daily involvement in fine art, choreography and music. More than 50 people attended the final art program on the last day. Unfortunately, 3 children got sick and were not able to complete the program.

April shared that the students did really well learning a song, sign language, dance and made self-portraits. Attendees enjoyed pizza and cookies at the closing event as well. Families stayed for a long time afterward, looking around, etc.

April said we slightly went over our \$2800 budget on Spark Arts Camp. The total spent was \$2984.88. Fuel and transportation costs would have made our transportation costs even a little higher, but Whitley Transit did help provide a grant to cover some of the increased cost this year. Greg moved to approve paying the overage with the presentation of receipts up from \$2800 to \$2984.88. This was seconded by Connie. The commission members unanimously approved the motion.

Jennifer and April will look into submitting a request to the Indiana Arts Commission for grant coverage of SPARK again in the next grant cycle. We can, hopefully, use the outline for the grant we used previously.

Greg moved to adjourn. Mike provided a second. The motion was approved and the meeting closed at 6:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Zartman Romano, CCAC Secretary

JULY 7, 2026, MEETING MINUTES APPROVED BY THE MEMBERSHIP

THIS _____ DAY OF _____ 2026.
