

Memorandum

To: Common Council

From: John Weidl, City Manager

Date: 5/14/2026

Subject: Public Art Commission

Following the previously provided memo regarding coordination between the Whitewater Arts Alliance and the Public Art Committee, this memo is intended to outline an additional policy consideration based on the current funding structure, committee activity, and the role of external partners in public art initiatives.

As noted, the City's direct investment in public art remains limited, with most projects initiated and funded by external organizations, including the Whitewater Arts Alliance. In addition, there is no dedicated City budget supporting ongoing public art expansion, and any future efforts would likely depend on external funding or additional direction from the Common Council.

The existing ordinance already establishes a connection between the Public Art Committee and the Whitewater Arts Alliance through designated representation. However, recent committee activity has been inconsistent, including challenges in maintaining quorum and a lack of a regular meeting schedule.

Given these factors, it may be appropriate to consider whether maintaining a City-level Public Art Committee is the most effective structure moving forward.

One potential option for consideration would be the dissolution of the Public Art Committee. Under this approach, individuals currently serving on or interested in the committee's work could be encouraged to participate in and support the Whitewater Arts Alliance. As an established organization actively engaged in fundraising, programming, and implementation of public art projects, the Arts Alliance may be better positioned to lead these efforts.

This approach would align responsibility for public art more directly with the organization already carrying out most of the related work, while allowing the City to focus on its regulatory role, including review of proposals as outlined in Section 12.46.080 of the Municipal Code.

This is presented as a policy option for consideration. Any action to dissolve the Public Art Committee would require amendment to the existing ordinance.

**Summary**

Given the City's limited funding role, the reliance on external partners, and the inconsistent activity of the Public Art Committee, transitioning responsibilities to the Whitewater Arts Alliance may provide a more practical and sustainable framework for supporting public art in the community.