

## Arts and Culture Commission Minutes

March 11, 2026

Pat Clower called the meeting to order at 4:15 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Roll call was taken with Pat Clower, Monica Sweeney and Megan Verbic were present. Greg Peerbolte and Ayla Samson were absent.

Also present was staff liaison Melissa Mazintas.

### **Approval of Minutes:**

Clower had one correction to the minutes. The fitness station mural mentions Mike Rittof and should be Mike Leonard.

Verbic made a motion to approve the minutes from the February 13, 2026 minutes with that change. Clower seconded. The meeting minutes were approved.

### **Public Comment:**

No Comment

### **Route 66 100th Anniversary: Potential Locations and concepts**

Clower said she drove by the Manor Motel and they already have two concrete pads, one looked like a pump house for a well and another had bolts sticking out of it so maybe we can utilize one of the pads already there.

Durkin said he called Silver, the owner of the motel and Silver said he has no problem working with us on a location. Durkin said when Silver is back in the Country they will get together. He briefly mentioned the site the Arts and Culture Commission was thinking of along I-55. Durkin said he drove over there and it looks like there may be electricity available as well so we may be able to include some flood lights. Durkin said that Steve Streit's email emphasized to us to really try to place the benches within proximity to Route 66.

Clower said when you travel by the Manor Motel, she thinks the bench would be invisible. The Route 66 sign is big enough to see from I-55 but the bench will be hard to see. Clower said the Three Rivers Library will be taking the Route 66 sign for the month of April then it will have to be moved anyway. Clower is thinking the Arts and Culture Commission should have the Route 66 sign moved to the Manor Motel along I-55 because it would be highly visible.

Durkin said he thought the idea was to have both the Route 66 sign and the bench together.

Clower said we could place the bench up front by the lobby entrance. The Arts and Culture Commission could also put the bench over by Thorntons or in front of the BP/McDonalds property. She is worried people are not going to be able to access the area over by the Manor.

Verbic asked if the Arts and Culture Commission can confirm having a bench location at the Manor Motel for sure, pending working with the owner of the property.

Durkin said yes, he thinks it is a safe bet.

Clower said the other two places the Arts and Culture Commission talked about are farther into town for people traveling on the bike path to be able to stop and take pictures.

Durkin said to keep in mind that the benches will be on display from May to September for the anniversary of Route 66. After September the benches are ours. The Arts and Culture Commission can choose to put them wherever we want.

Sweeny asked where the Arts and Culture Commission thinks what location will see the best traffic from the Route 66 travelers besides the Manor Motel.

Clower asked if the Arts and Culture Commission had another month to consider locations.

Mazintas said Streit wants the information as soon as possible.

Verbic said after September the Arts and Culture Commission could move it somewhere else like 3 Rivers Cafe.

Durkin said the Arts and Culture Commission could put the second one at the Gateway on a temporary basis.

Clower asked if the Route 66 sign would stay at the Manor Motel.

Durkin said he will discuss it with the owner when he is back in town.

Mazintas said the Arts and Culture Commission needs to send our list of design concepts over to the artist for the benches. She said Streit also wants to know who will be the designated contact person for the artist.

Durkin said Mazintas or himself will be the contacts.

Durkin asked if the Arts and Culture Commission wants the benches to be more Route 66 themed or more Channahon theme or if the Arts and Culture Commission is asking the artist to incorporate both.

Verbic asked if the Arts and Culture Commission wanted to ask the artists to stick to a traditional style or more of a contemporary one which could be more interesting.

Mazintas said she could let them know when she sends the lists of prompts that the Arts and Culture Commission is open to several styles and that the artist does not have to stick to a traditional look.

### **Fitness Mural:**

No Discussion

### **America 250 Art Competition:**

Clower said the Country has an Congressional Art Competition that is due in March 2026 and the Illinois State Board of Education had a 250 art competition that was due at the end of December 2026. Clower said she and Samson thought to piggy back off what was written up for the Illinois competition instead of starting from scratch. The Arts and Culture Commission will change it to include adults but otherwise follow the age categories from the state competition. We were thinking of having 1st, 2nd, and third place ribbons and then having a cash prize award to the first place. Out of the 5 categories the Arts and Culture Commission would pick a peoples choice award so we would have 6 winners total. Clower said the Arts and Culture Commission would have the art turned into the Village Hall but she talked to Mike Leonard over at the Park District to see if the Arts and Culture Commission could exhibit the art for our judging. We would take the art in on a Friday night and have the exhibit on Saturday.

Durkin asked why the Arts and Culture Commission would not have the exhibit at the Village Hall.

