



Beautification and Public Art Committee

Monday, March 16, 2026
4:00 PM
Elk River City Hall

Special Meeting Agenda

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER
2. CONSIDER AGENDA
3. CONSIDER MINUTES
 - 3.1 10-20-2025 BPA Minutes
4. GENERAL BUSINESS

Items in which the information is presented by city staff or consultants, then deliberation and action occur. General Business items are not opportunities to receive or provide public input. However, the presiding officer may, at its sole discretion, solicit public feedback.

 - 4.1 Beautification Award Policy Review
 - 4.2 Garden Gem Awards Review
 - 4.3 Public Art Planning
 - 4.4 General Updates
5. ADJOURNMENT



**Meeting of the Beautification and Public
Art Committee
Held at the Elk River City Hall
Monday, October 20, 2025**

Members Present: Committee Member Deb Hjermsstad, Committee Member Melissa McAlpine, Committee Member Ryan Hardin, Committee Member Nic Hahn, Councilmember J. Brian Calva, Councilmember Cory Grupa

Members Absent:

Staff Present: Economic Development Specialist Josh Mollan

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, the meeting was called to order at 4:31 p.m. by Josh.

2. CONSIDER AGENDA

Moved by Ryan and seconded by Melissa to approve the agenda. Motion carried 6-0.

3. CONSIDER MINUTES

3.1 08-18-2025 BPA Minutes

Moved by Ryan and seconded by Cory to approve the August 18, 2025 Meeting Minutes. Motion carried 6-0.

4. GENERAL BUSINESS

4.1 Beautification Award Judging

The committee judged the five Beautification Award nominees. The average scores are as follows:

Elk River Area Chamber of Commerce - 14.2 pts (Ryan abstained from scoring ERACC)
Price Homes - 12.2 pts
Thunderstruck Exteriors - 10.8 pts
Antiques Downtown - 10.3 pts
NRH Plumbing - 10.2 pts

Moved by J. Brian and seconded by Melissa to recommend to the EDA that Elk River Area Chamber of Commerce win the 2025 Beautification Award. Motion carried 5-0. Ryan abstained.

4.2 Garden Gem Awards

Josh updated the committee that the Garden Gem Awards were presented in September. He also shared the photos of the winning gardens and the personalized garden stones.

4.3 Artist in Residence/Public Art

Josh shared that conversations have continued with Wild Botanical Atelier. They are currently looking for a viable space.

Additionally, an artist connected with Josh about a potential gallery space. The committee was interested and wanted to continue the conversation.

4.4 General Updates

Ryan shared that he was pleased with the participation in the Garden Gem Awards and the Beautification Award, and is eager to keep the momentum going into next year.

J. Brian shared that he would like the committee to consider a rural category for the Garden Gem Awards next year.

Ryan asked about repeat winners for the Garden Gem Awards.

Josh shared that existing policy does not allow applicants to win in the subsequent two years but the committee could revisit that policy.

5. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Josh adjourned the meeting at 5:18 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Josh Mollan.



Josh Mollan, Recording Secretary



Tina Allard, City Clerk



City Beautification Award Policy

13065 Orono Parkway
Elk River, MN 55330
763.635.1000



City Beautification Award Policy

What is the City Beautification Award?

The City Beautification Award recognizes businesses who have made recent efforts to clean, repair, improve, and enhance the overall aesthetics of their building(s), property, and/or space, thereby maintaining the beauty of their neighborhood and surroundings. It is presented to encourage community improvements, therefore enhancing our city's image and economic vitality.

From May through September, the Beautification and Public Art Committee accepts nominations from the public and/or self-nominations. Nominees meeting the eligibility requirements will become finalists. All finalists will receive public recognition for making and continuing to help keep the City of Elk River beautiful.

At their October meeting, the Beautification and Public Art Committee will judge the finalists using the judging rubric. The highest scoring finalist will be recommended to the Economic Development Authority (EDA) to be awarded the Beautification Award. The recipient will receive the award at the following EDA meeting presented by the EDA President and/or a member of the Beautification and Public Art Committee. The recipient will also be awarded a grand prize as determined by the Beautification and Public Art Committee, and the EDA.

What does the Beautification and Public Art Committee look for?

The Beautification and Public Art Committee seeks to recognize commercial/industrial site improvements, commercial/industrial upgrades, landscapes, exterior renovations, restorations, and new structures that are architecturally noteworthy and well maintained.

