



Beautification and Public Art Committee

Monday, August 17, 2026

4:45 PM

Elk River City Hall

Special Meeting Agenda

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

2. CONSIDER AGENDA

3. CONSIDER MINUTES

3.1 06-15-2026 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 Presentation - Wind Phone

4.2 Public Art

4.3 Beautification Award

5. OPEN DISCUSSION

This section is reserved for the board and staff to discuss relevant topics, updates, and other non-action items of the board.

6. ADJOURNMENT



**Meeting of the Beautification and Public
Art Committee
Held at the Elk River City Hall
Monday, June 15, 2026**

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

Members Absent: Committee Member Nic Hahn

Staff Present: Economic Development Specialist Josh Mollan

Guests Present: Connie Beckers

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, the meeting was called to order at 5:02 p.m.

Josh reintroduced Connie Beckers and advised that her appointment to the committee is up for consideration at the subsequent EDA meeting.

2. CONSIDER AGENDA

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

3. CONSIDER MINUTES

3.1 05-18-2026 BPA Minutes

Moved by Deb and seconded by Ryan to approve the May 18, 2026 Meeting Minutes. Motion carried 5-0.

4. GENERAL BUSINESS

4.1 Beautification Award

Josh shared concept art for the Chamber's Beautification Award stone. He advised that Plaisted Companies is donating the stone and Stoneworks is donating the engraving.

J. Brian inquired on if the stone should feature Plaisted Companies or Stoneworks logo or name. Josh said that he could connect and see what the companies would think.

The committee liked the stone and design.

Ryan suggested pulling building permits to become aware of local projects if there are limited nominees

by the next committee meeting.

4.2 Garden Gem Awards

Josh shared that there have been seven nominations received, and he expects at least five more.

Josh advised that the Garden Gem Award judging would be in lieu of a regular committee meeting in July.

The committee will connect back with Josh with their availability.

4.3 Public Art

Josh shared the draft utility box art program outline as mentioned at last month's meeting.

J. Brian suggested thinking of other words than 'distracting' and 'discriminatory' from the list of prohibited content.

Connie shared that she could connect staff with Mary Altman from Minneapolis who was on the arts commission there which ran a similar program.

Ryan asked if permissions would need to be received from utility companies. Josh agreed.

Connie suggested looking into the library for a future mural project.

5. OPEN DISCUSSION

Josh shared that the Open Discussion section replaces the former General Updates item.

Josh also shared that staff does not plan to host a regular committee meeting in July.

6. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Josh adjourned the meeting at 5:25 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Josh Mollan.



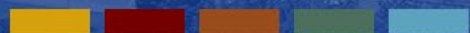
Josh Mollan, Recording Secretary



Justin Dunford, City Clerk



Wind Phone Art Grant Proposal



What is a wind phone?

- **Disconnected rotary or older land line phone.**
- **Located in a secluded natural area such as a park or arboretum.**
- **Located near a bench or in an artistic style “phone booth” type structure.**

What is a wind phone?

- People use the phone to connect with loved ones that have passed away by allowing them to say things they still feel they need to say.
- Wind phones help process grief.
- **Video:** [Olathe man builds 'wind phone' to help others cope with loss of loved ones – YouTube](#)

History of wind phones

- Wind phones began in Japan in 2010 by Itaru Sasaki.
- Article explaining more about the history of the wind phones:

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/innovation/what-are-wind-phones-and-how-do-they-help-with-grief-180985113/>

Types of wind phones

- **“Event” wind phones that can be temporarily set up at a table or bench at event or in honor of a day of recognition i.e. Memorial Day.**
- **“Traveling” wind phones that can be set up temporarily at an art gallery, business lobby, etc.**
- **“Private” wind phones can either be in someone’s home, a park, or arboretum, on permanent display primarily in a private space.**

Types of wind phones

Event



Event Wind Phone

“Listening In” 2023
Bayfield, Wisconsin
Washburn Cultural Center
Gayle Chatfield, Artist

