

# BEMIDJI PUBLIC ARTS COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

Tuesday, March 11, 2025

Conference Room  
City Hall – 317 4th Street NW  
1:00 PM



## CALL MEETING TO ORDER

## APPROVAL OF AGENDA

## APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- 1) February 11, 2025 Minutes

## CITY GIS VISIT

## ANNUAL REPORT TO CITY COUNCIL

- 2) 2024 Annual Report

## REVIEW POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- 3) Review Outdated Data, Overlap & Redundancies

## "HOTEL BEMIDJI" MURAL RESTORATION

- 4) Collaboration with the Heritage Preservation Commission

## NEXT MEETING

## ADJOURN

## MEMBER ATTENDING REMOTELY

COMMISSION MEMBER BMARTHALER WILL BE ATTENDING VIA WEBEX IN THE VILLA BALBOA COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION, 950 CAGNEY LANE, NEWPORT BEACH, CA 92663 UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF MINNESOTA STATUTES SECTION 13D.02. MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC MAY MONITOR THE MEETING BY ACCESSING THE REMOTE MEETING LINK ON THE CITY WEBSITE

**CITY OF BEMIDJI**  
**PUBLIC ARTS COMMISSION**  
**Meeting Minutes – February 11, 2025**  
**Annual Meeting**

**Present:** Cindy Burger, Lisa Bruns, Emelie Rivera, Lisa Jonas

**Absent:** Kristi Miller, Marcia BMarthaler

**Others:** Michelle Miller, Chris Bell, and Beau the NMF Morale Support Officer

Burger called the meeting to order at 1PM.

**Agenda:** The Heritage Preservation Commission discussion was moved farther down the agenda and Chris Bell from that commission was added.

**Minutes:** On a motion by Bruns with a second by Jonas the October 16, 2024, November 12, 2024 and January 14, 2025 minutes were approved. Motion carried.

**Election of Officers:** Jonas nominated Miller for Chair, Bruns nominated Burger for V. Chair and Burger nominated Miller for Secretary. The appointments were approved by acclamation.

**City GIS and the inventory:** Michelle talked to GIS Coordinator Derek Bernard and he will attend our March 11<sup>th</sup> meeting to update us. Emelie and Bruns will reach out to Derek prior to the meeting to clarify what our needs are and to see if the inventory is still there.

**Policies and Procedures overlap, redundancies and updated data:** Michelle will electronically send them to each member and we will make updates as well as changes we see as redundancies and send back to Michelle. At the March meeting we can review, edit and approve or not.

**Member Recruitment:** Katie Carter and Paula Swenson have both resigned. We need to recruit 2 more members. One needs to be from in the city limits and the other can be either in or out of the city limits.

**Heritage Preservation Commission:** Chris Bell attended (with Beau the wonder dog) as a representative of the HPC. Discussion ensued about how to collaborate on the Bemidji Hotel letter painting project. It seems appropriate that the two commissions should work together to further art and historical preservation in the community. With regards to the \$1,000, it can be used for this project however it will likely cost considerably more than that to complete. There was discussion towards enlisting volunteers to paint, and connecting with other local arts organizations and businesses (paint and supply donations) to get the project completed. It was also mentioned that State Historic Preservation possibly has dollars available.

**Adjourn:** With no further business the meeting adjourned at 1:50PM

Respectfully submitted, Kristi Miller, Chair and now Secretary as well.

## 2024 Bemidji Public Arts Commission Annual Report

Granted this is not an art piece in our town, however it's a bit of the beauty that is Bemijigamaag and could be considered art.



