



PUBLIC ART COMMITTEE
Wednesday, May 27, 2026, 5:30 PM
The Bonnie Osler Meeting Room
Regular Meeting
AGENDA

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<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82937800766?pwd=bEBbZzHAUqXSU2JwgQ4jGp1vaDsqVZ.1>

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The Bonnie Osler Meeting Room is located at 101 Adams Avenue, Lewes DE

Agenda Posted: 5/20/2026 Posted By: BJ

**City of Lewes
PUBLIC ART COMMITTEE
Wednesday, April 29, 2026
MINUTES**

The **Public Art Committee** met on **Wednesday, April 29, 2026 at the Bonnie Osler Meeting Room (Formerly the Margaret H. Rollins Meeting Room)**, in accordance with proper notification, with the following members present: Chairperson Heidi Lowe, and Committee Members Denise Emery, Susan Heller, Debora Hansen, Frances Resheske (attending virtually), and Marianne Zweig. Ex-officio, Councilmember Trina-Brown Hicks and Parks and Marina Administrator Giulia Kirsch were also present.

A CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL & ANNOUNCEMENTS: *Chair Heidi Lowe called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM in the Bonnie Osler Meeting Room.*

B. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

B.1. 2026 03 25 Public Art Committee Meeting Minutes

The minutes were presented for approval without notable objection.

Motion to approve the minutes as written was made by Committee Member Debora Hansen and seconded by Committee Member Denise Emery. The motion carried unanimously.

C PRESENTATION

1. Discussion & Review of Coastal Arts Presentation

Mary Alice Kelly, Chairperson of the Lewes 250 Committee, and Mario Pino, Outreach Director for Southern Delaware Orchestra (SODELO), presented a concept for a Coastal Arts and Innovation District formalizing a collaborative arts corridor along the 12-mile stretch between Lewes and Milton.

Ms. Kelly provided background on how the idea originated from shared observations during Lewes 250 events — namely, a strong community desire for sustained cultural programming. The presenters noted that they had already approached the Town of Milton, which responded enthusiastically. The core concept draws on successful multi-city arts district models from around the country, with one example cited spanning 320 miles in Colorado.

Mr. Pino outlined the strategic rationale: currently, individual artists and organizations operate independently, with varying marketing capacity and event schedules that can create either/or choices for audiences. A coordinated district structure would enable shared marketing resources, synchronized event calendars, joint grant applications (including potential National Endowment for the Arts funding), and greater economic impact — particularly in the off-season to drive year-round tourism and keep local businesses vibrant.

The presenters described a proposed governance model involving a unified management entity, potentially a 501(c)(3), with board representation from both cities' leadership, arts organizations, and public art committees. Ms. Kelly and Mr. Pino characterized their own role as business development facilitators rather than owners of the initiative, emphasizing that the cities themselves should ultimately own and direct the effort.

Committee members engaged substantively with the presentation. Chair Lowe raised a question about the framing of Lewes' identity, suggesting that rather than leading with "historic and maritime," the district should foreground Lewes' existing and growing art scene — its galleries, art tours, and performing arts events. The presenters

acknowledged this and indicated the language was intentionally general to invite exactly this kind of input. City Councilmember Trina Brown-Hicks raised practical considerations around city jurisdiction and resource constraints, noting that city funds and city-directed efforts must remain focused within city limits, and that any multi-city structure would need to carefully define where each municipality's responsibilities begin and end — including matters such as policing and infrastructure.

Several members offered constructive ideas for the initiative, including leveraging already-established calendar events such as First Fridays and farmers markets; hosting pop-up performances and "porch fest"-style events; utilizing the waterway shuttle and bike trail as connective tissue; and engaging student artists to broaden participation and draw family audiences. It was noted that Dogfish Head Brewery and the University of Delaware were potential partners. Committee Member Zweig suggested early outreach to the Delaware Arts Alliance and the Delaware Division of the Arts for advocacy and funding guidance, and confirmed that the presenters had already been in contact with the Alliance.

A recurring theme in the discussion was the concern about organizational bandwidth. Several committee members noted that their existing commitments — to DAC, Art in Bloom, Lewes and Bloom, and other organizations — were already at capacity, and asked how this initiative would reduce rather than add to their workload. The presenters responded that the intent is for Ms. Kelly and Mr. Pino to manage day-to-day operations, with committee and board members participating at a strategic level — perhaps quarterly meetings once the structure is established.

