

12-9-24 Arts Commission Minutes

**CITY OF ISSAQUAH
Arts Commission**

6:30 PM
December 9, 2024

MINUTES

COMMISSION AND ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL PRESENT

Commissioners:

Bridget Agabra
Rachel Brannon
Chris Craven
Tina Velazquez Hays
Treasure Hinds
Kimberly Kapustein (excused)
Tracie Mahadeo
Caroline Thienes
Albert Wang
Rachel Wright

Administration/Staff:

Amy Dukes, Cultural Arts Manager
Madelyn Nelson, CPD Intern
Minnie Dhaliwal, CPD Director

Guests:

Sonali Bhasin
Christina Bruning
Saira Khan
Ali Marcus
Connie Marsh
John Riziki

CALL TO ORDER

MAHADEO called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

WRIGHT moved to approve the minutes of October 14, 2024. CRAVEN seconded. Minutes were approved unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Saira Khan gave updates on the Literary Nights program series.
Sonali Bhasin and John Riziki shared their experience as artists who participated in the Open Studios program.
Connie Marsh provided comments on the Creative District draft code amendments.
Christina Bruning gave arts and culture program updates from DIA.

CHAIR REPORT

None

STAFF REPORT

DUKES shared with commissioners that since the last arts commission meeting, Eric Morgret has moved away from Issaquah and will no longer serve as an arts commissioner. Eric's significant contributions to the Issaquah Film Festival programs through the years are appreciated.

12-9-24 Arts Commission Minutes

The Senior Center Plaza construction has begun. The public artwork that needs to be relocated will be moved from the site this week and put in temporary storage.
King County Doors Open Funding has been announced, with approximately \$70 million going to 720 organizations across the county in 2025.

AGENDA ITEMS

- A **Creative District Draft Code Amendments (I, D)**
Madelyn Nelson and Minnie Dhaliwal, Community Planning and Development, provided a presentation outlining draft code amendments for the Creative District, related to public art. The arts commission made recommendations to the code amendment draft (memo attached for additional information).
- B **Issaquah Arts Grant Program: Application Evaluation Overview (I, D)**
Cultural Arts Manager Amy Dukes provided an overview of the evaluation process for the arts grant review, including a rubric for scoring each application. The arts commission received 40 grant applications for the 2025 arts granting process. Commissioners decided to add a January 6, 2025 special meeting to provide additional time for review and discussion. The commission will also hold its regularly scheduled meeting on January 13, 2025.

OTHER BUSINESS / ANNOUNCEMENTS

None

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:21pm.

MEMORANDUM**To:** Issaquah Planning Policy Commission**From:** Issaquah Arts Commission**Date:** December 10, 2024**Subject:** 18.522 Creative District Code Amendments

Thank you for your consideration and efforts to foster a vibrant and creative arts environment within the Issaquah Creative District. This memo outlines key recommendations and discussion points regarding code amendments to foster art within the Issaquah Creative District, as discussed at the Issaquah Arts Commission meeting on December 9, 2024:

1. Arts Commission supports the formal inclusion of the Creative District in Issaquah Municipal Code.

2. Arts Commission prefers an incentive-based approach to private art installation/inclusion:

- **Recommendation:** Rather than imposing prescriptive requirements, consider implementing an incentive-based approach to encourage private art installations and provide resources to developers to connect with professional artists for their projects.
- **Potential Incentives:** Expedited permitting processes, partnership grants, or variants for requested deviations could be used to incentivize private property owners to incorporate public art into their developments.

3. Arts Commission suggests incorporating Creative District goals into the permitting process:

- **Recommendation:** Require applicants with projects within the Creative District to demonstrate how their project can align with the district's goals.
- **Next Steps:** Further discussion is needed to relay specific Creative District goals that could be incorporated into the permitting process.
 - The Creative District was certified in 2020 after the [Olde Town Plan](#) was adopted in 2018. The State certification aligns with the plan, enhancing and supporting efforts for creative and economic vitality.

4. Arts Commission prefers a process that includes art expertise in the decision making:

- **Recommendation:** Involve the Arts Commission or Arts Program staff in the review of proposed public art projects within the Creative District. Any projects submitted for land use or building permits within the Creative District boundaries could be promptly shared with the Arts Commission for awareness and possible collaboration or participation.
- **Next Steps:** Prioritize creating a clear process for reviewing and approving art proposals, rather than establishing rigid art standards and criteria.
- **Additional Considerations:** Offensive or Inappropriate Art – Discuss potential regulations to address offensive or inappropriate art and the city's authority to deny such proposals.

5. Arts Commission recommends expanding options for art in development:

- **Recommendation:** In addition to murals, sculptures and other 2 and 3-D artworks, consider including art-oriented spaces such as performance space, maker spaces, artist galleries, markets, or teaching spaces as a potential option for art inclusion in a development project.

6. Arts Commission encourages creation of a public art permit:

- **Recommendation:** Recognize public art as a distinct permit type. There is an opportunity to invite participation through communicating Issaquah's support for development and the arts. A permit and process labeled with appropriate terminology for the process and the output reflects the value placed upon art within the Comprehensive Plan. It demonstrates respect for the work of professional artists with relevant terminology.
- **Next Steps:** Further discussion is needed to determine:
 - What types of art installations would require a permit.
 - Appropriate approval criteria for art permits.
 - The appropriate decision-making authority for art permits.
 - Art vs. Sign Regulations: Need clear guidelines to distinguish between public art and signage, particularly when art is used to convey marketing messages.

7. Arts Commission recommends encouraging art installations in redevelopment/existing development:

- **Recommendation:** Develop a program to encourage art installations for existing businesses within the Creative District.
- **Clarification Needed:** Address the specific requirements for businesses that wish to install murals or other forms of public art, including whether a permit is necessary and the approval process.