



AGENDA

Fergus Falls Public Arts Commission
March 20, 2025 – 12:00 PM – 1:00 PM
Council Chambers at City Hall

Agenda

1. Call to Order
 - a. Approval of Minutes- February 20, 2025
 - b. Approval of Agenda
2. Old Business
 - a. Wright Statue Grant Status Update
 - b. Downtown Sculpture Walk Update
3. New Business
 - a. Commission Member Orientation- Overview for New & Returning Members
 - b. Open Discussion (projects, initiatives, member interests)
4. Adjourn

FERGUS FALLS PUBLIC ARTS COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
February 20, 2025

The Fergus Falls Public Arts Commission (PAC) met on Thursday, February 20, 2025. The meeting was called to order at 12:00 PM. Members present were Kim Embretson, Lee Smalt, Brooke Barsness, Tom Kieschick, and Kim Konikow. Also Present: Naomi Schliesman (Sculpture Walk Manager) and Jill Hanson (City Staff).

Welcome New Members

Introductions were done for Brooke Barsness, Tom Kieschick and Kim Konikow, the newest PAC members.

Approval of Minutes

It was moved by Lee Smalt and seconded by Kim Konikow to approve the minutes from November 21, 2024 and December 6, 2024. Motion passed.

Agenda

Chair Embretson requested an addition to the agenda to continue discussing art in the Council Chambers . Lee Smalt moved, and Brooke Barsness seconded the approval of the agenda. Motion passed.

Election of Officers

Motion and second were made by Tom Kieschick and Kim Konikow to nominate Kim Embretson to continue serving as the Chair of the Public Arts Commission. Passed unanimously.

Motion and second were made by Tom Kieschick and Kim Konikow to nominate Lee Smalt to serve as Vice Chair of the Public Arts Commission. Passed unanimously.

Fergus Falls Sculpture Art Walk

Naomi Schliesman provided an update on the Open Call for Art, which was open from January 8 to February 13. Seventeen artists submitted a total of 30 pieces for consideration. The next Call for Art will open in July 2025 for the 2026 Sculpture Walk. Naomi outlined the timeline for the 2025 Sculpture Walk and the selection process. Brochures are being created for the walk, and QR codes will be on plaques near sculptures for more information. Interested buyers will work directly with Naomi for sculpture purchases. Current funding will sustain the program for three years, with six pieces displayed each year.

The PAC reviewed submitted proposals and selected six sculptures based on size, materials, quality, style, design, and color to ensure a dynamic and visually engaging exhibit. The final recommendations will be submitted to the City Council for approval. Selected artists will be notified by Naomi Schliesman on March 7, 2025.

Naomi showed the PAC images of the art pieces that she felt would be the best fit for the sculpture walk. PAC discussed how sculpture selections should complement one another. Consideration was given to including pieces that appeal to children and interactive elements. There was further discussion regarding responsibility for sculpture installation and ongoing maintenance.

Motion and second were made by Kim Konikow and Brook Barsness to select *Guardian* by Michael Finch, *Industry 3* by Timothy Cassidy, *Riverdale* by Tim Nelson, *House Tree* by Jon Kamrath, *Junk Ship* by Kyle Fokken, and *Tom's Playful Melody* by Blayze Buseth for the 2025 sculpture walk. Passed Unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 12:59 PM

Chair

Public Arts Commission (PAC) Meeting

Staff Report

Date: March 20, 2025

Submitted by: Naomi RaMona Schliesman

Sculpture Art Walk Project Update

1. Approvals & Contracts

- On **February 26**, I presented the six selected sculpture pieces to the Committee of the Whole for approval.
- The Committee approved the selections, and the recommendation was then presented to the City Council on **Monday, March 3**.
- The City Council approved the selections.
- On **March 7**, I sent out contracts and formal notifications to all six selected artists.

2. Legal Review & Payments

- City Attorney Ralph reviewed the artist contracts prior to distribution. Everything was approved and cleared for release.
- Fergus Falls Monument has been paid for their services, and I received the receipt from Bill in Accounting.

3. Meetings & Coordination

- On **Tuesday, March 18**, I met via Zoom with Len "Guy" Taylor to discuss logistics and coordination with Public Works.
 - Public Works will assist with welding the sculptures in place.
 - Artists will deliver their sculptures to 1127 East Washington on dates that Guy and I will finalize.
- I will be meeting again with Guy and representatives from Parks and Rec on **Wednesday, March 26** to finalize sculpture locations.
 - We are working with Fergus Falls Monument to deliver and place the limestone pedestals once ready.
 - I'm in regular communication with Mike Welle at Fergus Falls Monument for updates on materials and scheduling.

4. Public Works & Installation Process

- Public Works will assist with the placement and welding of sculptures on the pedestals.
- We will hire a welder through Public Works for this process.
- The steel tops on the pedestals will be painted black with Rust-Oleum and will be repainted annually as sculptures are re-welded.

5. Artist Confirmations & Requests

- All six artists have confirmed participation in the inaugural Fergus Falls Sculpture Art Walk.
- I am currently receiving signed contracts and working through any special requests from the artists.

6. Best Practices & Resources

- I spoke with Curt Grohl from Red Wing regarding their sculpture walk process:
 - They had an artist create custom plaques, and they use a local print company to update them annually.
 - They heat the weld to remove sculptures—no grinding—then cut them off cleanly.
 - They use Rust-Oleum spray paint, specifically black, while Sioux Falls uses a red rust color.
 - They elevate limestone pedestals using metal shims sourced from a local welder. I will look into sourcing similar shims for our installations, and Guy agreed this would work well.

7. Plaques

- I have reached out to artist, Wade Hardell regarding pricing for six custom plaques (similar to those used in Red Wing).
- Once I receive his quote, I will decide whether to proceed with him or possibly use Tag-Up here in Fergus Falls.

8. Positive Artist Feedback

- We received this thoughtful email from an artist, Mark Hall, in response to our selection notice:

*Dear Naomi,
Just returned from being out of town and saw your reply to our submission. It's one of the finest let-downs I've ever received - very well written! We'll follow you on Facebook, looking forward to seeing your selections and trying again next year. I thought your town would be a good fit for us since we've had sculptures most every year in Bemidji, and could swing over to you when their exchange is made. Until then I'll keep fingers crossed..*

*Best,
Mark Hall*

This feedback highlights the importance of clear and respectful communication with artists and reinforces our positive reputation.

This is the email that went out to all the artists who did not get chosen.

Hello Mark Hall,

Thank you so much for applying to our first call for art for the Fergus Falls Sculpture Art Walk. We truly appreciate your dedication to your public art practice and your willingness to share your work with us.

The Public Arts Commission (PAC) had the challenging task of selecting 6 pieces from 30 incredible submissions. Unfortunately, your artwork was not selected for this particular 2025 season. Please know that this decision was not a reflection of your talent or creativity—every member of the PAC and Naomi Schliesman is seeking something unique, and each sculpture has its own vision and flow.

We strongly encourage you to apply for our next Call for Art that will go live for 2026 applications, Monday, July 28th, 2025. Opportunities will be announced on our social media platforms and sent to your personal email.

Stay connected with us:

- **Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/CityofFergusFalls>

· **Website:** <https://www.fergusfallsmn.gov/artscommission>

Your dedication to the Arts makes our communities vibrant and inspiring. Keep creating, keep applying, and know that your work is an important contribution to the artistic landscape of our region.

Thank you again for sharing your work with us!

With gratitude,

Naomi Schliesman

Fergus Falls Sculpture Art Walk Manager

If you have any questions please feel free to reach out to me.

Thank you,
Naomi Schliesman