



City of Biddeford
Public Art Commission

September 10, 2026 at 5:00 PM
J. Richard Martin Community Center Room 2 & Teams

Join Teams Meeting Online
Meeting ID: 252 088 461 632 645
Passcode: xW3XF3Zs

Or call in by phone: +1 872-242-8054
Phone conference ID: 560 646 103#

1. Call to Order
2. Approval of Minutes
 - 2.a Public Art Commission August 2026 meeting minutes
3. Discussion Items
 - 3.a Memorial Discussion Update
 - Review of Draft Recommendations, included with August minutes
 - Proposal for utility box painting
 - 3.b Commission Goals 2026-2027
 - Master Plan – update from August 24 Policy Committee Meeting
 - Commission Member Status – Vacancies: 1 FT seat and 1 Youth Seat
 - Commission Logo
 - Budget
 - 3.c Five Points Sign Project with DDC
 - 3.d Remaining ArtWalk dates this season:
 - Friday, September 18, 2026
 - Friday, October 16, 2026

4. Review of Ongoing Projects: featured list of potential projects for the PAC

4.a • 41 Main Street potential project

- Tiny Art
- City Museum / Museum Crawl: Fire Dept, St Louis Alumni /LaKermesse, BCHC
- BCHC RFP support for public art commission
- DEI Committee accessibility signage - public bathrooms (City of Portland example)
- Plein air painting downtown event
- Scott Joslin - Mills Mural proposal
- Traffic Calming Interventions: safe crosswalk initiative, etc.
- Tactical urbanism, or “quick builds” – temporary speedbumps and traffic delineation posts
- Pop-up bike lanes
- Sharing the Stories of Biddeford: wheat paste mural example with QR code narrative
- Merc Building
- Wayfinding signage at parks and trails
- Support/Promotion of Five Points project stewarded by the DDC
- Conduct a training in partnership with the Chamber on how to bring art to your space
- Biddeford Community Gardens utility box

5. Other Business

6. Adjourn

7. Next meeting: October 8, 5:00PM J. Richard Martin Community Center, Room 2

**Biddeford Public Art Commission
Meeting Minutes – August 13, 2026**

In attendance:

- Jessica Muise, Chair
- Commission: Rebecca Cote, Braden Drypolcher, and Beth Whitney
- Staff Liaison: Erika Dube, Deputy Recreation Director
- Council Liaison: Councilor Abigail Woods
- Guests:
 - Raquel Miller
 - Carolyn Schmidtke
- Absences: Coco Corral
- *Two Commission Vacancies: Student Liaison and one Voting Member*

1. Meeting Called to Order: 5:04PM

2. Approval of July 2026 Meeting Minutes:

- Motion to Approve: Braden Drypolcher
- Seconded: Rebecca Cote
- Discussion: none
- Vote: unanimously approved

Discussion Items

3.a Memorial Discussion: the Mayor has asked for the commission “to work alongside city staff and public safety officials to help guide next steps regarding remembrance, preservation, public art, and the use of shared public spaces.” In response to this request, the commission conducted a two-hour discussion during the August meeting. Please see the included documents that provide background and context on the request as well as a framework for the discussion, and the draft recommendations prepared post-meeting by Chair Jessica Muise and Councilor Abigail Woods that summarize the discussion and were provided to city administration on Tuesday, August 18th.

- **Statement from BPAC Chair, Jessica Muise**
- **Public Art Commission Memorial Recommendations Draft 8.18.26**

3.b Commission Goals: *agenda item tabled.*

3.c Five Points Sign Project with DDC: *agenda item tabled.*

3.d City Hall Gallery Update: Documentary Photography Exhibit of City Theater’s production of “The Secret Garden” by Bethany Cox, local documentary photographer. Exhibit will be installed on Wednesday, August 19th and available through October 14; viewing times are during City Hall hours and during Biddeford Artwalk.

3.e August 14th Fringe Fest: Erika Dube prepared tabling activities for Fringe Fest including an interactive public survey, children’s activity station, and public art trading cards. Items were presented to commission members and a logistics discussion occurred about set up/breakdown and equipment.

4.a Review of projects list: *agenda item tabled.*

5. Other Business: N/A

6. Meeting Adjourned: 6:59PM

- Motion to Adjourn: Councilor Woods
- Seconded: Brayden Drypolcher
- Vote: Unanimously approved

Next Meeting: Thursday, September 10, 2026 at 5:00PM. Location: Room 2, J. Richard Martin Community Center – 189 Alfred Street

Thank you to Mayor LaFountain for asking the Public Art commission “to work alongside City staff and public safety professionals to help guide next steps regarding remembrance, preservation, public art, and the use of shared public spaces.”