The committee expressed general support for the concept, affirmed the importance of starting small and building incrementally rather than attempting to "boil the ocean," and agreed that identifying how successful districts in other communities were launched and sustained would be a valuable next step. No formal action was taken; the presentation was received as an informational and exploratory discussion.

D. OLD BUSINESS:

1. Discussion and possible action on 2026 Mural.

Chair Lowe presented a proposal for a mural by artist Michael Rosado on the exterior wall of the train station building (parking lot side), in continuation of the established mural program. The proposed funding breakdown is as follows: \$6,000 from the Public Art Committee, \$6,000 from Art in Bloom, and \$6,250 from LJRBA and a private donor (comprising \$1,250 from LJRBA and \$5,000 from the private donor), for a total of approximately \$18,250. The mural would depict a scene of a train arriving at a station.

It was clarified that because the Rollins Center is a city asset located within a park, the proposal must receive approval from both Parks and Recreation and City Council before any commitment can be made. City Councilmember Brown-Hicks recommended that a representative from each of the three contributing organizations be present at any Parks and Rec meeting to respond to questions. The committee discussed the order in which approvals should be sought, and while the precise sequence was not conclusively established, it was generally agreed that Parks and Recreation should be approached first, followed by City Council if needed, and that staff would verify the correct process.

Tony Boyd-Heron (Art in Bloom representative, attending as a guest) noted that artist Michael Rosado had a potential availability window in July or August, but acknowledged

that the approval process had not been anticipated when that timeline was discussed. It was agreed that the project may realistically extend into 2027 given the required approval steps.

Motion

Motion to recommend that the proposed Michael Rosado train mural move forward to Parks and Recreation and City Council was made by Committee Member Emery and seconded by Committee Member Hansen. The motion carried unanimously.

The committee noted that a separate vote committing the \$6,000 in Public Art Committee funding would not be taken at this time, as the project's approval through the city process must first be confirmed.

2. Recap and continued discussion on the 2026 Public Art Committee Bus Tour.

The committee reflected on the spring 2026 bus tour, which was broadly regarded as a success in terms of participant experience. The group visited two sites with private docent-led tours, enjoyed a box lunch, and made a stop in Smyrna. The bus service was well-regarded, and the committee expressed interest in using the same driver, Drew, for future trips. The bus accommodated 22 participants.

Discussion centered on the relatively low attendance, which surprised several committee members given the outreach efforts undertaken. Chair Lowe noted that over 3,500 emails were sent and the event was posted across more than 20 Facebook pages and various organizational networks. It was acknowledged that other organizations, such as the Rehoboth Art League, have a policy of not forwarding external emails to their membership lists, which limits reach. The broader observation was made that low response rates to widely distributed communications are not unique to this committee — a pattern that appears consistent across other events and sectors.

Several process improvements were identified for future tours. First, a post-tour survey should be sent to attendees — brief (three questions or fewer) and requiring no login — to capture feedback and suggestions for future destinations. Second, attendees should be asked to share future event notices with interested friends, helping to build a word-of-mouth network from a confirmed list of engaged participants. Third, it was noted that the non-refundable payment structure, required relatively far in advance, was a deterrent for some potential attendees, particularly older residents uncertain of their availability. This should be revisited for future tours.

Finally, staff noted that scheduling the bus tour in April created difficulties due to the city's fiscal year beginning on April 1, complicating the timely issuance of checks. The committee agreed that March or May would be preferable timing for future tours.

Financially, the tour came in slightly over the break-even target by approximately \$100. It was agreed that Committee Member Hansen and Committee Member Resheske would collaborate on drafting the post-tour survey, and that a thank-you note would be sent to the bus service on Public Art Committee stationery. The committee reaffirmed its goal of conducting at least one bus tour per year.

3. Continued discussion and possible action regarding the 2026 public art installation.

Chair Lowe reported that sculptor Wally Dion is no longer able to complete the previously planned sculpture due to his inability to obtain the required insurance

coverage. While the committee expressed disappointment given the two-year investment of time and a written grant, the decision was accepted, and the committee moved forward with a new concept.

Chair Lowe presented a revised proposal developed in collaboration with local artist Nate Landis. The installation would consist of a series of aluminum silhouettes representing significant but less widely known figures from Lewes' history, intended to be installed in George H. P. Smith Park — the same location originally planned for the Dion sculpture. The figures would be cut from half-inch marine-grade aluminum, mounted on a flat 2-inch border frame secured to the ground with screws, and viewable from both sides without a defined front or back. The silhouettes are designed to create an interesting visual line that draws viewers in before they approach to read the accompanying plaques.

