

DATE: Tuesday, August 11, 2026
TIME: 4:30 PM
PLACE: 400 South Vine Street, Urbana, IL 61801

AGENDA

- A. Call to Order, Roll Call, and Declaration of Quorum**
- B. Additions to the Agenda**
- C. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting**
 - [1. Meeting Minutes 01-13-2026](#)
 - [2. Meeting Minutes 03-17-2026](#)
 - [3. Meeting Minutes 04-14-2026](#)
 - [4. Meeting Minutes 06-09-2026](#)
- D. Public Input**
- E. Communications**
 - [1. Staff Report](#)
- F. Old Business**
- G. New Business**
 - 1. Selection of 115 Main Muralist
- H. Announcements**
- I. Adjournment**

PUBLIC INPUT

The City of Urbana welcomes Public Input during open meetings of the City Council, the City Council's Committee of the Whole, City Boards and Commissions, and other City-sponsored meetings. Our goal is to foster respect for the meeting process, and respect for all people participating as members of the public body, city staff, and the general public. The City is required to conduct all business during public meetings. The presiding officer is responsible for conducting those meetings in an orderly and efficient manner.

Public Input will be taken in the following ways:

All City meetings are broadcast on Urbana Public Television and live-streamed on the web. Details on how to watch are found on the UPTV webpage located at <https://www.urbanail.gov/executive-department/page/urbana-public-television>.

Email Input

Public comments must be received prior to the closing of the meeting record (at the time of adjournment unless otherwise noted) at the following: Rachel.Storm@UrbanaIL.Gov. The subject line of the email must include the words “PUBLIC INPUT” and the meeting date. Your email will be sent to all City Council members, the Mayor, City Administrator, and City Clerk. Emailed public comments labeled as such will be incorporated into the public meeting record, with personal identifying information redacted. Copies of emails will be posted after the meeting minutes have been approved.

Written Input

Any member of the public may submit their comments addressed to the members of the public body in writing. If a person wishes their written comments to be included in the record of Public Input for the meeting, the writing should so state. Written comments must be received prior to the closing of the meeting record (at the time of adjournment unless otherwise noted).

Verbal Input

Protocol for Public Input is one of respect for the process of addressing the business of the City. Obscene or profane language, or other conduct that threatens to impede the orderly progress of the business conducted at the meeting is unacceptable.

Public comment shall be limited to no more than five (5) minutes per person. The Public Input portion of the meeting shall total no more than two (2) hours, unless otherwise shortened or extended by majority vote of the public body members present. The presiding officer or the city clerk or their designee, shall monitor each speaker's use of time and shall notify the speaker when the allotted time has expired. A person may participate and provide Public Input once during a meeting and may not cede time to another person, or split their time if Public Input is held at two (2) or more different times during a meeting. The presiding officer may give priority to those persons who indicate they wish to speak on an agenda item upon which a vote will be taken.

The presiding officer or public body members shall not enter into a dialogue with citizens. Questions from the public body members shall be for clarification purposes only. Public Input shall not be used as a time for problem solving or reacting to comments made but, rather, for hearing citizens for informational purposes only.

In order to maintain the efficient and orderly conduct and progress of the public meeting, the presiding officer of the meeting shall have the authority to raise a point of order and provide a verbal warning to a speaker who engages in the conduct or behavior proscribed under “Verbal Input”. Any member of the public body participating in the meeting may also raise a point of order with the presiding officer and request that they provide a verbal warning to a speaker. If the speaker refuses to cease such conduct or behavior after being warned by the presiding officer, the presiding officer shall have the authority to mute the speaker’s microphone and/or video presence at the meeting. The presiding officer will inform the speaker that they may send the remainder of their remarks via e-mail to the public body for inclusion in the meeting record.

Accommodation

If an accommodation is needed to participate in a City meeting, please contact the City Clerk’s Office at least 48 hours in advance so that special arrangements can be made using one of the following methods:

- Phone: 217.384.2366
- Email: Rachel.Storm@UrbanaIL.Gov



MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
URBANA ARTS & CULTURE COMMISSION

DRAFT

DATE: January 13, 2026

TIME: 4:30 p.m.