We look forward to working in partnership with city staff, elected officials, other committees and commissions, and Biddeford residents in a process that I hope we will define together. As the Mayor stated, “That process must balance remembrance, free expression, public safety, accessibility, and the many ways residents use our shared spaces.”

One month ago, one of our community members, Johan Sebastián Durán Guerrero, was killed by an ICE agent in our streets. Since then, our community has created temporary memorials to process, grieve, and remember together - at the site where he was killed, on the corner of Hill and Pool Streets, and at Mechanics Park. There has also been a lot of public comment and emails submitted to the Mayor and Council requesting a permanent memorial in honor of Johan. I wanted to share some background that I think is helpful for this commission and the public to be aware of as we move into discussion.

During the city council meeting on July 21st, where the council opened the floor to public comment, the idea of a permanent memorial was raised; specifically a stone planter at the corner of Hill and Pool. An offer was made by community members to fund and coordinate such an effort, and the idea was brought to the family. The response was that the family does not want a permanent memorial at this time.

The memorial mural recently completed on the corner of Alfred and Main, does have the family's blessing. The artists Ryan Adams, Erica Sedler, and Rachel Gloria Adams, coordinated permissions with the property owner, and sought the family's approval throughout the design process, using an image the family selected in the final design.

Ideas such as a memorial plaque, bench, or tree, or naming a street or square after Johan, have also been raised by community members. Typically for a permanent memorial for an individual, the decisions and timeline of the family lead the process; in other cities this is handled through a memorial gift program, and often takes the family 1 - 2 years to request something like this.

While this event has affected all of us, in addition to public safety needs, any process we engage in should prioritize the following, in this order:

- 1) The wishes of the Guerrero family: The family has asked that nothing be done in Johan's name without their express permission. They have not requested a permanent memorial at this time, and their wishes should be included in this process.
- 2) The perspectives of those most affected: our immigrant neighbors. Our values in our Master Plan include cultural equity. You may have heard the phrase “Nothing about us without us” that arose out of disability equity movements; meaning for this situation that no decisions about memorial, remembrance, or public art in this space should be made without the people most affected at the table.

- 3) The broader community needs and desires: Mechanics Park belongs to all of Biddeford, and public input will be vital throughout this process.

Given all this I would suggest the following to be considered in our discussion:

Let the family's wishes determine next steps for a permanent memorial in Johan's name.

For temporary memorials: focus immediately on safe stewardship. The process should also carefully consider who documents, collects, preserves, returns, archives, or displays memorial materials, and who decides. This could look like convening a small group that includes representatives of affected immigrant communities, current memorial caretakers/community organizations, Public Art Commission members, and appropriate City staff to develop separate stewardship and transition plans for Mechanics Park and Hill/Pool. Ways that community members can continue to process and grieve need to be explored in coordination with residents and key community organizations as part of a transition process for these temporary memorials. As a commission I would ask us to look closely at the public engagement tools we have at our disposal, the details are laid out in our commission handbooks, and our draft guidelines in the Master Plan.

Removal or major alteration should generally wait until a transition process is established, except where immediate safety requires action. If action is required, I would follow the current process generated by caring community members and local organizations, where materials are being carefully sorted, stored, preserved, and archived: messages to the family would be saved to be given to them, flowers that dry well would be carefully sorted and preserved where possible; flowers that cannot be saved are composted at the Biddeford Community gardens; fabric strips with community wishes incorporated into the community quilt; other items including signs would be added to the archive at the Library; even the plastic has been saved to potentially include in a future public art project, like has been done by artists in response to the tragic shooting in Lewiston. The family will be contacted and has the right of first refusal for all archived materials. The remaining items can be added to the Library's permanent collection which would mean these items are available for free for the public for years to come.

There are two temporary memorials, one at Hill/Pool and one at Mechanics Park, and I believe they need different responses.

The activities in Mechanics Park in recent weeks have raised questions and concerns. There is a combination of activities happening in that park, including protests, gatherings, and temporary memorial activities. Accumulation of items left at Mechanics Park meant that City staff needed to clean up broken glass and other safety hazards. Items City staff have removed from the site have been safely stored and are now in the Library's archives. City staff and Council have heard feedback from residents that Mechanics Park does not feel like a welcoming and inclusive space at this time. While activities there may intend to support our immigrant community, I think it is important to reflect on how some activities cause unintended consequences or harm.