The eight figures currently proposed span from 1756 to 2023 and include: Cato Lewis (shipbuilder and business owner), Elsie Dunning Wingo (first Black nurse at Beebe Hospital), Lydia Fisher (who brought the Beach House to Lewes, originally a DuPont), Sarah Fisher Ames (artist and suffragist), Ronald "Beau" Gooch (former Chief of Police), Betsy Rawls (professional golfer who spent over 20 years in Lewes), Harold W. T. Pernel (nationally recognized photographer from the area), Theodore "Ted" Freeman (astronaut from Lewes), and Ben Wiltbank (baseball player from Lewes). Chair Lowe noted that a list of approximately 50 candidates had been compiled, and members could suggest additional names for consideration.

Chair Lowe explained the thematic intent: these are individuals who were shaped by Lewes and who, in turn, shaped Lewes — a deliberate choice to highlight people not commonly featured in existing historical narratives. Each silhouette will have an individual plaque identifying the figure, and a primary plaque will describe the installation as a whole. A QR code will be included linking to additional content on the city website, potentially including audio histories.

Discussion touched on the following points: Committee Member Lowe suggested Absalom Jones as a potential addition; the Chair noted the extensive candidate list and invited further name submissions. City Councilmember Brown-Hicks observed that Mr. Gooch's surviving family members — including a wife — live in the community, and several members suggested that, as a courtesy, the families of recently deceased figures with living spouses or partners be contacted in advance of installation. Chair Lowe indicated she would follow up with those contacts. It was also noted that the installation is not intended to be permanent; after the exhibition period, the city or the Lewes Historical Society may choose to retain it, otherwise it will be dismantled.

Regarding the process, Councilmember Brown-Hicks advised that since the grant was already in progress and Parks and Recreation had been informally advised of the pivot to a new concept, a conversation with Parks & Recreation Commissioner Mark Shue would be appropriate prior to the May 18 Parks and Recreation meeting. It was confirmed that the project does not need to go to Mayor and City Council, as it is not a permanent installation.

The estimated cost is \$9,000, consistent with the existing grant. Chair Lowe noted she would submit an updated project description to staff by Friday to support the grant resubmission to the Delaware Division of the Arts (DDOA).

No formal vote was required at this stage; the committee's consensus was to proceed with the Landis collaboration and advance the project through the Parks and Recreation process.

4. Continued discussion and possible action regarding the 2027 public art installation and contract.

Chair Lowe noted that a contributing factor to the breakdown of the Dyon contract was that the formal contract had not been provided to the artist early enough in the process. To avoid a recurrence, Chair Lowe indicated she would promptly provide a copy of the standard contract to the artist being considered for the 2027 installation, even if project details are not yet fully finalized, so the artist can review the terms in advance.

E. NEW BUSINESS:

1. Discussion and possible action regarding Public Art Committee Workshop.

The committee discussed scheduling a public strategic planning workshop. It was confirmed that because any gathering of a quorum of committee members constitutes a public meeting under Delaware law, the workshop must be open to the public and properly noticed. The Chair suggested it could nonetheless function as a working session — brainstorming current capabilities, near-term goals, and longer-term aspirations — while still allowing for public comment on the agenda.

Councilmember Brown-Hicks suggested incorporating a brief public education component on what public art is, noting that a prior committee workshop at the University of Delaware had been well received for this purpose. The committee agreed this was a worthwhile addition.

The committee discussed timing and preferred a summer date — either late June or July — to avoid conflicts with spring programming and the holiday season. A 10:00 AM start time was agreed upon, with a duration of approximately 90 minutes to two hours. The committee agreed that a morning meeting, potentially with refreshments, held in the Bonnie Osler Meeting Room would be appropriate. Chair Lowe asked Ms. Kirsch to identify several available midweek dates in June and July for member consideration, to be circulated by email for a response (individual reply, not reply-all).

2. Discussion and possible action regarding proposing a community bulletin board on Second Street.

Committee Member Hansen raised the idea of establishing a dedicated community bulletin board in a high-foot-traffic downtown location — ideally on or near Second Street — as a more prominent and reliable venue for publicizing Public Art Committee events and other city-related programming. The proposal envisions a managed, regularly updated board that would be available to city-affiliated organizations, with submission and key-holding managed through the committee or city staff.