The Public Arts Commission appointed Kristi Miller as Chair and Katie Carter as Vice Chair in 2024 at their annual meeting. While not much is going on within the Commission, a few things occurred. They are:

- The Sculpture Walk folks visited a couple times and asked if there was anything we could help them with regarding the process of getting artists to develop and submit renderings of their sculptures to be vetted by the committee. They have run out of interested members. As we cannot commit to assisting, we encouraged them to contact the new City Manager.
- Sam Anderson, City Engineer/Director of Public Works, wanted the Commission to begin to think about possible art and greenery that could be in the 3 roundabouts that are to be installed on the west side of town.
- The art inventory (an electronic data file that describes the art, shows a picture, the artist and medium information, when it was installed or painted, its condition and what kind of maintenance it may require) started by Brett in GIS in 2022 still exists apparently and the Commission would like to look at it and see if it is of value and can be utilized and updated. The person, now in the GIS Dept, will attend our March 2025 meeting to report on this.
- We seem to always be searching for members but were able to pick up Lisa Bruns, Lisa Jonas and Marcia Marthaler during the year. We were at 7 members, per the ordinance, as of the end of 2024.
- During the year, the Bemidji Downtown Alliance asked for our support and/or direction (when needed) for them placing art in their downtown kiosks. One has been completed according to Kevin Johnson of the BDA.
- There is overlapping and outdated language in the Policies and Procedures, Ordinance and By-laws that we are looking at. We're aware that no changes can be made by PAC but would suggest updates for the Council's approval sometime in 2025.
- Bemidji City Manager, Rich Spiczka, visited the Commission in 2024 and restated that public art, being considered for public view, should be vetted by PAC with the City

Council having the final decision. Additionally, art should be representative of what we want our city to be.

- Lastly, we think you are aware of the \$1,000 stipend that was granted to PAC from Region 2 Arts Council in 2022 to develop goals, objectives and collaborative initiatives. It can also be used for capital improvements that will support art access, education, and arts and cultural heritage activity. To date, we have not spent it. However, one project where it could potentially be used is to repaint the letters on the building at 201 Mn. Ave., the old Bemidji Hotel. We believe it would be a great visual now and when the railway corridor is developed. (Building owner, Robert Bush, approves but doesn't have funds to assist with the project.) We'd like to collaborate with the Bemidji Heritage and Preservation Commission on this and potentially transfer the thousand to them. Obviously, it will cost more than \$1,000 to accomplish but there are ways to mitigate the expenses by getting paint donated and involving city staff and equipment, i.e. a lift. If the transfer were to happen it'd likely need a motion by the Council.



Respectfully submitted,

Kristi Miller, Chair

# Public Art Policies And Procedures

Bemidji Public Arts Commission

*City Council Adopted March 21, 2016*

**City of Bemidji**

Bemidji Public\_Arts Commission  
317 4<sup>th</sup> Street NW  
Bemidji, MN 56601  
218-759-3560

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Statement of Purpose and History .....	3
Definition and Scope .....	3
Values and Goals .....	3
Responsibility, Authority and Partners .....	4
Public Education .....	5
Gifts and Loans .....	6
Artwork on Public Right-of-Way .....	6
Removal .....	6

## **SECTION 1** **STATEMENT OF PURPOSE AND HISTORY**

### **Statement of Purpose**

Art enhances Bemidji's identity as a community that values creative and diverse expressions. It builds our sense of civic pride, and enriches the quality of our lives. Public art fulfills these purposes in a myriad of ways; by improving our experience of public spaces through excellent harmonious design, by sensitively preserving or highlighting vistas, by introducing surprising and enlivening elements into otherwise ordinary spaces, and by engaging us with insightful interpretations of our community's activities, aspirations and history. In sum, public art has the capacity to humanize our urban environments. In recognition of the importance of integrating public art into the daily lives of the residents of Bemidji, the City of Bemidji supports a strong public arts program. To this end the City hereby establishes the Bemidji Public Arts Policy with the following values and goals in mind.

The purpose of this policy is to encourage the display of public art in the City of Bemidji and to provide a mechanism for the inclusion of public art and memorial structures throughout the city primarily in parks, open spaces, in the downtown area, and inside and outside City structures.

### **History**

In 2011 the city council appointed an ad hoc committee to draft an ordinance to establish a Public Arts Commission (PAC). The council passed the ordinance after three readings in 2012. The PAC began meeting in 2012 and drafted by laws that the council approved in 2013.