For future temporary and permanent memorials, I think this commission should continue to prioritize work on the Master Plan, reviewing the draft and adding any sections to establish clear processes for temporary and permanent memorials moving forward, as well as what happens when a memorial appears without an application, arising from death, tragedy, or community trauma. I don't think we can treat spontaneous memorials like ordinary temporary public art.

The Master Plan draft currently covers:

- Project-specific review panels and community/site representation.
- City/technical expertise alongside community participation.
- Safety, ADA, traffic, maintenance and site considerations.
- Temporary installations of up to one year, with possible extension.
- Documentation/archiving of temporary work.

I hope that moving forward with reviewing and implementing the Master Plan can help guide new community proposals for memorials and other public art projects, creating a framework with adequate representation from those most affected in decision making, a clear path for broad and diverse community input, and clarity for City staff's role to advise on safety, ADA, traffic, snow removal, materials, etc.

While the Master Plan process is expected to take some time to move through Policy Committee and Council approval, we could develop a simple interim City protocol for spontaneous memorials that establishes responsibility for safety, communication, documentation, preservation, and decisions about transition. Any significant change to the existing memorials should include a clear communication plan whenever circumstances allow.

To bring this back to our discussion and task for this meeting, the Mayor has asked us to "consider this issue in an official, but ultimately advisory, capacity and provide recommendations to the City regarding an appropriate framework for temporary and permanent memorials on City property. This could include guidance on how temporary memorials should be accommodated and managed, how and when their duration should come to an end, the circumstances under which a more permanent memorial might be considered, and a thoughtful process for evaluating future memorial requests on City property.

There is also a more immediate role where the Commission's assistance may be valuable. Following consultation with our public safety staff, and provided that any involvement is consistent with their guidance, the Commission may consider a role in helping steward the temporary memorials that have formed in recent weeks. In coordination with City staff, this could include assisting with their care, upkeep, and thoughtful curation, as well as helping determine how materials might eventually be respectfully collected, preserved, documented, or otherwise handled when the time comes for these temporary memorials to transition."

I have begun consultations with City departments to coordinate these efforts, along with gathering information from the Library, and other residents to inform our discussion tonight.

Public Art Commission - Response to Mayor LaFountain's Request

PAC Discussion Summary August 13 Meeting

The members of the Biddeford Public Art Commission are deeply appreciative that you have asked for and value input regarding next stages of the temporary memorials. It's something very special about Biddeford city staff and officials, and we wanted to say that specifically.

We had a wide-ranging conversation at our commission meeting on Thursday, and eventually worked to separate the short-term and long-term response. We see the work of the commission being focused on the development of long-term policy and ordinance to help identify and define a response pathway to any potential future event. The commission agreed that this work falls under the purview of the group and falls in line with our draft Master Plan, allowing us to incorporate more relevant guidance into that plan so that we will be more prepared for emerging memorials and needs in Biddeford's future.

The Commission's founding ordinance (Sec. 2-337.14) defines public art broadly, including "other expressive media," but does not explicitly name memorials as a category, unlike the Portland guidelines our Master Plan was modeled on. In the weeks since Johan Sebastián Durán Guerrero's death, Mechanics Park and the intersection of Hill and Pool Streets have become sites of spontaneous, community-driven remembrance: chalk messages, flowers, signage, and other tributes that fall outside any existing City process. The Commission has been asked by the Mayor to help guide the City's approach to these spaces, and brings this framework to the Policy Committee for initial guidance before further development.

Regarding the current community response to the tragic loss of our neighbor, the commission also discussed the temporary memorials at Hill/Pool and at Mechanics Park, knowing that staff are open to suggestions on the care and upkeep of these sites.

Hill/Pool is a more reflective and private site as it is where the shooting occurred. This led to a spontaneous memorializing of the site by neighbors and beyond. It is on both private and public property (private being the hedge surrounding the multiunit house, public being the sidewalk and street). The Mechanics Park memorial began as a site for protest the day the shooting occurred, for a combination of factors - in particular, proximity to the shooting and more space for gathering.

