

**MINUTES
CITY OF DEKALB
CITIZENS' COMMUNITY ENHANCEMENT COMMISSION
March 17, 2025**

The Citizens' Community Enhancement Commission (CCEC) held its regular meeting on March 17, 2025, in the Second Floor Training Room of the DeKalb Police Department, 700 West Lincoln Highway, DeKalb, Illinois.

Chair Brad Hoey called the meeting to order at 4:10 p.m.

A. ROLL CALL

Roll call was recorded by City Staff Liaison Scott Zak and the following members of the CCEC were present: Chair Brad Hoey and Commissioners Al Farris, Jeanine Holcomb and Ellingsworth Webb. Melissa Beck, Brandon Elion and Helen Umbdenstock were absent.

B. APPROVAL OF AGENDA – ADDITIONS/DELETIONS

Chair Hoey asked for a motion to approve the agenda.

MOTION

Ms. Holcomb motioned to approve the agenda, seconded by Mr. Farris.

VOTE

The agenda was approved by unanimous voice vote.

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – JANUARY 21, 2025

MOTION

Mr. Farris motioned to approve the minutes, seconded by Ms. Holcomb.

VOTE

The minutes were approved by unanimous voice vote.

D. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No public comments were received.

E. NEW BUSINESS

1. ILLINOIS AMERICA250

Chair Hoey said a recent conference he attended encouraged communities to join Illinois America250, which is the state's initiative to celebrate the 250th

anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. He said the Commission should take the lead on the initiative locally by gathering ideas, including looking for ways to tie in Baron DeKalb, Lincoln Highway and the 100th anniversary of Route 66, which is another state tourism initiative. The Commission agreed to support Illinois America 250.

2. PAINT-A-PLUG 2025

Mr. Zak said April is typically when the City begins soliciting proposals for the Paint-A-Plug program. To incorporate the Illinois American250 initiative, Chair Hoey said artists should be invited to use DeKalb's history and America's birthday as themes for painted hydrants. It was also suggested past participants be encouraged to touch up their hydrants. The Commission agreed to move forward with a news release.

2. FY2026 ILLINOIS ARTS COUNCIL GENERAL OPERATING SUPPORT GRANT

Mr. Zak shared he submitted the application for this grant funding following the Commission's success in receiving the funding for the current year. He clarified the grant is funded through the state and not the federal government.

F. OLD BUSINESS

1. REVIEW OF STRATEGIC PLAN IDEAS

Mr. Zak said he reviewed with Mayor Barnes the ideas generated by the Commission during the strategic planning discussion held at its previous meeting. The Commission's and Mayor's ideas align well, and the Mayor would also like the Commission to continue with utility box murals.

2. DOWNTOWN PASS-THROUGH

Mr. Zak said he had not yet received more detailed designs of the sculptures discussed for the pass-through. Chair Hoey said the Commission would like to see the designs soon.

3. SEVETH STREET MURAL

Since replacement of the Lincoln Highway mural on Seventh Street has been a strategic priority of the Commission, a proposed Call for Artists for a new mural at that location has been developed and was distributed for review.

The Call seeks mural proposals that incorporate the themes of the Declaration of Independence, Lincoln Highway and Abraham Lincoln. Mr. Zak said the themes take into account several factors that fit together well. First, the National Endowment for the Arts, a possible funding source, is encouraging grant applicants to incorporate the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of

Independence into proposals. This also aligns with the Commission's desire to support the related Illinois America250 initiative. Additionally, after the previous mural was damaged beyond repair, there have been Commissioners and community members who have said they would like to see Lincoln Highway represented again in the new mural. The Highway's namesake, President Lincoln, was incorporated as a thematic bridge since Lincoln often used the Declaration of Independence in his arguments for ending slavery.

Under the Call for Artists, the City would work with the selected artist to submit an NEA application this year, and if the grant is awarded, the mural would be done in 2026.

The Commission supported the plan. Mr. Webb said he appreciated that the mural would extend the City's public arts initiative to the downtown's eastside. Mr. Farris said he hopes the mural promotes unity and shows every resident belongs. Chair Hoey said the Commission can look for that message as it reviews the applications.

4. OTHER UPDATES

Chair Hoey shared information on civic improvements that he saw while attending a conference in Springfield. Mr. Webb, who serves on an association of Illinois counties, shared some proposals coming before the body for input including the consolidation of townships.

G. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Scott Zak
Communications & Engagement Manager

Minutes approved by the Citizens' Community Enhancement Commission on May 19, 2025.