



100 Parkers Mill • Oswego, IL. 60543 • (630) 554-3618 •  
Website: <http://www.oswegoil.org>

**WEDNESDAY, JUNE 22, 2019**  
**SPECIAL MEETING OF THE CULTURAL ARTS COMMISSION**  
**VILLAGE OF OSWEGO**  
**MEETING MINUTES**

**Roll Call**

Attended: Jennifer Putzier, Tony Pastore, Karen Kulzer, Tamzin Ritchie, Jenette Sturges

Absent: Rachelle Stoller, Shannon Greene Robb, Kristie Vest

The meeting was called to order at 6:11 PM.

**Public Forum:**

Opened and closed at 6:12pm

**MEETING MINUTES:**

Jenette presented written copies of the May 22, 2019 minutes for approval.

Karen motioned to approve the March meeting minutes; Tony seconded it. The minutes were approved.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

**1. Public Art Manhole Cover Project Update**

- a. Jenette presented the draft of the manhole cover publicity plan, which will expand and contract based on the construction timeline. It includes a poster at PrairieFest. Tony said he'd like to see the CAD drawing, and Jenette said it'll be pushed out when it's available.
- b. The plan also includes a press release, promotions tied to construction, incorporation at the LitFest, and promotional coasters for A Day Without Water, to connect water sustainability issues to downtown businesses via art.
- c. Karen suggested double-sided coasters with facts on one side and design on the top to promote public awareness. Jenette confirmed that's the plan. Tony wants the coasters to credit the artist and the Cultural Arts Commission. Jenette said this would agree with the department's goal of hitting multiple goals with each initiative.
- d. The group reviewed the press release. Tamzin said she liked the inclusion of the pedestrian friendly alleyway to let people know where they could see the manhole covers safely. Karen said she liked how it addressed cost issues. Because of the climate, people are sensitive to the use of tax dollars, there needs to be something to tell people it's a way to bring art but be sensible. Tamzin called it a "functional aesthetic" -- this has to happen anyway, why not make it pretty. Tony agreed on the need to be transparent about costs. Jenette clarified that there is an upcharge for the mold, but that it is not that significant. Final cost is still coming in. Jenette also suggested Tamzin add something about placemaking in her quote. Karen suggested adding a Cultural Arts Commission boilerplate sentence to raise public awareness of Cultural Arts.

**2. Lit Fest update**



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- a. Jenette said the Sept 29 date is confirmed for Village Hall. This year Jenette said they're considering a shift from 9-1 p.m. to 10-2 p.m. to accommodate last year's traffic patterns, and to be able to offer programming for the authors. Jenette said that Village staff is currently putting out feelers with possible partners.
  - b. Staff had a meeting with library staff. Their biggest concern was staff time. Jenette said the partnership with the library is not ending but changing. The library is still donating Gloria's time.
  - c. Jenette said she and Julie went to Printers Row Lit Fest to scout ideas and vendors.
  - d. One concern is indoors, which is space-limited, versus outdoors, which is weather-dependent. Karen said there was concern last year about going outdoors, but said that more authors wanted to be outside than inside. To accommodate weather, Karen said it made sense to do an Indoor Plan for bad rain, that would bring vendors inside because fewer vendors will show up.
  - e. Tamzin suggested promoting it as a last hoorah before winter.
  - f. Jenette said the Village is working on ways to create cross promotion to the downtown and the Oswego Country Market. Tamzin suggested a scavenger hunt or other activity. Jen suggested a story as you go, which would eliminate the need for paper.
  - g. Jenette asked about curation. Do we want to be more selective about the authors that come? A tier system could be first-come first-serve, but then release the application to popular authors earlier. Otherwise, an application process would require specific criteria. Karen said it was important to support the 'underdogs' like the self-published. Perhaps the announcement that there are limited slots per genre. Tamzin suggested certain slots for the self-published.
  - h. Jenette asked if the consensus was take steps to elevate the quality, but make sure there's space for newbies. Tamzin said it will look good to have a curated experience that also makes space for newbies. Karen said the local authors, even if self-published, will also drive traffic.
  - i. Tony asked about promotions. Jenette said the application will change this year to ask more about marketing, social media handles, pictures of books, etc.
  - j. Jenette said staff is interested in a partnership with a local bookstore or local publisher since they are already on the author tours. Tony asked if we'll be advertising through the bookstores. Jenette said the indie bookstore scene in the western suburbs are not big, but that staff would investigate through partnerships. Building that partnership may be a longshot, but we'll try.
  - k. Jenn asked if we've reached out to the Chicago Writers Association. Jenette said that's an option, along with local colleges.
- 3. New Board Orientation**
- a. Jenette said staff would like to see the Cultural Arts Commission present to the Village Board to introduce them and their projects to the board and get direction from the board to bring them along in a vision of how Cultural Arts aligns with the Board's vision for the community as a whole.
  - b. Karen said the worksheet was a struggle because of identity crisis of what the CAC has done versus what it aims to do. Previously it was more work/action/detail-oriented. Tamzin said that the CAC used to produce more of the ideas, and now ideas are coming



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from staff. Karen said in the past two years, it's been more of an advisory role. Neither is better or worse, but it's different. The work we're doing is valuable, but it's really different operationally.