## **SECTION 2** **DEFINITION AND SCOPE**

### **What is Public Art**

"Public art is not an art 'form'. Its size can be huge or small. It can tower fifty feet high or call attention to the paving beneath your feet. Its shape can be abstract or realistic (or both), and it may be cast, carved, built, assembled, or painted. It can be site-specific or stand in contrast to its surroundings. What distinguishes public art is the unique association of how it is made, where it is, and what it means. Public art can express community values, enhance our environment, transform a landscape, heighten our awareness, or question our assumptions. Placed in public sites, this art is there for everyone, a form of collective community expression. Public art is a reflection of how we see the world—the artist's response to our time and place combined with our own sense of who we are."—Association for Public Art

### **Scope of Policies and Procedures**

These public art policies and procedures pertain to permanent artwork commissioned or purchased by the City, donated to the City as a gift, or on temporary loan. These policies also apply to the planning for, purchasing, commissioning, conserving and maintaining public artwork under the jurisdiction of the City.

Any agreements the City of Bemidji develops with private site owners or managers, and other partners for public art projects, shall be consistent with these policies. The breadth of public art is vast. Artworks can be made of bronze, brick, steel, water, or fabric; they can be in the form of a mural, sculpture, park bench, banner, or imprint; it can be colorful or subdued, interior or exterior, monumental or diminutive, utilitarian or decorative. Artworks can be integral to public works projects or a stand-alone piece of art.

## **SECTION 3** **VALUES AND GOALS**

### **3.1 Create Exciting, Appealing and Harmonious Public Spaces.**

- a. Integrate art into architecture, urban design and planning of infrastructure at the earliest design stage.
- b. Insure consideration of artistic/aesthetic issues in local decision-making.
- c. Identify sites in the City's built and natural environments with the greatest potential for enhancement of art and the space in which it would reside.

- 3.2 Celebrate Our Community’s Heritage, Ethnicity, Commonality and Civic Pride.**
  - a. Stimulate collaboration and understanding between artists and Bemidji’s diverse community.
  - b. Provide support and encouragement for the development of public art programs.
  - c. Encourage partnerships with neighborhoods, commercial areas, and other City and Regional cultural/heritage organizations.
- 3.3 Enhance Bemidji’s Image Locally, Regionally, and Nationally.**
  - a. Insure the creation of the highest quality public art.
  - b. Review all proposed artwork for compliance and aesthetic appropriateness.
  - c. Coordinate with various City departments to encourage inclusion of art spaces in the early development of public spaces and parklands.
- 3.4 Value Artists and Artistic Processes.**
  - a. Encourage artists to live and work in the Bemidji area and participate in community life.
  - b. Promote working spaces for artists.
  - c. Investigate means to promote Bemidji as an attractive place for artists to live in various media/information sources.
- 3.5 Generate Economic Impact.**
  - a. Coordinate with various tourism departments on new ways to promote local artwork.
  - b. Attract new audiences, media attention, and cultural tourism.
  - c. Provide support and collaborative efforts among existing arts organizations that are currently promoting/displaying public art in the city.
- 3.6 Use Resources Wisely.**
  - a. Identify potential public/private resources for public arts programs and projects and use those resources wisely.
  - b. Work with various City and State organizations to identify new funds and/or grants and other enhancements to existing funding for public arts programs.
  - c. Ensure budgets adequately support artists and programs, and funds are used in the most cost effective manner.

