**Wendell Appearance Commission**

**Board Room**

**Board Conference Room, 409 Landing View Drive, Wendell, NC, 27591**

**Regular Session Agenda**

**Tuesday, September 8, 2026 @ 7:00 PM**

## CALL TO ORDER

- Ethics Agreements
- Elections of Chair and Vice Chair

## 1. ADJUSTMENT AND APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA & MINUTES

1.a February 17, 2026 Appearance Commission Meeting Minutes

Staff Contact: Jeannine Ngwira
Planner II

jngwira@townofwendellnc.gov

## 2. NEW BUSINESS

- Timeline and Update for Halloween/Holiday Decorating Contests

## ADJOURN

**AGENDA ITEM NO. 1.a**

# Item Cover Page

**APPEARANCE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM REPORT**

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| **DATE:** | September 8, 2026 |
| **SUBMITTED BY:** | Jeannine Ngwira , Planning |
| **ITEM TYPE:** | Minutes |
| **AGENDA SECTION:** | ADJUSTMENT AND APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA & MINUTES |
| **SUBJECT:** | February 17, 2026 Appearance Commission Meeting Minutes |

**ATTACHMENTS:**
2.17.26 AC Meeting Minutes_Draft.pdf

# Appearance Commission Meeting
# February 17, 2026
# Minutes

**Members Present**: Jordan Russell, Marjorie Lynch, Natasha Emmanuel and Andrea Burnham

**Members Absent**: Kaitlyn Sanderson and Katie Rossi

**Staff Present:** Bryan Coates Planning Director and Jeannine Ngwira Planner II

**Meeting Called to Order & Welcome:**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. A quorum was established per the bylaws.

1. **Adjustment and Approval of the Agenda and October 6, 2025 Minutes**

   Andrea Burnham made a motion to approve the agenda and minutes. Jordan Russell seconded the motion.

2. **New Business**

   a. **Public Art Plan**

   *Mr. Coates gave the following presentation:*

## Executive Summary

The Town of Wendell Public Art Master Plan establishes a comprehensive vision and framework for integrating public art throughout the town as a catalyst for identity, pride, economic vitality, and enhanced quality of life. Developed through town engagement in 2024-2025, this plan reflects public support and provides strategic direction for the next 7-10 years of the town's cultural development.

## Plan Vision

To celebrate Wendell as a vibrant arts community that celebrates its agricultural heritage and small-town charm while embracing growth, where public art serves as a unifying force that connects neighborhoods and generations.

## Five Strategic Goals

The plan is organized around five interconnected goals that emerged directly from stakeholder and community input:

**Goal 1: Build Community Identity and Pride** through neighborhood-specific projects, storytelling initiatives, and intergenerational collaborations that bridge Wendell's established residents and newcomers.

**Goal 2: Enhance Public Spaces and Beautification** by integrating art into downtown revitalization, parks and greenways, gateway entrances, and functional infrastructure improvements.

**Goal 3: Support Economic Development and Tourism** by expanding the Mural Trail, supporting local businesses through art partnerships, leveraging major community events, and attracting creative businesses.

**Goal 4: Build Strategic Partnerships and Regional Connections** through collaboration with the United Arts Council, private sector engagement, and artist professional networks.

**Goal 5: Establish Art Funding Policy and Management Systems** by diversifying funding sources, integrating art into development processes, establishing efficient program management, and planning for long-term sustainability.

## Town and County Plan Alignment

- Blueprint Wendell 2030: Preserving Character While Embracing Growth
- Wendell Strategic Plan: Building Community Pride and Quality of Life
- Wake County Cultural Plan: Regional Coordina9on and Resource Sharing
- Downtown Streetscape Master Plan: Timing Art with Infrastructure



## Plan Development Process

### *Phase 1: Initial Research and Foundation*

A designated group of staff from the Town of Wendell gathered information and collaborative feedback to develop the Wendell Public Art Master Plan. The first step was to gather information on other public art master plans. Staff communicated with other towns and studied other master plan documents to understand best practices and successful implementation strategies.

### *Phase 2: Engagement and Data Collection*

*Public Engagement:* The community survey garnered significant participation with approximately 314 completed responses from residents, stakeholders, and visitors. The results revealed overwhelming support for public art, with 96% of respondents wanting more public art in the town.

*Business Engagement:* A targeted business survey was conducted with 14 local business owners and managers representing diverse sectors including retail, restaurant/culinary, professional services, and entertainment. This survey revealed that 50% of businesses were very interested in having public art installed on or near their properties, with 43% having previously considered commissioning murals or public art.

*Supplemental Engagement:* Recognizing the need for specific expertise in public art planning and limited time that staff had for planning, the Town of Wendell engaged Cultural Planning Group (CPG) to assist in finalizing the Public Art Master Plan. CPG conducted additional stakeholder engagement and expanded the current public art plan draft and developed comprehensive guidelines.

### *Phase 3: Plan Development*

Based on the extensive community input, professional consultation, and strategic analysis, the planning team developed focused goals and strategies. Public art guidelines, and ordinances.

### *Phase 4: Plan Implementation*

It is anticipated the plan will be adopted by the Town of Wendell in November 2025. Implementation for the plan goals and funding policies may be sectioned into 3-4 phases over 7-10 years.