PLACE: Council Chambers, City Hall, 400 South Vine Street, Urbana, Illinois

MEMBERS ATTENDING: Hannah Andresen, Sarah Buckman, Xander Hazel, Barbara Hedlund, Abby Heras, Robert White

MEMBERS EXCUSED: NONE

STAFF PRESENT: Vivian Krishnan

OTHERS PRESENT: NONE

A. CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL AND DECLARATION OF QUORUM

The Urbana Arts and Culture Commission was called to order at 4:30 p.m. by Barbara Hedlund with a quorum declared present.

B. CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

There were none.

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of November 12, 2025, Regular meeting were presented to the Commission. With no changes or discussion, Robert White moved that the Arts & Culture Commission approve the minutes as written. Xander Hazel seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

D. PUBLIC INPUT

There was none.

E. COMMUNICATIONS

1. STAFF REPORT

Chair Hedlund opened the presentations session to the Commission. Vivian Krishnan, Arts Program Specialist, presented the following:

- Downtown Urbana: Winter Lights: This event was rescheduled due to extreme cold weather and snowstorms. Ms. Krishnan shared brief background and photos.

- 40 North
 - PostMark Urbana served as an effective anchor for same-day event promotion for the second year.
 - Crag Gray's "Ice Pops" sculpture located at Boneyard Creek Crossing is being replaced with "Heal Us" by Nicole Beck
 - The owner of the Parking Deck Mural will complete initial cleaning/power-washing. City Arborist may assist with tree trimming and site cleanup.
- Programs & Grants
 - Regarding the Urbana Arts Grants 2026, a clarification was made for Tier 2 indicating that Letters of Recommendation are required, and letter writers should also match the funds awarded.
 - The application for the 2026 Poet Laureate has not yet been released.
- Exhibitions & Events
 - For Artist of the Corridor, Ms. Krishnan introduced Mili Vishwakarma, who features nature photography and will exhibit from January through June 2026 at the Urbana Free Library, as well as participate in the Boneyard Arts Festival taking place from April 10 through April 12, 2026.
 - PostMark celebrates Poetry Month, Lunar New Year, and Valentine's Day at the Urbana Free Library in partnership with the Asian American Cultural Center, and it will feature cultural musical performances.
 - Make and Take at the Market operates as a partnership between The Idea Store and the Winter Farmers' Market.

F. OLD BUSINESS

There was none.

G. NEW BUSINESS

A discussion about the UAC Bylaws was had. Ms. Krishnan agreed to follow up with the City Clerk regarding the necessary range of commissioners required by City ordinances. The commissioners discussed the secretary and administrative aspects of the commission, agreeing that more direction was needed. They also identified adding a permanent Vice-Chair position, forming subcommittees, holding study sessions, and establishing commission goals as areas of interest for future discussion. Commissioner Buckman then motioned to add a study session to the February 10 agenda, during which the commissioners would discuss revisions to the November 4, 2014, UAC bylaws, finalize the edits, and make a plan for utilizing the bylaws to set commission goals. The motion was seconded by Ms. Andresen and passed.

Following this, a discussion pertaining to the Boneyard Creek Crossing Public Arts, Programs, and Maintenance was held. Commissioner Hazel moved that the commission approve a motion to move the Boneyard Creek Crossing Public Arts Program and Maintenance discussion to the February 10 agenda. The motion was seconded by Mr. White and passed.

H. ANNOUNCEMENTS

There was none.

I. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5:27 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Rachel Rosson
Temporary Administrative Support



MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
URBANA ARTS & CULTURE COMMISSION

DRAFT

DATE: March 17, 2026

TIME: 4:30 p.m.

PLACE: Council Chambers, City Hall, 400 South Vine Street, Urbana, Illinois

MEMBERS ATTENDING: Hannah Andresen, Xander Hazel, Barbara Hedlund

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Abby Heras, Sarah Buckman

STAFF PRESENT: Olivia Jovine, Rachel Storm

OTHERS PRESENT: Kelly White (via telephone)

A. CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL AND DECLARATION OF QUORUM

Urbana Arts and Culture Commission was called to order at 4:30 p.m. by Chair Hedlund. A quorum was not present.

B. CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

There were none.

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

There were none.

D. PUBLIC INPUT

There was none.

E. COMMUNICATIONS

1. STAFF REPORT

Chair Hedlund opened the presentations session to the Commission. Olivia Jovine, Director of Community Development Services, began the report.

Interim Arts & Culture Commission Coordinator, Rachel Storm, was introduced, and summarized her background.

The 2026 Poet Laureate cycle began on February 1 and will be extended to April 27, 2026. Commissioner Buckman will be volunteering as support.

UAC Grants Program 2026-2027 point of contact will be Ms. Storm, and Ms. Jovine noted the schedule for the commissioners. For 2026, \$90,000 in funding is available to support arts projects in Urbana. The Sneak Peak Event will take place in June, though exact date is TBD.

The commission clarified the process which applicants would use, with a pre-recorded virtual workshop offering guidance for first-time users. Both Ms. Jovine and Ms. Storm gave updates as to advertising streams, stating these will occur via the City of Urbana website, Press Releases, and the UAC Newsletter, potential Commissioner support by word of mouth. Commissioner Hazel mentioned availability for the Jury panels, which occur on May 18-19, beginning at 5 p.m., alongside fellow members of the public.

F. OLD BUSINESS

There was none.

G. NEW BUSINESS

UAG Parking Deck Jury Selection and Ms. Jovine introduced Kelly White, Executive Director of 40 North, the potential artists, and noted that experience in use of lifts, heights, and textured medium should be considered. The commission discussed the following artists:

- Alixandra Jade (Casey, IL): has experience with multi-level designs, and varying medium.
- EKAH (Mahomet, IL) and Lisa Kesler (Champaign) collaboration: a joint application of 2 artists who are seeking to combine efforts to produce a project.
- Jose Vasquez (Champaign, IL): has broad experience in art style, commissioned projects, and varying medium, and level design.
- Langston Allston (New Orleans): uses historical and contemporary art and community to create pieces. Certified boom operator.
- Matthew Mederer (Chicago, IL): creates large-scale projects using trompe l'oeil and community storytelling techniques.

H. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Rachel Storm will be working on a part-time basis while an Arts Coordinator is being secured through FY 2027 budgeting which opens on July 1.

I. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Rachel Rosson
Temporary Administrative Support



MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
URBANA ARTS & CULTURE COMMISSION

DRAFT

DATE: April 14, 2026

TIME: 4:30 p.m.

PLACE: Council Chambers, City Hall, 400 South Vine Street, Urbana, Illinois

MEMBERS ATTENDING: Sarah Buckman, Xander Hazel, Barbara Hedlund, Robert White

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Abby Heras

STAFF PRESENT: Olivia Jovine, Rachel Storm

OTHERS PRESENT: Hannah Andresen (via telephone)

A. CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL AND DECLARATION OF QUORUM

Urbana Arts and Culture Commission was called to order at 4:30 P.M. by Chair Hedlund with a quorum declared present.

B. CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

Ms. Jovine offered the following amendment to the agenda under NEW BUSINESS: *Item 1 [Selection of Artist and Design for Downtown Urbana Mural] should be struck and should read "Reviews of qualified artists, discusses portfolios, and makes recommendations."*

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

No minutes were provided for approval.

D. PUBLIC INPUT

Chair Hedlund opened the Public Input portion of the meeting and Nancy Yeagle came to speak in support of her son, Langston Austin, one of the finalists to design the Parking Deck Mural. She mentioned that he was named as 2010's Alum to represent University High School's "Class of the Century". She also shared that he has good practice with using lifts and scaffolding and was reliable. No further public input was given.