**SECTION 4**  
**RESPONSIBILITY, AUTHORITY AND PARTNERS**

- 4.1 The Bemidji Public Arts Commission**  
The Bemidji Public Art Commission shall initiate or manage the review of public art projects based on the criteria identified in these policies and procedures.
- 4.2 City Departments**  
City departments may initiate public art projects but they shall adhere to the PAC policies and procedures and be subject to the PAC evaluation and approval. City departments may also be called upon to offer assistance and advice to public art projects.
- 4.3 Independent Boards and Commissions of the City**  
Independent Boards and Commissions may recommend public art projects to the PAC. Public art projects developed in partnership with these entities must be reviewed and approved according to these public art policies and procedures. Agreements with these boards and commissions shall reflect the policies and procedures of all partners.
- 4.4 Greater Bemidji Area Joint Planning Board**  
The preliminary location and design of public art projects shall be reviewed by the Planning Board (unless they waive this review).
- 4.5 The City Council**  
The City Council approves the membership and budget for the Public Arts Commission, as well as other budgets for public art. The execution of all contracts must be approved by the City Council. The City’s ownership of artworks must be documented in writing upon receipt, completion, and acceptance of the artwork, and upon approval by the City Council.

**4.6 Artists**

Artists may suggest public art projects to the city or be invited to submit RFPs for the creation of works of public art. Local Artists shall also serve on project steering committees and artist selection panels.

**4.7 Bemidji Sculpture Walk Board**

The Bemidji Sculpture Walk is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. The BSW program partners with City staff on installation and maintenance of the sculpture walk. The program conducts an annual juried sculpture competition and approved works are displayed downtown for one year. The PAC will approve art works that are to be displayed on city property or right-of-way.

**4.8. Private Site Owners**

Site owners must also comply with the City's Public Art Policies and Procedures when working in partnership with the City. Project Steering Committees coordinating public art projects shall work closely with the representatives of these sites and adhere to their policies when working in partnership or placing projects on their property. Agreements entered into with private site owners shall reflect the policies and procedures of all partners.

**4.9 Project Steering Committees**

Various project steering committees may be created to provide guidance and leadership for public art projects. Project Steering Committees shall be determined by the Public Arts Commission.

**4.10 Artist Selection Panel**

The purpose of the Artist Selection Panel shall be to interpret and review artist's proposals based on the selection criteria. The PAC will recommend Artist Selection Panel members for each project. In most cases the Project Steering Committee will act as the Artist Selection Panel. In some cases the PAC may act as the Artist Selection Panel. However, additional or alternative panel members may be recommended by the PAC to satisfy needed expertise or insight not present on the current panel, or to replace someone with a conflict of interest.

**SECTION 5**  
**PUBLIC EDUCATION**

**5.1 Objectives**

- Educate the community about public artworks and artists.
- Use artworks as a means to educate the community about City services and places.
- Encourage educational programs that are appropriate for the community.
- Reduce the risk of vandalism.

**5.2 Public Information and Events**

Upon completion of a public artwork, the City shall distribute a press release to local media informing the public about the, artwork, post information on the City's website and hold a public dedication. The City may provide informational flyers about the artwork at the site and to relevant community groups and neighborhood organizations. Information about each public artwork owned by the City shall be posted on the City's website.

**5.3 Plaques**

Plaques shall be installed for each public artwork developed by the City. Plaques shall contain the title of the artwork, artist name(s), year of dedication, responsible department for the commission, and a credit to all sponsors who contribute major funding if required by Project Steering Committee. Sponsor credits shall be limited to the individual or institution name and shall not exceed the point size of responsible department. The plaque shall also acknowledge the Bemidji Public Arts Commission and the City of Bemidji. When appropriate, plaques shall include a phone number for reporting vandalism or damage.

**SECTION 6**  
**GIFTS AND LOANS**

The process of evaluating and accepting, or rejecting, a gift or loan of art shall begin with a presentation to the Public Art Commission. The PAC will then advise the city of their recommendation.

**SECTION 7**  
**ARTWORK ON PUBLIC RIGHT-OF-WAY**

The Public Arts Commission will review and coordinate with the city street and parks departments on placement of art on right of way or in parks.

At the request of the City, the Public Art Commission shall evaluate and comment upon requests to place art in the right of way. For long-term projects or projects of significant public interest, this review process may include a request form and one or more public meetings. Requests for art in the right of way shall be evaluated based on the review criteria outlined in Section 3.