Discussion acknowledged several challenges. Councilmember Member Brown-Hicks noted that placement on a public street involves regulatory considerations — including proximity rules and right-of-way requirements — that fall outside the committee's direct purview. It was concluded that a community bulletin board on a public street is likely outside the lane of the Public Art Committee, and that identifying the appropriate city department or body to advance this idea would require further research. Ms. Kirsch indicated they would investigate which department would have jurisdiction and report back; the committee agreed this follow-up did not need to flow back through the Public

Art Committee.

Alternatives discussed included sandwich boards (noting potential Bike-Ped restrictions), leveraging the existing bulletin board at Zwaanendael Park, exploring whether a building owner on Second Street might host a board on an exterior wall, and engaging the Chamber of Commerce as a possible partner given the business district location. No formal action was taken.

F. PUBLIC COMMENT:

Councilmember Brown-Hicks offered the following announcements on behalf of the Lewes African American Heritage Commission:

May 30, 2026 — *Two events co-sponsored by the Lewes African American Heritage Commission and Lewes 250: a dedication ceremony for the Johnnie Walker Beach interpretive sign at 10:00 AM, and the "Blue Moon" evening event at the American Legion from 6:00–10:00 PM, honoring the Happy Day Club with live music from the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, food, and one complimentary Blue Moon beverage. Tickets are available via QR code and have already exceeded 100 in sales.*

June 27, 2026 — *Juneteenth celebration in George H. P. Smith Park (rescheduled from June 19 to avoid conflicts with Rehoboth and Georgetown events), running from 11:00 AM to 6:00 PM with vendor setup beginning at 10:00 AM. City committees and commissions are invited to host informational tables. Sign-up is available via QR code on the Lewes African American Heritage Commission website. Chair noted this would be a natural opportunity to promote the new public art installation, which is anticipated to be in place by that date.*

September 19, 2026 — *Johnnie Walker Beach Day.*

G. ADJOURNMENT:

Motion to adjourn was made by Committee Member Emery and seconded by Committee Member Heller. The motion carried unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 6:50 PM.

Minutes submitted by: Jeffery Coover, Administrative Support Specialist

Minutes generated by HeyGov.ai

Transcripts available upon request



The Web

By the Open Space Art Collective

Origin of the group/idea

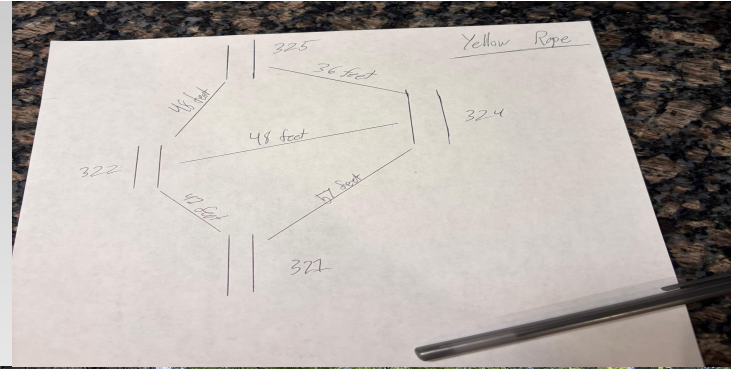
We all wanted to create a spot where we could just hangout as a group out in the nature where we couldn't be bothered. We saw some posts online that interested us in doing this so we found a little area to see if it was doable. Once we started we realized we could create tons of patterns with it, if we wanted to and create different colors and images. Once we figured out how to do it we just kept getting larger and larger and just kept on building and building it.

Why we want to do this

Well first we all enjoy spending time outside and just getting out and doing something. Something like this allows to have a project we know needs to get done over the summer which will keep us occupied. And we know it's for the city of Lewes which we've all grown up in so its like giving back. Some of us our also in a group called National Honors Society and were hoping we could get some hours from doing this. It's a fun, easy, and cool piece of art we love to do.

Where we hope to do it

In between blockhouse pond and beebe hospital. These trees are much further apart from our first design. We are going to need around \$4,000 for materials.



How is this art

This is art because throughout the web we can use any of the colors we want. We can string different patterns into it different images into and to make it look how web like it to. We can make it bright colors soft colors. We can do lots of different things to make it looks lots of different ways.

Previous project

This is the first web we created. We built this with 10 people in the span of a week. And we have used over 1.5 miles of rope.

Our costs were around 1,000



The knots we use



The rope we use

We are using a 550 paracord. Each 1000 feet is 62\$ plus shipping..



☰  ☰

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550 Paracord in Black

★★★★★ 4 reviews

SKU: 2836-550

Weight: 5.00 lb

\$62.00