



**LIBERTY ARTS
COMMISSION**

**LIBERTY ARTS COMMISSION
MEETING SUMMARY
August 14, 2025
6:00 p.m. City Hall, 3rd Floor Conference Room**

Present: Garrett Brown, Greg Duncan, Katie McDonald, Kelley Wrenn Pozel, Karly Schieder, Bill Stilfield, Christian Vetter, Nathan Wyman

Absent: Molly Hon, Brian Kelley, Anna Knackstedt,

Staff Present: Jeanine Thill, Community Development Manager; Katherine Sharp, Planning & Development Director

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm by Chairwoman McDonald.

Commissioner Duncan made a motion to approve the July 10, 2025 meeting summary as corrected. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Vedder. The motion passed 4-0-3 Commissioners Brown, Wyman and Wrenn-Pozel abstained.

Current Business

- **Great Americans Update-** Ms. Sharp reported that the Ford Motor Company is in the planning process to expand their stamping plant. That expansion plan identified that a fee-in-lieu of planting trees would be paid into the City tree replacement fund for trees which would not be planted on site. Ford is requesting to give a portion of the money toward The Great Americans Project instead of paying into the tree fund.
- Ms. Sharp explained that when applying for a variance, the applicant can request a payment-in-lieu of tree planting. The code allows use of the tree fee for public art, if the public art is deemed to be of public value. The Art Commission's role is to determine if the art is of public value. The location has not been determined but the intent is that it will be downtown.
- Commissioner Duncan commented that we have a public art policy and best practice is, if there is public art going into the city the Arts Commission should determine if it has public value.

- Commissioner Schieder asked if we could we could have a stipulation that the sculpture not be placed in one of the rotating sculpture locations, adding that it might feel crowded after several are added.
- Commissioner Duncan said that we should have a big picture view.
- Chairwoman McDonald said the GAP project has been successful. She wishes that she knew who this next Great American was.
- Ms. Sharp said the group is being asked if the GAP qualifies as public art.
- Commissioner Duncan made a motion that the Arts Commission deems the next sculpture to be added to Great Americans program to be of public value. The Commission expressed a desire that existing rotating art sites not be considered for this sculpture. In the future the commission would like to know more about the scope and vision of the GAP, specifically about the density of the public art planned for downtown. The commission expressed a strong desire to know the identity of the subjects prior to consideration of future sculptures. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Wrenn-Pozel. Motion passed 8-0-0.

TGT Update

- LAC Branding Update- Commissioner Brown shared a presentation of the recommendation on how to best use the marketing funds.
- LAC is the parade marshal for Fall Fest this year. The float will feature sculpture icons recreated in plywood or foam and affixed to a trailer. It will be a collaboration with William Jewell College students and possibly high school students. The LAC subcommittee will work on this and will coordinate with staff to purchase the necessary supplies and giveaways.
- LAC Shirts- Commissioner Brown is working with local vendors on bids for reverse tie dye and new black shirts with icons of our sculptures. These are intended to be worn by Commission members for the parade and throughout the year. He will finalize the layout and design.
- Sculpture Cards- Another way we can create brand awareness is to have permanent collection collector cards, similar to baseball trading cards, he has worked on some designs with an artist that has experience with trading cards, there will be possibly six different designs. The artist that designed the trading cards would like to retain the rights of the design. The turn around is quick and can be done before Fall Fest and used as giveaways. The current quote is \$50 for 50 cards of six.
- Stickers- He has designed hologram stickers, featuring some of our permanent sculptures, these can be used at public events as giveaways.
- Collaborative merchandise efforts- Commissioner Brown has reached out to Hammerhand Coffee and 3 Halves about possible collaborative efforts but it is slow going. There could be an Arts Commission blend of coffee or maybe a LAC IPA.
- The Commission was comfortable with all of these concepts presented. Commissioner Brown said that he will keep the group informed and will work with staff to place orders.

- Film Fest- The logo for the January 2026 Film Fest has been developed. Aliens will be the theme. Commissioner Brown showed the trailer for the 2026 Film Fest.

Commissioned Sculpture-

- Commissioner Duncan reported that the Public Art Panel (PAP) is proposing “Stop and Smell the Roses” by a local artist, Amie Jacobsen, to be the commissioned sculpture to be placed near the Kansas Street entrance. There were 117 applications received and scored. The top five scoring were invited to present concept proposals to the PAP. The PAP decided to recommend this piece because it best met the criteria; iconic, sturdy, conversational, welcoming and timeless. Commissioner Duncan showed the concept images of the sculpture. Each of the flowers will be different a combination of metal, cast glass and it lights up at night with color.
- The contract has been signed by the artists and the next step is for this group to approve the recommendation. The contract will be on the August 25th City Council meeting for final approval. Commissioner Duncan encouraged the Commission to attend. The member of the PAP will also be invited to be at the meeting.
- Commissioner Wrenn Pozel said it is a beautiful design.
- Chairperson McDonald said she can’t wait to see the finished sculpture. And that she felt this piece has a lot of marketing potential.
- Commissioner Brown agreed and said he believes this piece will have a lot of social interactions, with people taking pictures in front of it.
- A motion was made by Commissioner Vedder to approve the commissioned sculpture “Stop and Smell the Roses”. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Wrenn Pozel. The motion passed 8-0-0.