**SECTION 8**  
**REMOVAL**

The City shall remove and dispose of works of art and memorials in its collection when it finds such action to be in the public interest. Life spans that have been assigned to the work during the commissioning process shall be taken into consideration as part of requests for removal. For artworks that have not been assigned a life span, the City may engage experts to assist in assigning the artwork a life span, based on the life expectancy of the artwork's materials and fabrication methods.

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*Policies & Procedures  
for the Public Arts  
Committee  
PAC*

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*STILL IN EXISTENCE?*

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**SECTION 5  
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*\* would require FUNDING  
SHOULD A SECTION  
COVERING  
FUNDING  
(FROM CITY,  
GRANTS,  
PARTNERSHIPS  
ETC. BE  
ADDED?*

**5.1 Objectives**

- Educate the community about public artworks and artists.
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- Reduce the risk of vandalism. *-How?*

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*★*

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ART ACQUISITION  
~~transfer~~

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# Public Art Policies And Procedures

for the

Bemidji Public Arts Commission

City Council Adopted March 21, <sup>2025</sup>~~2016~~

## City of Bemidji

Bemidji Public Arts Commission  
317 4<sup>th</sup> Street NW  
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218-759-3560

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Statement of Purpose and History .....	3
Definition and Scope .....	3
Values and Goals .....	3
Responsibility, Authority and Partners .....	4
Public Education .....	5
Gifts and Loans .....	6
Artwork on Public Right-of-Way .....	6
Removal .....	6

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- b. Insure consideration of artistic/aesthetic issues in local decision-making.
- c. Identify sites in the City's built and natural environments with the greatest potential for enhancement of art and the space in which it would reside.

- 3.2 Celebrate Our Community's Heritage, Ethnicity, Commonality and Civic Pride.**
  - a. Stimulate collaboration and understanding between artists and Bemidji's diverse community.
  - b. Provide support and encouragement for the development of public art programs.
  - c. Encourage partnerships with neighborhoods, commercial areas, and other City and Regional cultural/heritage organizations.
- 3.3 Enhance Bemidji's Image Locally, Regionally, and Nationally.**
  - a. Insure the creation of the highest quality public art.
  - b. Review all proposed artwork for compliance and aesthetic appropriateness.
  - c. Coordinate with various City departments to encourage inclusion of art spaces in the early development of public spaces and parklands.
- 3.4 Value Artists and Artistic Processes.**
  - a. Encourage artists to live and work in the Bemidji area and participate in community life.
  - b. Promote working spaces for artists.
  - c. Investigate means to promote Bemidji as an attractive place for artists to live in various media/information sources.
- 3.5 Generate Economic Impact.**
  - a. Coordinate with various tourism departments on new ways to promote local artwork.
  - b. Attract new audiences, media attention, and cultural tourism.
  - c. Provide support and collaborative efforts among existing arts organizations that are currently promoting/displaying public art in the city.
- 3.6 Use Resources Wisely.**
  - a. Identify potential public/private resources for public arts programs and projects and use those resources wisely.
  - b. Work with various City and State organizations to identify new funds and/or grants and other enhancements to existing funding for public arts programs.
  - c. Ensure budgets adequately support artists and programs, and funds are used in the most cost effective manner.

**SECTION 4**  
**RESPONSIBILITY, AUTHORITY AND PARTNERS**

- 4.1 The Bemidji Public Arts Commission**  
The Bemidji Public Art Commission shall initiate or manage the review of public art projects based on the criteria identified in these policies and procedures.
- 4.2 City Departments**  
City departments may initiate public art projects but they shall adhere to the PAC policies and procedures and be subject to the PAC evaluation and approval. City departments may also be called upon to offer assistance and advice to public art projects.
- 4.3 Independent Boards and Commissions of the City**  
Independent Boards and Commissions may recommend public art projects to the PAC. Public art projects developed in partnership with these entities must be reviewed and approved according to these public art policies and procedures. Agreements with these boards and commissions shall reflect the policies and procedures of all partners.
- ~~**4.4 Greater Bemidji Area Joint Planning Board**  
The preliminary location and design of public art projects shall be reviewed by the Planning Board (unless they waive this review).~~
- 4.5 The City Council**  
The City Council approves the membership and budget for the Public Arts Commission, as well as other budgets for public art. The execution of all contracts must be approved by the City Council. The City's ownership of artworks must be documented in writing upon receipt, completion, and acceptance of the artwork, and upon approval by the City Council.