- c. Tony said we're talking a lot about programs and less about future vision. What's our vision for this we want to accomplish.? How do we get there and put together materials to get the things we want? We only had two meetings about the aesthetic and then were on the road with the manhole covers.
- d. Jenette said commissions are meant to be advisory, rather than action-oriented. The events that came out of the action orientation were good but not all of them were aligned with the goals outlined for staff. For example, the Light Fest was popular and valuable because it was unique, but was one day, was not revenue neutral, and did not fulfill a permanent placemaking function.
- e. Tamzin said she would have liked to see the aesthetic conversation continue in light of placemaking goals.
- f. Karen explained the light festival background and identified changes that would have made it revenue neutral, including toy sales. The weather happened to be perfect and it was well attended and regionally attended.
- g. Jenette explained the department's post-event analysis process and including the way the Village now tracks staff time as a hard cost through ERP. Risk was also a big issue, especially related to January weather.
- h. Karen said weather is a risk for an outdoor festival.
- i. Tamzin suggested continuing with the development of the aesthetic and the sense of placemaking, and grounding any events and public art in that aesthetic, giving music, art and literature related activities a "sense of Oswego."
- j. Jenette agreed a goal for the future is to go back to the aesthetic and Tony agreed. Jenette said another important directive is developing a public art focus and a plan.
- k. Tony said that events maybe distracted from that because of their inherent urgency. Do the aesthetic and then go back to events.
- l. Tamzin agreed, recalling discussions from a year ago about temporary versus permanent art and emphasizing the organic.
- m. Jenette proposed developing a public art plan, rooted in the aesthetic, that outlines goals for public art, where it would go, how to adopt it, and emphasized that a clear tie between public art and core goals, like economic development in the downtown, is most likely to gain support.
- n. Tamzin asked if the Commission could start a conversation on a piece of art that has value, meets the aesthetic, and is specifically for the new Block 11 if that's the new place for gathering the community.
- o. Jenette said that identifying specific places for Public Art is a departmental goal. She proposed a new project for the commission that starts with continuing the definition of the aesthetic, identifying places, and identifying some first types of projects, and some funding mechanisms. The group agreed that that kind of project is something they'd like to do.
- p. Tamzin identified a goal for a piece of art that interacts with and celebrates the natural environment and elements relative to the downtown, something that moves with



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wind/water/sun. Karen suggested paint that changes with sun and rain as something that interacts with the elements, something that creates new experiences. Tony suggested something that works with shadow.

- q. Tony also suggested something functional, like bike racks.
- r. Jenette suggested that as the Commission thinks about a public art plan, we can seek out quick wins in functional art. In a community where taxes are a concern, the group has to be sensitive about the appetite for public art in the community.
- s. Tony suggested developing the vision first, then the presentation. The group asked whether pushing back the presentation before the board would be damaging, and Jenette said that would probably not be an issue.
- t. Jenette said that one goal may be projects like Cows on Parade that get people excited about creativity in the public space while also raising money for more sophisticated projects.
- u. Jen asked if there was a current survey of public art in the community. Jenette suggested adding a survey of current pieces to the public art plan. The Village currently does not have pieces that it's maintaining that she personally knows of.
- v. Tony said we throw great parties but don't do enough to lift up architecture and art in the community. Karen asked about the façade improvement grant. Jenette explained that the façade improvement grant was turned into a different grant that can be used for both interior and exterior improvements with more financial proof requirements.
- w. Tony asked about whether there are architectural guidelines. Jenette said it's something that could be talked about as part of the aesthetic conversation. She added that the Village does not tell businesses what they can and cannot do aesthetically with their buildings. Rather, the Village can offer building/business owners ideas and suggestions as part of incentive discussions, a carrot, rather than stick, approach.
- x. Jenette said she would bring back to the group some exercises to get the Commission brainstorming on the Public Art Plan and the aesthetic again.
- y. Tamzin said the Commission could explain to the board where CAC has been and where it wants to go, but it's not a straight path.
- z. Jenette suggested a presentation that includes the following piece: "The Cultural Arts Commission has taken on such-and-such projects in the past. Currently, the CAC is working on a Public Arts Plan. Here's the sketch of where we think it's going. And here's the data of why public art is important to the community." Tamzin asked that kind of outline to go to the group.

Village President Troy Parlier joined the meeting. He introduced himself and thanked the members for participating on the Commission. He said he would try to be at following meetings, noting tonight's conflict with the Economic Development Commission, and excused himself.

- aa. Jen said the conversation of where the CAC has not been hitting all our goals should be part of the discussion, whether or not it goes before the Village Board it would be a good discussion point for the group.

#### **STAFF REPORTS:**

1. No staff reports



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**COMMISSIONER REPORTS:**

**NEXT MEETING:** JULY 10, 2019

**ADJOURNMENT** 7:43 p.m.