

Committee for Art and Culture September 10, 2025 Meeting Notes

Present: Genevieve Stewart, Jeremy Russell, Sam Locke Brown, Ginny Flowers, Shelli Gates, Peggy Saporito, Paige Griffin, Kelly Wyatt

Staff provided updates on summer programming, arts initiatives, and upcoming events.

Fitness and Wellness Programming

Staff reported that yoga programming will continue through October. Outer Banks Health (OBH) expressed satisfaction with its sponsorship and requested additional data regarding local versus visitor participation. Staff noted the potential to increase sponsorship levels next season. Fitness Friday programming continues to be successful, with discussions underway about extending the program to a longer season and adding fitness activity on Wednesdays.

Art Mast Program and Functional Art

Staff provided updates on the Art Mast Program, noting that Red Dawn is developing a new panel referencing both historic Dowdy and modern Dowdy Park, with a subtle tribute to Kerry Oaksmith Sanders. The committee discussed additional ways to honor Kerry's legacy, including incorporating functional art elements such as fitness stations within park spaces. Emphasis was placed on form and function, rather than standalone memorial sculptures.

Staff reported that 4 original art mast panels are due for replacement. Vinyl panels displayed along the highway will be replaced at an estimated cost of \$270 per panel. Funding is available to replace two panels this year, with the remaining two planned for replacement the following year. The existing panels have been in place for nearly four years.

Town Hall Art and Documentation

Staff discussed the Town's collection of artwork displayed at Town Hall, including Kerry Oaksmith Sanders' *No Bull* painting, which has been rehung prominently. The committee supported the idea of professionally photographing and digitally cataloging all Town artwork for public viewing online.

Community Engagement and Partnerships

The committee discussed opportunities to involve the community in future projects, including a potential fitness trail. Ideas included partnerships with OBH or nonprofit organizations and exploring ways for the community to contribute toward project costs.

Holiday Markets

Staff reviewed plans for the Holiday Markets. Originally scheduled to include three Saturday markets and one evening market, the evening market has been removed due to low participation and competition with other events. Staff noted that summer and holiday markets differ in purpose, with holiday markets focused on handcrafted gift items from local vendors.

Staff reported that the Holiday Market application will open on October 15, with rules published in advance. Applicants will be required to review and acknowledge market rules before submitting applications. Priority will not be given to specific vendor types, such as food or perishables.

Staff also noted the importance of additional staffing and backup during markets following a recent medical emergency, which required coordinated response while maintaining market operations.

Tree Lighting and Holiday Programming

Staff reviewed plans for the annual Tree Lighting event scheduled for November 29th. Planned elements include possible children's ornament-making activities, cookies, cocoa, hot apple cider, and Santa's appearance. Staff discussed potential enhancements, including music partnerships and interactive elements. Additional holiday ideas were discussed, including lighting displays synchronized to music, expanded tree lighting, and other festive programming. Larger-scale concepts such as ice skating rinks or drone shows were discussed but noted as cost-prohibitive at this time.

Public Art and Community Ideas

The committee expressed strong support for a proposal from the Outer Banks Women's Club to install a Free Little Art Gallery at Dowdy Park at no cost to the Town. Additional ideas discussed included commemorative and legacy events, potential collaborations with other organizations, and long-term planning milestones, including the 10-year anniversary of Dowdy Park in 2027.

Next Steps

Staff will continue refining holiday programming, advancing art documentation efforts, and exploring partnerships for future projects. Committee members were encouraged to share ideas and connections as planning continues.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned following discussion.