Mazintas asked if the room would cost at the Park District.

Clower said the Arts and Culture Commission could have it at the Village Hall but we would need a room Friday and Saturday.

Sweeney said she agrees with Durkin, the exhibit should be at the Village Hall.

Clower said she reached out to Midwest Signs for cost on realtor sized signs because she and Samson were thinking of ways to display the winners. If the Arts and Culture Commission can get the winning art pieces printed out we can insert them into the realtor sign holders and display them around town. We think the pieces could then be displayed initially at the Memorial Tree Walk then could be moved to the Fourth of July Firework celebration. Other thoughts were to have them displayed outside during our Sips, Sights and Sounds event and over at the Gateway during the America 250 relay that will be traveling down the I & M Canal in the Fall. The thought being that the Arts and Culture Commission would display the winners for all of the 250th year and the Arts and Culture Commission get additional advertising.

Mazintas verified we would have the six categories and the winning piece of each category would get their piece printed and those would go in the realtor signs to be showcased.

Sweeney said she likes the idea but is not sure that there is enough time to get art work in and judged.

Verbic said she thinks the timeline is too tight. From a teacher's perspective, even if the Arts and Culture Commission sent out the information soon it would not be enough time. If this project was presented to her she would probably pass on it. She said she would also propose not doing any cash prizes and the award would be having their art displayed throughout town for a year. As an art educator if she knew about it ahead of time she could have worked it into her curriculum. If she were to just send the information home with the students she would not get a good response. She said the Arts and Culture Commission should consider doing a digital call for entry and have a digital judgment to save time.

Sweeney said we should not make it too complicated. Have a digital competition and simplify the age categories.

Verbic said the competition should be ages five through adults.

Mazintas said to clarify we will leave the competition open and just see how many art pieces are received and just pick the top 5 or 6 pieces.

Durkin asked if the Arts and Culture Commission decided to go with a digital call how would the artwork be submitted.

Verbic said the residents would be emailing photos of the art work.

Durkin told the Arts and Culture Commission to be aware that the Village of Channahon is losing our Marketing Director for the time being. Thompson is taking a job in Joliet so the Arts

and Culture Commission should take that into consideration since she would normally be the one to create the digital call and social media advertising.

Mazintas said if the residents are just sending an email they could submit them to her but if they want them to set something up on our website to take submissions she can not do that.

Verbic said it should be fine to have the residents email the photos and then we could put the images into google slide presentation. The Arts and Culture Commission can give that a try and see what the response is.

Clower said Samson and herself came up with a couple themes for the art competition.

“My Country, My Town”

“My Home, My People, My Land”

“Through my eyes”

“Grateful and Proud”

“We the People”

“Art Expressions”

Verbic said she likes “My Country, My Town” the best.

Durkin suggested the Arts and Culture Commission should consider giving out gift cards from businesses in town to the winners. The top winner could receive \$250 since it is for the America 250.

Sweeney stated the Arts and Culture Commission should make sure we add that in the budget.

Mazintas said the Arts and Culture Commission should advertise \$250 dollars worth of Channahon business gift cards. The Arts and Culture Commission can spend \$50.00 at each location and the winner gets them all.

Verbic asked when we want the art turned in and when will the Arts and Culture Commission be sending it out the competition information.

Durkin said he thinks we should have it due around the Fourth of July.

Clower said the Arts and Culture Commission would need it done earlier because we would want them displayed at the Fourth of July fireworks.

Mazintas said since it is digital the Arts and Culture Commission could have the submissions due in June.

### **Sips, Sights and Sounds:**

Sweeney said she is going to be the main contact person for all of Sips Sights & Sounds vendors.

Clower said Sweeney should speak with Four Rivers and see if the Arts and Culture Commission could lock in a date for 2027 and ask what it would take to have the second Friday in October every year.

Sweeney said she will reach out to Four Rivers.

Verbic asked if the Arts and Culture Commission could nail down True Vinyl as the entertainment again this year.

Mazintas asked Durkin if the Arts and Culture Commission needs to wait to book anything until after the fiscal year ends on April 30th.

Durkin said it will be fine to reach out to the vendors now.

Verbic said she wanted to check because she knows True Vinyl wanted the extra time to set up last year.

Clower said the Arts and Culture booked the room from four to ten this year so we are paying for the extra hour for set up. The Arts and Culture Commission can not go against the venue so if the band is unable to set up within the time slot we may have to go with someone else.