E. COMMUNICATIONS

1. STAFF REPORT

Ms. Jovine gave an update on the decommissioning of “ICE POPS” (Craig Gray, Florida) and installation of “Heal Us” (Nicole Beck). Ms. Storm informed the commission that as Mr. Gray resides in Florida and is unable to remove this sculpture himself, it is therefore viable to have an agreement in writing that states it may be removed and disposed of by the city at the same time “Heal Us” is installed. A tentative date in July has been noted, but nothing has been officialized yet. More information will be presented as it comes.

- Murals on Glass: Ms. Jovine informed the commission that 2 new installations were set, with both located at Lincoln Square Mall.
- Boneyard Arts Festival Weekend was April 10-12.
- The Poet Laureate application selection: Ms. Storm noted that this was underway and will be announced at the May meeting.
- Arts Grants were still available, and the application period has not closed.

F. OLD BUSINESS

There was none.

G. NEW BUSINESS

Olivia Jovine and Rachel Storm gave an update on what the mural selection process currently was. Ms. Jovine then noted that the Mural Process needed to be further clarified, and guided Commissioners to discuss the following: goals, their vision as it relates to the mural, and the qualities of the artists that they sought to reflect that vision. Ms. Jovine stated that no action needed to be taken at this time, this serves as a general discussion.

A discussion regarding the commissioners preferred selection of the artist, qualifications of each applicant, the overall goal, and the preliminary screening criteria ensued. Ms. Jovine explained that approximately 15 to 20 total artist submissions were initially received. Staff, along with technical expertise from Kelly White, the Executive Director of 40 North, narrowed the pool down to five finalists using specific parameters: restricting international entries, prioritizing domestic artists with a local or Illinois connection, and evaluating technical capacity to paint a large-scale exterior wall, including familiarity with lift operations and scaffolding.

Commissioners discussed potential additions to the overarching goals of the program, with an agreement from all the commissioners stating that prioritizing local artist connections should be formally integrated into the vision statement. Ms. Storm clarified that while geographic filtering helped establish the finalist group, criteria had not been explicitly weighted, leaving room for the Commission to assign value to specific factors in their recommendations.

Ms. Jovine highlighted that the selection process was still early and abstract, as the Commission was evaluating portfolios rather than site-specific artwork. She suggested recommending a top two or top three ranking rather than a single choice to maintain flexibility for further refinement, artist availability, and stakeholder input. Commissioner Hazel emphasized that community involvement, collaborative spirit, and mentorship were key qualities to seek in an artist, noting that Urbana’s identity centers around community.

The Commissioner reviewed the top-ranked artists, specifically Alexandria (Casey, IL) and Langston Austin. Commissioners expressed support for submitting the top two candidates to the building owner

and selection team, noting that they present distinct artistic directions, one focusing on human and community storytelling, and the other offering a more abstract or natural concept. Commissioner White noted a personal preference for introducing work that has not yet been seen in Urbana to foster visual diversity, while Commissioner Buckman reiterated the importance of evaluating how new murals complement existing public art in the downtown area.

Mr. White noted that standard artistic etiquette dictates selecting an artist before requiring a full design proposal, as asking artists to create uncompensated custom renderings is discouraged in the art community. Ms. Jovine agreed and added that an interim communication step could be established to confirm artist's availability and discuss general scope with the review committee before entering the design phase.

Ms. Jovine affirmed that the selected artist would work alongside a mural review committee, the building owner, 40 North, and local stakeholders to finalize the design before installation. Commissioners identified key overarching qualities they hope the mural will embody, including a strong sense of place, reflecting Urbana's unique identity and diverse community, and serving as a landmark that attracts visitors downtown.

Ms. Jovine concluded the discussion by noting that staff would present further details on the evolving mural review framework at the next meeting and invited Commissioners to submit any additional feedback via email.

H. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ms. Jovine noted that the City of Urbana was in the process of having a Housing Needs Survey done which is reflective of the 2025 Comprehensive Plan and enables information to be obtained by those who complete it that would not otherwise be noted on a census report. With this data, the city can then better develop and inform policy that meets the marketing gaps between the census report and development within Urbana. It is not limited to near-future timelines; it is one step of many within the housing and development within the city.

I. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Hillary L. Ortiz
Executive Assistant



MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING

DRAFT

URBANA ARTS & CULTURE COMMISSION

DATE: June 9, 2026

TIME: 4:30 p.m.

PLACE: Community Development Services Conference Room, City Hall, 400 South Vine Street, Urbana, Illinois

MEMBERS ATTENDING: Hannah Andresen, Sarah Buckman, Xander Hazel, Barbara Hedlund, Abby Heras, Ty Lewis

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Robert White

STAFF PRESENT: Rachel Storm

OTHERS PRESENT: NONE

A. CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL AND DECLARATION OF QUORUM

Urbana Arts and Culture Commission was called to order at 4:30 by Rachel Storm with a quorum declared present.

B. CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

There were none.

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Commissioner Buckman moved to approve the May 12, 2026, meeting minutes. Commissioner Hazel seconded this motion. However, as no official minutes were provided in the packet, staff will resubmit them for approval at a subsequent meeting.

D. PUBLIC INPUT

Chris Evans shared input regarding the relocation of the Boneyard popsicle sculpture to the front porch of the Independent Media Center (IMC). Mr. Evans noted the sculpture's deterioration and, following discussions with the artist, gauged commissioners' interest in refurbishing and relocating it. He clarified that he lacks the authority to negotiate on behalf of IMC but is rather just initiating the conversation to gather general information and explore possibilities. Furthermore, Mr. Evans noted that restoration and relocation costs would be covered by the IMC. Commissioner Hedlund and Ms. Storm added that the artist had spoken with them, explaining that because the artist resides out of state, travel expenses are too high for him to undertake the restoration and maintenance personally.

E. COMMUNICATIONS

1. STAFF REPORT

Rachel Storm introduced the new Urbana Arts and Culture Commissioner, Ty Lewis, and reminded the commissioners that vacancies remain on the commission.

Ms. Storm provided an update on the 2026 Urbana Arts Grant applications received. She stated that a total of 50 applications were received, and the city was able to fund 25 of them, with \$90,000 available in funding. Ms. Storm mentioned that the grantees have been notified and a public release for all selected will go out by the end of the week.

Ms. Storm then informed the commissioners of upcoming arts and culture events, sharing details on when each event is taking place and its purpose. This list included:

- "PostMark" outside the Urbana Free Library on June 9th.
 - A family-friendly arts programming event in collaboration with local artists, businesses, and community partners.
- Pop-Up Concert at Urbana High School on June 13th at 7:00 p.m.
 - The final pop-up concert of the summer features a performance by the Urbana Pops Orchestra entitled "From Sea to Shining Symphony."
- Poet Laureate Inauguration Celebration at Analog Wine Library on June 16, 2026, from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.
 - A celebration in honor of Ninetta DeBoni, who was selected to be the 2026 Poet Laureate.
- "Sneak Peek" at Gallery Art Bar on June 18th from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.
 - An opportunity to meet and greet with all Urbana Arts Grant awardees and discuss their upcoming projects.

Ms. Storm provided an update on the planning process for the proposed mural project. This project is expected to extend into late summer or early fall 2026. Ms. Storm noted that a more detailed summary will be discussed in the New Business portion of the meeting.

Ms. Storm mentioned that city staff are coordinating the transition of sculptures at the Boneyard Creek Crossing. This transition will include the de-installation of the existing Ice Pops sculpture and the installation of a new piece called *Heal Us* by Nicole Beck. Ms. Storm expanded on the conversation held at the beginning of the meeting related to the Ice Pop sculpture, stating that unless something major happens before the end of the week, the Ice Pop sculpture is scheduled to be destroyed at that time.

Lastly, Ms. Storm notified the commissioners that the newly selected Murals on Glass installations have been completed and are located on the south and east entrances of Lincoln Square Mall.

F. OLD BUSINESS

There was none.