## Engagement Results Highlights:

- ***What impact the community wants to celebrate through public art…***
  - Agricultural heritage (tobacco farming history)
  - Small-town charm with entrepreneurial spirit

- ***Strong Support for Public Art:***
  - 96% want more public art in Wendell
  - 77% consider public art extremely or very important in streetscapes
  - 78% consider art extremely or very important in new community facilities

- ***Preferred Art Types:***
  - Murals, Landscape Art, Music/Performance, Community Art and Architectural Art

- ***Priority Locations:***
  - Downtown, Town Parks and Facilities, Gateways/Entrances and Greenways/Public Trails

- ***Primary Motivations:***
  - Beautification, Community Gathering, Local Identity, Inspiration and Economic Development

## Engagement Results Highlights Cont.

- ***Business Interest and Support: (Small sample)***
  - 50% very interested in public art near their businesses
  - 43% have considered commissioning art
  - 76% interested in murals
  - 57% see enhanced cultural identity and community pride as top benefits
  - 43% expect increased foot traffic and beautification benefits

- ***Business Concerns: (Small sample)***
  - Maintenance responsibilities (38%)
  - Content appropriateness (31%)
  - Potential vandalism (15%)
  - Impact on building structure (15%)



## Plan Goals

- ***GOAL 1: Build Community Identity and Pride***

  1.1 Strengthen Neighborhood Identity

  1.2 Create a Community Storytelling Initiative

  1.3 Implement Intergenerational Art Projects



## Plan Goals

- ***GOAL 2: Enhance Public Spaces and Beautification***

  2.1 Integrate Art into Downtown Revitalization

  2.2 Enhance Parks and Recreational Spaces

  2.3 Beautify Gateway Entrances and Major Corridors

  2.4 Improve Functional Infrastructure Through Art



## Plan Goals

- ***GOAL 3: Support Economic Development and Tourism***

    3.1 Develop Art Tourism Infrastructure

    3.2 Support Local Business Through Art Partnerships

    3.3 Leverage Major Events for Art Programming

    3.4 Attract Creative Businesses

## Plan Goals

- ***GOAL 4: Build Strategic Partnerships and Regional Connections***

    4.1 Build Regional Arts Collborations

    4.2 Engage Private Sector Partnerships

    4.3 Foster Artist and Creative Professional Networks

## Plan Goals

- ***GOAL 5: Establish Art Funding Policy and Management Systems***

    5.1 Diversify Funding Sources

    5.2 Integrate Art into Development Processes

    5.3 Establish Efficient Program Management

    5.4 Plan for Long-Term Sustainability

## Potential Public Art Sites

***Priority Areas for Installation***

**Tier 1 – Near-Term:**

- **Downtown Core** - Integration with Streetscape Master Plan
- **Third Street Apollo** - Large performance space with art integration potential
- **Main Street Park** - Central gathering space
- **Private Development Integration** - Developer collaboration projects including Town Gateways.

**Tier 2 - Medium-Term:**

- **Greenway System** - Sculpture trail development
- **Pleasant Grove** - New development public spaces
- **Hollybrook Park** - Community recreation area

**Tier 3 - Long-Term:**

- **Senior Center** - Enhanced programming space with existing kiln
- **Neighborhood Entrances** - Community identity markers
- **Alleyway Activation** - Downtown connectivity and discovery
- **School Partnerships** - Educational art integration

**Discussion:**

Marjorie Lynch asked where the Third Street Apollo project will be located.

Mr. Coates explained that it will be in the old Ed Morrell building located on East Third Street between North Pine Street and North Hollybrook Road. It is 150,000 square feet of warehouse space that will be converted into office, retail, restaurant and performing arts spaces.

Ms. Lynch asked if it is happening now.

Mr. Coates said the plans are currently in review.

Ms. Lynch asked if the new senior center will be an expansion of the current community center.

Mr. Coates said that the new Carver Center will be used for senior programs and the new recreation center will also have senior programs.

Ms. Lynch asked where the staff will be for the senior center.

Mr. Coates explained that the town will be integrating facilities to include all generations. There may possibly be a senior center on its own, but we will be using all facilities for all populations.

Ms. Lynch asked if the library will be moved into the current community center building.

Mr. Coats said that the current community center will be demolished and a new library will be built by Wake County and will have Public Art. He explained that all of the Town facilities are too small and need to be updated to go with our growth.

Ms. Lynch asked how Mr. Coates felt about the community engagement response to the Public Art Plan.

Mr. Coates said that he always would like more public engagement, but the response was very positive.

Natasha Emmanuel asked if the Town gives incentives for completing surveys.

Mr. Coates said that we don't at this time, but we would have considered new strategies if the response wasn't good.

Ms. Emmanuel asked if there will be more security for Lake Myra School when the new county park opens.

Mr. Coates said that it is a county facility, so he doesn't know.

Ms. Emmanuel asked what is going on with the building next to the bridal shop.

Mr. Coates said that the building has no access to water or sewer and no entrance or exit at the back of the building, which causes a fire code issue as well.

Ms. Lynch asked how the Town can incentivize business owners to participate in fixing the issues.

Mr. Coates said that we have a Downtown Improvement Grant.

Jordan Russel made a motion to recommend approval of the Public Art Plan. Andrea Burnham seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

3. **Planning Director's Update**

Mr. Coates gave an overview of current projects that are in different stages of development approval.

4. **Adjourn to Next Regularly Scheduled Meeting**
    - Andrea Burnam made a motion to adjourn. Jordan Russel seconded. The meeting adjourned at 8:21 pm.