@mywindphone

Event

Event Wind Phone



Camp Forget-Me-Not/Camp Erin DC
Washington, DC

@mywindphone

Travel

Travel Wind Phone



Pennsylvania
Reach out to Susan at
slrmcgann@outlook.com

Types of wind phones

Private

Private

Wind
Phone

Zihuatanejo, Mexico
@mywindphone



Private

Private

Wind
Phone

Leesburg, Florida
@mywindphone



Private

Private

Wind
Phone

Tallahassee, Florida
@mywindphone



Types of wind phones

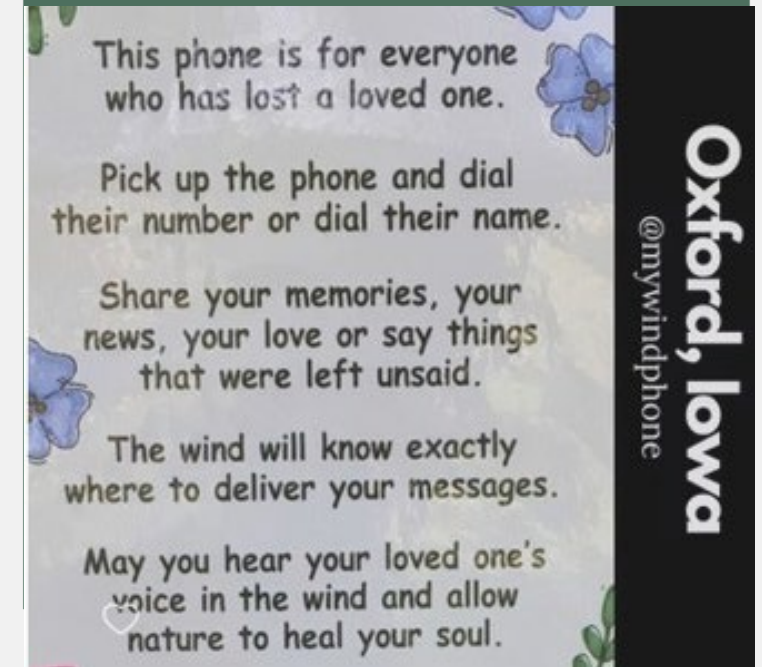
Purpose



Private



Purpose



Project Proposal

- **Gain approval from Parks and Recreation Commission to pursue community and public interest and apply for a grant to install an artistic interactive wind phone sculpture.**
- **Create a temporary wind phone display to gather interest and support for the project at summer public events.**
- **Gather additional input and interest from local community organizations and artists groups.**

Project Proposal

- **The location for the wind phone art must be free and accessible by all per the grant requirements.**
- **The grant and phone registry sites provide step by step guidance on selecting locations and creating wind phones.**
- **Work with city staff and commission to finalize location.**
- **Create an RFP for professional Artists to submit proposals.**

Current Locations

- There are two current registries where existing wind phones can be located:
- <https://thetelephoneofthewind.com/location-directory/>
- <https://www.mywindphone.com/windphonelocations>



Current Locations

- **There is only one wind phone so far in Minnesota located at The Arboretum at Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter. It was installed November 2024. The estimated cost was \$5,000.**

Potential Locations

Woodland Trails Regional Park



Bailey Point Nature Preserve



Lion John Weicht Park



Artist & Art Selection

- **The art should invoke an experience/change/attitude, contribute to the community identity, culture, or history per the grant.**
- **Review and select artist, art proposal, and complete artist agreement.**
- **Work with staff, the artist, and community interest groups to create an installation timeline.**

Funding

- **Finalize costs associated with the project, get approval for 25% grant match and back up funding options.**
- **Apply for the Central MN Arts Board Public Art grant in Winter 2027.**
- **Identify potential collaborators or sponsors if grant denied.**

Potential Collaborators

- **Grief Support Groups**
- **Counseling Centers**
- **Sherburne County Social Services**
- **Hospitals and Clinics**
- **School District 728**
- **Service Organizations**
- **Senior Assisted Living**
- **Hospice Care**

Grant Reimbursement

- **Receive grant award notification.**
- **Provide measurable outcomes and project evaluation to the grant provider.**
- **Maintain Financial Tracking and Spreadsheets for grant reimbursement.**
- **Acknowledgement of Grant Funding.**

Promotion/Advertising

- **Signage and promotional material ideas are available on the wind phone registry site for our communications team to use as resources.**
- **Once the wind phone is installed it can be registered on the wind phone locator site.**
- **The wind phone can also be promoted via national days such as National Grief Awareness Day on August 30th.**