G. NEW BUSINESS

Rachel Storm notified the commissioners that they are being asked to vote on the approval of the 115 W. Main St. Mural Selection Committee. Ms. Storm elaborated that this selection committee will consist of the mural location's building owner, Mike Hosier; two members of the Urbana Arts and Culture Commission, Xander Hazel and Robert White; the Director of 40North/88West, Kelly White; a resident of the ward where the mural will be located, Christopher Evans; and a member of the City of Urbana Arts and Culture Staff, Rachel Storm.

At the May 2026 Arts and Culture meeting, a question was raised by Commissioner Hazel asking if the Urbana Arts and Culture Commission should formally approve the subcommittee prior to its inception. Ms. Storm stated that since that meeting, staff have reviewed city code, consulted with the City Clerk, and determined that the Arts and Culture Commission should provide formal approval of the subcommittee and its members. Ms. Storm then gave a detailed summary of the purpose of the mural review committee and the Arts and Culture Commission's role in the process. She further outlined a tentative timeline, aiming for fabrication and installation to be completed by October.

A discussion among the commissioners and Ms. Storm followed. Ultimately, Commissioner Hazel motioned to approve the establishment of the Mural Review Committee as a temporary subcommittee for the 115 W. Main St. Mural Project. Commissioner Hedlund seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

H. ANNOUNCEMENTS

There was none.

I. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5:06 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Hillary L. Ortiz
Executive Assistant



DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Economic Development Division

Urbana Arts & Culture Program Monthly Progress Report

2nd Tuesday of the Month– August 11th, 2026

Prepared by Rachel Lauren Storm, Interim Arts and Culture Coordinator

Introduction

The following Urbana Arts & Culture Program Monthly Progress Report describes activities of the Arts & Culture Program for the Urbana Arts & Culture Commission. The report includes information regarding projects that are in progress, recent requests and recommendations from the public, staff activities, and upcoming events.

Staffing Update

- **Part-time Interim Arts and Culture Coordinator, Rachel Storm**

Dr. Rachel Lauren Storm is currently serving as the part-time Interim Arts & Culture Coordinator for the City of Urbana's Arts & Culture Program. This role builds on her previous leadership within the City of Urbana's arts initiatives, where she developed and implemented programs that expanded access to the arts and supported local artists and organizations. Her initial Interim Arts and Culture Coordinator appointment was until June 30th, but has been renewed. The City of Urbana plans to fill the full-time Arts and Culture Coordinator position as part of overall hiring planning for the City of Urbana, and Rachel will continue to support the program until that time.

- **Welcome new UAC Commissioner, Sheila Parinas**

The Urbana Arts and Culture Commission welcomes new commissioner Sheila Parinas, a registered nurse, experienced grant reviewer, and longtime advocate for arts and culture whose background bridges healthcare, nonprofit leadership, and community engagement. Parinas currently serves as a Registered Nurse at Carle Health and brings more than a decade of experience reviewing federal grants for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. A former board member and executive producer for Station Theatre and current member of the Chicago Lyric Opera Young Professionals Board, her appointment adds valuable expertise in nonprofit governance, grant evaluation, and arts advocacy to the Commission.

- **Urbana Arts and Culture Commission Vacancies**

The Urbana Arts and Culture Commission currently has vacancies and encourages community members with interests in the arts, cultural programming, education, event planning, neighborhood organizing, business, or related fields to apply for service. More information about the Commission and the City's Board and Commission application process is available through the City of Urbana website.

