

Committee for Art and Culture

November 12, 2025 Meeting Notes

Present: Ginny Flowers, Peggy Saporito, Melanie LaFontaine (Swell Ceramics), Genevieve Stewart, Paige Griffin, Kelly Wyatt

Staff Updates

Staff provided updates on programming, markets, and upcoming events.

Fitness and Wellness Programming

Staff reported that the yoga season was very successful, with participation peaking at 72 attendees, including strong visitor attendance. Programming continued even during inclement weather. Staff noted the goal of offering yoga again next year, with Coastal Carolina Vacations returning as a sponsor. Tortuga's Lie Restaurant will sponsor Friday Fitness.

The committee discussed adding an additional fitness offering on Wednesdays. Options discussed included an additional yoga day or Pilates. Potential instructors were discussed, and the need for a sponsor was noted. If a sponsor cannot be secured, staff will consider including the program in the budget and pursue sponsorship for a future season. Cost estimates were reviewed, along with types of sponsor recognition through signage and social media.

Holiday Markets and Events

Staff reported that the most recent Holiday Market was very successful, with favorable weather and strong attendance estimated at over 700 people total. The market included approximately 15 new vendors and a well-balanced vendor mix. Staff noted that despite the number of holiday markets in the region, many vendors continue to prioritize Dowdy Park markets.

The next Holiday Market is scheduled for November 29, with the Tree Lighting event planned for the same evening. Staff reviewed plans for the Tree Lighting, including the introduction of a Town commemorative ornament (200 produced), Santa's appearance under the pavilion, music, and a festive atmosphere. Staff noted the intention to continue the ornament as an annual keepsake.

Staff also discussed the annual Candy Cane Hunt scheduled for mid-December. Volunteers will be needed to assist with setup and hiding candy canes. The event will include two age groups, with a prize awarded for finding the large candy cane.

Whalebone Park Updates

Staff reported that Whalebone Park is now open, with the pavilion, shade structures, and restrooms operational. Programming at the pavilion will need to be discussed, perhaps focus on small-scale performances, such as one- or two-person musical acts, due to acoustics.

Ginny Flowers shared information about Dare Arts' Plein Air painting event, noting interest among artists and potential future collaborations.

Vendor After-Action Review

Staff reported that an after-action meeting was held with vendors following the market season. Approximately 7–8 vendors attended, and feedback aligned with survey results.

Key themes included:

- Maintaining market hours from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., which supports both vendors traveling from outside the area and local lunchtime attendance.
- The need for stricter enforcement of parking rules, including timely vehicle removal by vendors.
- Clear expectations regarding vendor conduct, with consensus that repeated violations (e.g., disruptive behavior or failure to follow rules) should result in removal from the market.

Staff discussed holding a mandatory pre-summer vendor meeting to review expectations, with options for morning and late-afternoon sessions. Attendance would be required for participation. Staff also discussed creating an acknowledgment or initialed agreement outlining expectations and rules.

Winter Markets

Staff discussed Winter Market programming, noting that markets have historically focused on food vendors. The committee discussed whether to allow additional perishable items; however, consensus was to continue limiting Winter Markets to food vendors only. Winter Market scheduling relative to other regional markets was reviewed.

Art and Cultural Programming

Staff discussed the construction of the FLAG (Free Little Art Gallery), with a forthcoming press release. The FLAG program will feature small-scale community art contributions. Also, there are plans to expand the Little Free Library to accommodate larger children's books.

Meeting Schedule

The committee discussed whether there may be a better time for Art & Culture Committee meetings. A potential shift to Wednesdays at 10:00 a.m. was proposed. Staff will follow up with committee members regarding availability.

Veterans Day and Youth Engagement

Staff provided an update on the Veterans Day Ceremony held the previous day, noting strong attendance (62 participants) and a meaningful program, including personal storytelling and recognition of veterans across generations.

The committee discussed goals for increasing youth involvement in future ceremonies and programs, including potential writing workshops and partnerships with Dare Arts.

Adjournment

The meeting concluded following discussion.