



# Beautification and Public Art Committee

Monday, June 15, 2026  
5:00 PM  
Elk River City Hall

## Special Meeting Agenda

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1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER
2. CONSIDER AGENDA
3. CONSIDER MINUTES
  - 3.1 05-18-2026 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
  - 4.2 Garden Gem Awards
  - 4.3 Public Art
5. OPEN DISCUSSION
6. ADJOURNMENT



**Meeting of the Beautification and Public  
Art Committee  
Held at the Elk River City Hall  
Monday, May 18, 2026**

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

Members Absent: Committee Member Melissa McAlpine

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 5:00 p.m. by Josh.

2. CONSIDER AGENDA

**Moved by Ryan and seconded by Nic to approve the agenda. Motion carried 5-0.**

3. CONSIDER MINUTES

3.1 04-20-2026 BPA Minutes

**Moved by Ryan and seconded by Cory to approve the April 20, 2026 Meeting Minutes. Motion carried 5-0.**

4. GENERAL BUSINESS

4.1 Beautification Award

Josh shared that the Beautification Award nomination period is open. He also advised that staff is looking at producing a video highlighting the program.

Josh shared two versions of concept art for the Chamber's engraved stone. He advised that Plaisted is donating the stone and Stoneworks is donating the engraving. The committee was in favor of the horizontal format concept. For future awards, the committee was in favor of including the 'B' logo on bench plaques.

Josh said that he plans to promote the program at the upcoming DERBA meetings.

4.2 Garden Gem Awards

Josh shared the Garden Gem Awards nominee sign. The committee liked the design and did not suggest any changes.

Deb shared that the Sherburne County Master Gardeners could be available to assist with delivering

nominee signs and judging.

Josh asked the committee if anyone wanted to be in front of the camera to promote the program.

#### 4.3 Public Art

Josh shared the idea of a utility box art program. The committee was interested and wanted to see Josh's draft outline.

Nic suggested allowing wrapped designs on the boxes for a more professional look. She also suggested providing uniform paint for the artists.

The committee was still interested in a mural-type project.

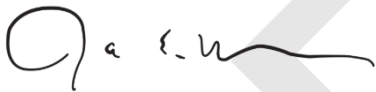
#### 4.4 Open Discussion

Deb asked about last month's guest and her role with the committee. Josh shared that she is expected to apply to be a member of the committee, which would fill a vacant at-large position.

### 5. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Josh adjourned the meeting at 5:26 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Josh Mollan.



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Josh Mollan, Recording Secretary

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Justin Dunford, City Clerk

City of Elk River



**BEAUTIFICATION  
AWARD WINNER**

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**Elk River Area  
Chamber of Commerce**

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**2025**

## Utility Box Art Program Concept

06-2026

### Phase 1: Utility Coordination & Inventory

Before inviting artists, permissions must be secured and define the "canvas."

- **Partner Agreement:** Coordinate with relevant utilities partners and landowners. Establish a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) regarding access and future maintenance.
- **Box Inventory:** Map out eligible boxes. Categorize them by size, location, utility, and landowner.
- **Condition Assessment:** Ensure boxes are functional and not slated for replacement. Note any vents or handles that must remain unpainted.

### Phase 2: The "Adopt-a-Box" Logistics

A formal application and "adoption" model should be created to manage the claiming process.

#### The Application Process

- **Application Period:** The BPA Committee will field applications from January to April.
- **Artist Tiers:** Create tracks for professional artists (paid commissions) and community groups/students/families (volunteer-based/"adoption"). The BPA Committee will reserve select boxes for professional artists. The EDA will provide a flat [\$XXX] stipend to the selected artists.
- **Design Submission:** Require a "mock-up" on a provided template showing all four sides and the top.
- **Technical Specs:** Standardize the materials to ensure longevity.
  - *Prep:* Sanding and high-adhesion primer should be completed by an EDA selected contractor.

- *Covering:* Provide a permitted list of high-quality outdoor acrylics, professional-grade spray paint, or vinyl wrap. Paint will be supplied by the artist(s).
- *Protection:* A mandatory clear anti-graffiti coating should be applied by an EDA selected contractor.

### The "Selection" Mechanism

- **Interactive Map:** Create a GIS-based map where available boxes are pinned.
- **Location Selection:** Specific locations can be requested in the application with final decision by BPA Committee. 'No preference' can also be requested.
- **Selection Process:** After the application period has concluded, the BPA Committee will review and select designs based on artistic merit and adherence to themes.

### Phase 3: Community Engagement & Themes

Engagement ensures the community feels ownership of the art.

- **Promote Collaboration:** Give preference to local groups and organizations that will allow for increased participation.
- **Thematic Guidelines:** Suggest themes that resonate with local heritage:
  - *Outdoors:* Nature, parks, and the Elk and Mississippi Rivers.
  - *History:* Elk River's industrial or agricultural roots.
  - *Artistic:* Modern, abstract, and/or thought provoking.
  - *Prohibited:* Content that is political, discriminatory, offensive, distracting, or anything else the BPA Committee deems inappropriate.
- **People's Choice Award:** Post the top 5 designs, as chosen by the BPA Committee, on social media and let residents vote on which one gets the "prime" location.

#### Phase 4: Field Execution & Safety

- **Safety Protocols:** Since many boxes are near traffic, artists should be required to wear safety vests and use traffic cones provided by the city (where necessary).
- **Weather Window:** Limit painting to a specific window between May and September to ensure proper paint curing and artist comfort.
- **Maintenance Agreement:** Stipulate that the city reserves the right to remove or paint over art if it becomes damaged or weathered beyond repair (typically a 3 to 5-year lifecycle).

#### Phase 5: Digital Showcase on Economic Development Website

A dedicated web presence turns the project into a "Public Art Walk" that drives local tourism and business interest.

- **Interactive Art Map:** Embed a Google Map with "pins" for every painted box. Clicking a pin should reveal:
  - High-resolution photos of the finished box.
  - A brief bio of the artist or group.
  - The "Artist Statement" explaining the design's meaning.
- **"Before & After" Gallery:** A slider showing the transformation of a rusted gray/green box into art highlights the program's ROI for beautification.
- **QR Codes:** Place a small, weather-resistant QR code sticker on the base of each box that links directly to its specific page on the Economic Development site.