- 4.6 Artists**  
Artists may suggest public art projects to the city or be invited to submit RFPs for the creation of works of public art. Local Artists shall also serve on project steering committees and artist selection panels.
- 4.7 Bemidji Sculpture Walk Board**  
The Bemidji Sculpture Walk is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. The BSW program partners with City staff on installation and maintenance of the sculpture walk. The program conducts an annual juried sculpture competition and approved works are displayed downtown for one year. The PAC will approve art works that are to be displayed on city property or right-of-way.
- 4.8. Private Site Owners**  
Site owners must also comply with the City's Public Art ~~Policies and Procedures~~ when working in partnership with the City. Project Steering Committees coordinating public art projects shall work closely with the representatives of these sites and adhere to their policies when working in partnership or placing projects on their property. Agreements entered into with private site owners shall reflect the policies and procedures of all partners.
- 4.9 Project Steering Committees**  
Various project steering committees may be created to provide guidance and leadership for public art projects. Project Steering Committees shall be determined by the Public Arts Commission.
- 4.10 Artist Selection Panel**  
The purpose of the Artist Selection Panel shall be to interpret and review artist's proposals based on the selection criteria. The PAC will recommend Artist Selection Panel members for each project. In most cases the Project Steering Committee will act as the Artist Selection Panel. In some cases the PAC may act as the Artist Selection Panel. However, additional or alternative panel members may be recommended by the PAC to satisfy needed expertise or insight not present on the current panel, or to replace someone with a conflict of interest.

## **SECTION 5 PUBLIC EDUCATION**

- 5.1 Objectives**
- Educate the community about public artworks and artists.
  - Use artworks as a means to educate the community about City services and places.
  - Encourage educational programs that are appropriate for the community.
  - Reduce the risk of vandalism.
- 5.2 Public Information and Events**  
Upon completion of a public artwork, the City shall distribute a press release to local media informing the public about the, artwork, post information on the City's website and hold a public dedication. The City may provide informational flyers about the artwork at the site and to relevant community groups and neighborhood organizations. Information about each public artwork owned by the City shall be posted on the City's website.
- 5.3 Plaques**  
Plaques shall be installed for each public artwork developed by the City. Plaques shall contain the title of the artwork, artist name(s), year of dedication, responsible department for the commission, and a credit to all sponsors who contribute major funding if required by Project Steering Committee. Sponsor credits shall be limited to the individual or institution name and shall not exceed the point size of responsible department. The plaque shall also acknowledge the Bemidji Public Arts Commission and the City of Bemidji. When appropriate, plaques shall include a phone number for reporting vandalism or damage.

~~SECTION 6~~  
~~GIFTS AND LOANS~~

Art Acquisition Procedures

The process of evaluating and accepting, or rejecting, a gift or loan of art shall begin with a presentation to the Public Art Commission. The PAC will then advise the city of their recommendation.

**SECTION 7**  
**ARTWORK ON PUBLIC RIGHT-OF-WAY**

The Public Arts Commission will review and coordinate with the city street and parks departments on placement of art on right of way or in parks.

At the request of the City, the Public Art Commission shall evaluate and comment upon requests to place art in the right of way. For long-term projects or projects of significant public interest, this review process may include a request form and one or more public meetings. Requests for art in the right of way shall be evaluated based on the review criteria outlined in Section 3.

**SECTION 8**  
**REMOVAL**

The City shall remove and dispose of works of art and memorials in its collection when it finds such action to be in the public interest. Life spans that have been assigned to the work during the commissioning process shall be taken into consideration as part of requests for removal. For artworks that have not been assigned a life span, the City may engage experts to assist in assigning the artwork a life span, based on the life expectancy of the artwork's materials and fabrication methods.