Transient Guest Tax Fund Update

The following written report was submitted from Claire Rodgers, manager of the Transient Guest Tax Fund:

- On Monday, we heard from Finance that the 2025 projected revenue for the TGT is about \$60,000 down. The Tourism Committee met on Tuesday to discuss the 2026 Transient Guest Tax Budget. Staff presented all of the budget requests and a recommended 2026 budget. On Thursday we found that we had about \$200,000 more in the fund balance than originally anticipated. Staff has revised the budget and the Tourism Committee will vote to approve via email - so the below is tentative but we wanted to provide an update for the LAC meeting to be timely.

As it relates to the arts - below is what is proposed -

- Art Grants approved increase to \$12,000
- Sculpture insurance approved increase to \$4,000
- MMD approved increase to \$7,000
- Film Festival approved increase to \$10,000
- Art on the Side approved increase to \$5,500
- Public Art Master Plan approved for \$75,000

- Sculpture Maintenance maintained at the same \$11,500 as 2025
- Decrease marketing to \$5,000
- 9 sculptures at \$2,000 honorariums
- Purchased piece - \$20,000
- Sculpture Supplies - \$5,000

We also carried the increases to the standing programs through the 4-year forecast. As you can imagine that \$200,000 additional in the fund balance was a welcome error, but went fast. We were not able to add back in any additional mural projects - which is not directly a LAC project but I know many of you are interested in that as well.

A few contributing factors that made this year's TGT budget discussion unique -

- The Mayor has created an America 250 in Liberty Task Force and requested \$250,000 from the TGT to fund a variety of events and special projects next year
- Construction on the two new hotels is slow moving and we have not integrated that new revenue into the budget until at least June 2026.
- We have been operating in a budget deficit the last several years in an attempt to spend down our growing fund balance (particularly with bigger ticket one-time projects), and 2026 will be the year that crests and we need to start saving fund balance in order to maintain that deficit and all of our programming going forward.
- We are anticipating two big projects in the coming years that we are intentionally saving for - Parks & Rec is acquiring 100 acres of land from MDC this year (that process is ongoing) we want to have the funding opportunity to help improve those properties to be a destination attraction in some way; and Liberty's Bicentennial in 2029.
- We are cautiously optimistic that the World Cup will boost hotel occupancy rates next summer!
- This will be approved by the Tourism Committee next week and then will go through the normal budget approval process to Budget Committee and City Council.

Rotating Sculptures- Ms. Thill reported that the new rotating sculptures will be installed Sept. 8-23. She shared a power point presentation showing the placement of them. The Commission approved of the locations.

- Update on Fall Fest Parade entry- Chairwoman McDonald thanked the subcommittee for work on this. We can solidify the details and logistics this next month.
- Film Fest 2026 – Commissioner Schieder said the committee will meet with B&B in September, they are going to try new things with the after party.
- America 250 Film Fest Meeting update- Commissioner Schieder said there is a wide range of films that the Mayor is hoping to show for this one-day film fest, planned for

the Sunday or Monday of Labor Day weekend 2026. They are hoping to have a morning section and evening session of films. The goal is to show 12 films, some playing more than once and others only playing once.

Other Business:

Art Partner Reports:

Liberty Arts Foundation- No report

Library- No report

William Jewell- Commissioner Wyman reported school starts next week. They hope to have a collection of art from private collections. They will do a theatre production this fall.

Corbin Theatre- Commissioner Stilfield said that the Garrison Cultural Center has been renovating but they are back in business. There was an article in the newspaper about Jazz at the Garrison recently. Before the article published, there were about 12 people in attendance for this performance, but after the article, there was about four times as many people. On Tuesday they had the Liberty Ukeladies, they will be back on November 11th. Sept. 11-14 "Drinking Habits" will be featured, it is only \$15 per person for any of the performances and \$5 for children.

Liberty Public Schools- No report

Misc. Matters-

- Ms. Thill reported that Dr. Cecelia Robinson recently requested that the Garrison Gallery be considered as a community partner gallery. She said it is ADA accessible and they will work on having set hours for it to be open. This will be discussed further at a future meeting.

A motion was made by Commissioner Stilfield to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Duncan.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 7:40 pm.