Updates on Current Projects

- Urbana Arts Grants:** The Urbana Arts and Culture Program received nearly 80 applications in this 2026 cycle. The program completed its jury process last month for Tier I, II, and Arts in the Schools grants. A total of \$90,000 was awarded to artists, arts organizations, and festival presenters for creative projects that enrich the lives of Urbana residents and visitors in the 2026 cycle. Projects are already underway and commissioners and members of the public are encouraged to find updates on the Urbana Arts and Culture web and social media pages.
- Urbana Poet Laureate Program:** The 2026-2027 Poet Laureate, Ninetta (Nina) DeBoni (they/them) will offer new programs beginning next month as part of their found poetry workshop series. DeBoni was a recent featured poet opener for an author's event at new Urbana business, Spineless Books, and will be an upcoming interviewee of WEFT radio's Catch the Beat program.
- 115 Main Mural Project:** Following a competitive Call for Artists process, the Mural Review Committee recommends the selection of José Vazquez as the artist for the proposed mural at 115 W. Main Street. Staff have continued internal City planning for the mural's installation, including projected timeline, City resource allocation, and support for the artist and building tenants. The design development phase, which will include collaboration with the property owner, project partners, and community stakeholders, will include an Urbana word association activity with public input gathered virtually and in-person at the Meet the Muralist event on August 19th, 2026. A final mural concept will be presented to the Commission for review at a future meeting prior to installation. Project completion is anticipated in September/early October 2026.
- Meet the Muralist with Jose Vazquez:** On Wednesday, August 19th, 2026, the public is invited to meet the 115 Main Muralist, Jose Vazquez, in the back hallway event area of Common Ground Food Co-Op. The event will feature food, music, and a chance to meet the artist. An Urbana word association community engagement activity will offer attendees and the muralist an opportunity to think together about what makes Urbana a unique place to live, work, and play. This event is free and open to the public.
- Boneyard Creek Crossing Engagement:** This summer has marked an important time for activating the Boneyard Creek Crossing. The installation of *Heal Us* by artist Nicole Beck was successfully completed in June at the site; the Urbana Public Works Department has made substantial landscape improvements; new lighting has been installed at the site; and the Urbana Arts and Culture Program has created new programming and engagement, including film screenings and theatre for young audiences events that have brought community members together. Volunteers have helped sweep sediment and care for this unique greenspace.

- **Get, Set, Romeo and Juliet | Shakespeare in the Park:** The Urbana Arts and Culture Program partnered with Illinois Shakespeare Festival to present *Get, Set, Romeo and Juliet!*, a free 40-minute Theatre for Young Audiences performance. Designed for audiences of all ages, the production introduced Shakespeare's classic story through an engaging adaptation featuring humor, action, and themes of choice, fate, and decision-making. The event provided an accessible opportunity for families and community members to experience live theater in a welcoming public setting. The event featured Urbana business, Popcycle, selling unique sweet treats.
- **PostMark Urbana:** The Urbana Arts and Culture Program partnered with 40 North | 88 West to continue the 2026 PostMark Urbana series with two free, family-friendly events that activated downtown Urbana through arts and cultural programming. On July 11, *Theater Arts!* celebrated the performing arts through live performances, children's activities, and a costume and prop scavenger hunt featuring materials from Krannert Center for the Performing Arts displayed throughout downtown businesses. On August 8, *Back-to-School* welcomed families to the Urbana Free Library for music, games, crafts, bubble activities, a downtown scavenger hunt, and school supply giveaways in partnership with Busey Bank, the Urbana Free Library, and Urbana Park District. Together, these events encouraged community engagement, supported local artists and businesses, and strengthened partnerships among cultural and community organizations.
- **Urbana Fall Fusion Festival:** The Urbana Arts and Culture Program, in partnership with 40 North 88 West, will present the fourth annual Urbana Fall Fusion Festival on October 10, 2026, in downtown Urbana. The free community celebration will feature live music curated by the C-U Folk & Roots Festival, live art demonstrations, performances, children's activities, interactive experiences, and seasonal attractions. The festival continues to activate downtown Urbana through collaborative arts programming that highlights local artists, organizations, businesses, and community partners.
- **Downtown Festival Season:** Staff continue to coordinate with community partners in preparation for a robust fall festival season in downtown Urbana. Confirmed event dates include the new Urbana Bazaar (September 12), Pygmalion Festival (September 24–27), the C-U Folk & Roots Festival (October 8–10), the Urbana Fall Fusion Festival (October 10), the C-U Jazz Festival (October 15–18), and CU Pride Fest (October 17). Collectively, these events are expected to attract thousands of visitors to downtown Urbana while supporting local businesses, artists, musicians, and cultural organizations through a diverse slate of arts, music, and community programming.

Arts & Culture Commissioners and the public are encouraged to get involved with the Urbana Arts & Culture Program's ongoing events and initiatives.