A major criterion is how the project visually enhances the surrounding neighborhood and community. How the business incorporates design, maintenance, color, organization, and creativity within the existing community. Improvements to structures, exterior spaces, and landscaping are important elements for consideration.

Applications will be evaluated based on the overall visual appearance of the completed project.

Application Requirements

Submit completed online entry form plus at least two high-quality photos (For businesses eligible to be finalists, additional photos may be requested), including a “before” if available and “after” (if applicable) from May through September of each year.

elkrivernm.gov/FormCenter/Economic-Development-11/City-Beautification-Award-Entry-Form-350



Eligibility

- The applicant/nominee must be an operational business located within the City of Elk River corporate limits.
- A photo release approval may be needed to authorize the use of photos in various social media and print forums.
- For new construction or renovations, a certificate of occupancy must have been issued.
- Public projects are not eligible.
- Previous recipients of the City Beautification Award are ineligible to receive the award in the succeeding two years at the same location.

Judging Rubric

This award recognizes businesses whose building(s), property and/or spaces that contribute to the beautification of the city through landscaping and architecture.

Nominees need to score a minimum of 10 points to be eligible to win.

Scoring Rubric	0	1	2	3	Total
Criteria	Does not meet the criteria	Neutral	Meets the criteria	Exceeds the criteria	
The business building(s)/property/space visually enhances the surrounding neighborhood.					
The business building(s)/property/space is well maintained.					
The business building(s)/property/space incorporates a visually pleasing color scheme.					
The business building(s)/property/space incorporates creativity and design.					
The business made substantial improvements to their building(s)/property/space.					
				Grand Total	



Elk River Garden Gem Awards Program Guidelines

Program Overview

Established in 2025, the Elk River Garden Gem Awards highlights exceptional gardens and landscaping in Elk River. Each year the Elk River Economic Development Authority (EDA) and Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA), with recommendations from the Beautification and Public Art Committee, recognizes residents, neighborhoods, and businesses who have maintained beautiful gardens or landscapes, therefore adding to the overall beauty and attractiveness of the city.

Nominations may be submitted by anyone including neighbors, contractors, friends, or the gardeners themselves.

Eligible Categories

- Single Family built before 2000
- Single Family built in 2000 or later
- Townhome
- Neighborhood – Resident/volunteer managed monument sign landscape, cul-de-sac landscape, or community garden
- Commercial – Professionally managed business, or retail/business park monument sign landscape

Requirements

- Garden/landscape must be located in Elk River
- Garden/landscape must primarily feature flowering plants, trees, shrubs, ground cover, perennials, retaining walls, arbors, or water features to create a visually significant summer long display
- Garden/landscape must be well maintained through the growing season
- Garden/landscape must have a positive visual impact on the neighborhood by being substantially visible from the right-of-way
- Previous winners are ineligible to win in the subsequent two years

Program Timeline

- Nomination period: May 1 to July 31
- Judges tour and evaluate gardens: August
- EDA and HRA formally recognizes winning gardens: September

Awards

Winners in each category receive:

- A personalized garden keepsake
- An additional award as determined by the EDA and HRA
- Formal recognition at an Authority meeting
- Award yard sign in garden/property for six weeks

Judging Criteria

Each garden/landscape nominated is visited and judged based on the following criteria:

- Overall attractiveness
- Design
- Plant variety
- Environmental impact
- Creativity
- Appropriate maintenance

Judging Rubric

Elk River Garden Gem Awards										
Judging Rubric										
Criteria									Score	
Overall Attractiveness										
There is curb appeal with color, contour, and texture. The landscape/garden is pleasing and inviting that enhances the neighborhood's beauty.										
Design										
The garden/landsacpe has a thoughtful arrangement of plants and features within the landscape.										
Plant Variety										
There is a diversity of plants used in the garden/landscape.										
Environmental Impact										
The garden/landscape features sustainable elements such as water conservation, native plants, pollinator support, composting, and solar lights.										
Creativity										
There is a variety of plant materials and/or ornamental elements such as a water feature, trellis, bird house, bird bath, arbor, or statue.										
Appropriate Maintenance										
The garden/landscape is well-cared and watered. Weeds are kept to a minimum.										
Poor			Fair			Good			Excellent	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	