



## Meeting Minutes: Public Art Advisory Committee

Date: January 13, 2026  
Minutes prepared by: Sarah Kidwell  
Location: Wescott Library, Eagan

### Attendance

- Mike Todaro (via Teams)
- Cheryl Caponi
- Bob Erickson
- JuliAnne Jonker
- Al Tsai
- Cindy Gehrig
- Jen Reichert Simpson, Dakota County Library
- Heather Stephenson, Dakota County Library
- Diane Poldolske, Dakota County Library
- Lil Leatham, Dakota County Planning
- Beth Landahl, Dakota County Parks
- Teresa Mitchell, Dakota County Public Services & Revenue Division
- Sarah Kidwell, Dakota County Public Services & Revenue Division

### Decisions Made

- Al Tsai will serve as Chair and Mike Todaro will serve as Vice Chair for 2026.

### Agenda

- Approval of Agenda / Chair / Approval or Modification
- Approval of Minutes / Chair / Approval or Modification
- Per Diem Requests will be emailed / All / Member Signature
- Election of Advisory Committee Officers / Chair / Nomination and Approval
- Presentations
  - County Overview and Foundations of Public Art Advisory Committee: Teresa Mitchell

- Introduction of Library Director & Strategic Objectives: Jen Reichert Simpson
- Project Updates
  - Wentworth Library Remodel: Cheryl Caponi, Liaison
  - Burnhaven Library Remodel: Cheryl Caponi, Liaison
  - Unity Trail: Mike Todaro & JuliAnne Jonker, Liaisons
  - 2026 Art Contest: Al Tsai, Liaison
- Unfinished Business
  - Dakota County Blueprint Public Art Plan Update: Lil Leatham
- New Business
  - Tunnel Mural Potential Partnership: Teresa Mitchell
- Announcements

## Next Meeting

Date: February 10, 2026

Time: 5:30 pm

Location: Virtual via Teams

Agenda items: Review Blueprint Public Art Plan Mission, Vision, and Guiding Principles

## Meeting Notes

### Approval of Agenda: Chair

JuliAnne Jonker moved to approve the agenda, and it was seconded by Cheryl Caponi. The motion passed.

### Approval of Minutes: Chair

JuliAnne Jonker moved to approve the minutes of the previous meeting, and it was seconded by Cheryl Caponi. The motion passed.

### Per Diem Requests: All

Per diem requests were distributed, signed and returned to Sarah Kidwell.

### Election of Advisory Committee Officers

Cheryl Caponi moved to nominate Al Tsai as chair and Mike Todaro as vice chair, and it was seconded by JuliAnne Jonker. A roll call vote was taken since there was one member attending virtually, and the motion passed unanimously.

## Presentations

- **County Overview and Foundations of Public Art Advisory Committee: Teresa Mitchell**

Teresa Mitchell gave a presentation about the Public Art Advisory Committee, how it fits into the county structure, and the role of advisory committees. She provided handouts including the County Policy 1015: Advisory Committees, Bylaws, and Art in Public Places Program overview. This information will provide a foundation as we move through the process of creating the Public Art Blueprint.

- **Introduction of Library Director & Strategic Objectives: Jen Reichert Simpson**

Jen Reichert Simpson was introduced as the new Library Director and has been with the Dakota County Library as the Deputy Director for nine years. She shared the Library's mission and strategic plan, including three goals and six priority areas.

Jen also spoke to more detail about why the Library discontinued its poetry contest. It ultimately came down to the return on investment between the poetry contest and the music series. The music series reached a greater audience and attracted more participation in the community than the poetry contest.

## Project Updates

- **Wentworth Library Remodel: Cheryl Caponi, Liaison**

The proposal from the artist selected for the artwork at Wentworth Library, Shea Maze, was shared with the Advisory Committee, which included pictures of their prior work.

- **Burnhaven Library Remodel: Cheryl Caponi, Liaison**

The Burnhaven Library remodel has not began yet.

- **Unity Trail: Mike Todaro and JuliAnne Jonker, Liaisons**

Beth Landahl provided a written update that the contracts were recently executed and the project should kick off later in January.

- **2026 Art Contest: Al Tsai, Liaison**

The Art Contest submission portal is open and accepting submissions! Help spread the word. A copy of the article that will be published in the next Dakota County magazine was included in the meeting packet.

## Unfinished Business

- **Dakota County Blueprint Public Art Plan Update: Lil Leatham**

Lil Leatham provided an update on the project and handout with the project schedule. Via Partnership will be at the next meeting to present concepts for the mission, vision, and guiding principles.

The Advisory Committee is interested in the potential for greenway art. Lil indicated that they could do a city scan to identify what the cities interest are related to that topic.

A copy of the article that will be published in the next Dakota County magazine was included in the meeting packet.

## New Business

- **Tunnel Mural Potential Partnership: Teresa Mitchell**

Teresa Mitchell shared a conversation that she had with staff from the City of Egan regarding a tunnel under the county road by Caponi Art Park as a potential location for artwork. The tunnel is owned and maintained by the city, so we'll monitor to see if this idea gains any traction from the city.

## Announcements

- **February 10 meeting** – Virtual meeting with Via Partnership led discussions.