Verbic said Bishops Hill would love to be involved again however for them to be there in the capacity they were last year would not be financially beneficial for them. She said lots of the feedback we received last year is that the guest would like a more robust offering which Bishops Hill does not offer. Bishops Hill could donate the wine but the Arts and Culture Commission would have to serve it. In conjunction with our food offering, the Hive does not offer a drink package but some of the other caterers do. If we were to use a caterer with a bar service they would have to be able to serve Bishop Hills products. Of course if the Arts and Culture Commission could figure out how to purchase our own alcohol she could bartend. If the Arts and Culture Commission can figure out how to bartend ourselves then we can continue to use The Hive as our caterer.

Clower asked Durkin if he thought the Village of Channahon could pick up insurance for that.

Durkin said he would have to look into the Village of Channahon insurance coverage.

Verbic said Bishops Hill said they would also be willing to donate a tasting for a raffle prize or would donate another case of wine to the raffle.

Clower asked how many wine glasses were left from last year.

Mazintas said she will have a final count for the next meeting.

Verbic asked if Thompson could post our "Save the Date" on social media before her last day. She also asked when we can get the "call for art" posted on Entrythingy.

Mazintas said she has added the call for art on Entrythingy and to create the event on Onecause to her to-do list before the next meeting. She said for the call for art she just needs to know if the Arts and Culture Commission wants to ask the artist to stick to a theme this year or leave it open.

Clower said she does not think Sips, Sight & Sounds needed a theme. We will get a larger variety of art if we leave it open.

Verbic said since the event will be a month earlier so we may want to think of alternative decor.

Clower said what dates should we put in for the call for art.

Verbic said the Arts and Culture Commission should open it up asap and have it close September 1st. Drop off to the Village Hall could be the week of Friday the 11th.

Mazintas said she reached out to the Grundy County Chamber about including our Sips, Sights & Sounds flyer in their newsletter and she was thinking of having it included in July..

Verbic and Sweeney said to shoot for June instead.

Clower said the Arts and Culture Commission needed to work on creating sponsorship levels for local business.

Mazintas said she sent out a generic letter to several businesses last year but several businesses asked if they could make a monetary donation instead of a gift basket.

Sweeney asked if she could see a copy of the generic letter that was sent to businesses last year.

Clower asked the Arts and Culture Commission if they thought the first sponsorship step should be \$500.00 or \$250.00 dollars and what the step should be called.

Verbic said she thinks \$250 is a good starting point. She said most of the examples have the lowest step at \$250, then \$500, \$1,000.00, \$2,500.00 and the largest step is \$5,000.00

Mazintas said what if the levels are artist last names.

Sweeney said she likes the idea of tying the sponsorship levels into our theme.

Verbic suggested we stick to artists and musicians from Illinois to keep it more local.

Clower said her fear is that people may not recognize some of the local artist names.

Sweeney said let us come back and we can collaborate on the sponsorship letters because she would like to possibly include information on the Gateway Tree. We should really shoot to have a rendition of what the tree will look like and an opportunity there to show off the leaves and donations that way.

Clower said that the Arts and Culture Commission needed to make an official vote to agree to move forward with the tree concept and then bring the tree concept to the Village Board for approval for concept and to put out the call for proposal. Next month the Arts and Culture Commission needs to vote to approve the concept.

Verbic asked how soon we could start to sell tickets.

Mazintas said as soon as we get the site up.

Clower said she began to work on the budget for the next fiscal year. She is thinking that for Sips Sights and Sounds we should look at what we spent last year and double it.

Sweeney said the Arts and Culture Commission may need to add a line item for decor because most of the decorations were brought in by her and Clower.

Clower said the Arts and Culture Commission may be able to borrow black table clothes from Minooka High if we need more to save money.

Durkin said the Arts and Culture Commission needs to look at what the cost for Sips, Sights & Sounds were, what revenue was generated and what the expenses are to get those numbers into the budget.

Clower asked if the Arts and Culture Commission wanted to charge \$70 dollars for the tickets this year.

Mazintas said last year the Arts and Culture Commission discussed selling early bird tickets at a lower price but we did not have the time, this year we definitely do.

Clower said if the Arts and Culture Commission sells 120 tickets at \$70 it comes out to \$8750.00 in income.

Sweeney said the Arts and Culture Commission should really wait to determine ticket price until we know what the caterer is going to cost because if we add a bar the cost is going to rise significantly.

**Next Meeting Date:**

The next scheduled meeting date is Wednesday, April 8th, 2026 at 4:00 p.m.

Sweeney made a motion to adjourn at 5:40 p.m. Clower seconded. All ayes approved the adjournment.

Submitted by Melissa Mazintas