Several updates were shared with the commission about the community and staff work already being done at both sites, and the differences in approach between the sites. Mechanics Park has a combination of activities, including protests, community events and gatherings, and temporary memorial activities, and city staff have been on site to clean up broken glass and other safety hazards, as well as to connect with those who are regularly occupying the site. As a public space, there are more specific considerations regarding both ordinance enforcement and public safety/comfort in the space for the wide variety of users. Hill/Pool, conversely, is a memorial site where the tragedy occurred, and the majority of the memorial is on private property. The immediate term response would look to ensure private property rights are honored, to prioritize the safety of residents visiting that space, and to carefully consider plans to caretake that space.

In discussing the approach for these two sites, the group was supportive of the response that has already been loosely developed by community partners, which includes caretaking and archiving. Largely, our suggestion is to a) formalize that response and b) develop a Community Response Memo that provides a framework for staff and elected officials to follow and to create a mechanism for community updates to the public that includes information about how memorial materials are being preserved and ways they can support ongoing efforts.

Our understanding is that Mechanics Park is the location with more pressing concerns, which we have certainly seen in the public discourse and in our own interactions with the space, but we want to address both locations, as well as some suggestions that apply generally for overall management.

Input from City Staff, Council, and other stakeholders

Chairperson Muise has also met with heads of Recreation, Public Works, and Police, Council President Beaupre, Library Archivist Rose, and Delilah at Heart of Biddeford and Larry Weyand Art of Biddeford.

Needs and ideas surfaced in meetings with department heads and Council President Beaupre (note meeting TBD with Interim City Manager Knight):

- Growing concerns from families shared with the Recreation Department about safety and access based on activity in Mechanics Park point toward enforcing the existing ordinances and park rules, rather than waiting on new policy.
- Because protestors have informally taken over management of the memorial at Mechanics Park, it is creating a barrier to enforcing other ordinance and park rule violations by protestors such as park presence after hours, erecting structures, grilling, etc. City staff are being approached and questioned when they are on site doing their jobs. If the City limits size, materials, or safety features, those rules need to be applied the same way regardless of the memorial's message or religious character. Inconsistent enforcement - removing some items but not others based on their content - is a viewpoint-discrimination risk.
- The City has to weigh whether or not to formalize a policy based on prior attempts in Maine/lack of any examples in the State; although MDOT guidelines don't directly apply, State of Maine's signage statute for categorical signage [§1913-A. Categorical signs](#) could be useful to review for duration, size, and location guidelines.
- Legal risks - the need to adopt an affirmative policy rather than informally allowing memorials indefinitely. Courts have sometimes treated a government's inaction toward an unattended religious display on public property, such as allowing it to remain without any policy governing it, as tacit endorsement of that religious message, raising Establishment Clause exposure.

- Need to respect private property - The fence at Mechanics Park is private property - so nothing should be affixed to it. The memorial at Hill/Pool is partially on private property and requests from the property owner need to be respected.
- Communication plan considerations - staff raised concerns around creating community conflict or potential escalation if plans to transition memorials are announced publicly. Safety is a priority, and there are many complex considerations for ensuring the safety of staff and the public. A clear and transparent communication plan will be crucial to building trust and buy-in from residents.

Recommendations

We have attempted to bring all this feedback and discussion together in a series of recommendations; we've organized our response to follow the structure of the mayor's request. Each item in the mayor's email is first *"quoted in italics"* and then responded to. There are a few additional sections following those items: Stakeholder Map; Community Response Memo; Draft Site Management, Collections, and Archiving Plan; Maintenance and Collection; Archiving and Healing; Draft Timeline.

"An appropriate framework for temporary and permanent memorials on City property" and "a thoughtful process for evaluating future memorial requests on City property"

The commission has already completed significant work in drafting the Public Art Master Plan; going forward, **we'd recommend that both temporary and permanent memorials on City property be governed by guidelines in the Public Art Master Plan.** The Master Plan will cover temporary permitted public art projects and permanent projects to be owned by the City in public spaces, and would be the thoughtful process for evaluating future memorials requests on City property. Our Master Plan has cultural equity as a value, and has thoughtfully considered meaningful community input and collaboration across staff departments.

Recommended Next Steps:

- PAC reviews existing draft and adds any suggestions re: memorials
- Policy Committee Review of Master Plan draft at August and September 2026 meetings
- City Council Review and adoption October 2026

"Guidance on how temporary memorials should be accommodated and managed" and "How and when their duration should come to an end"

We recommend that spontaneous, i.e. arising from death, tragedy, or community trauma, **sometimes called "roadside" memorials, are not treated the same as temporary or permanent memorials as described in the Master Plan.** We suggest a distinction between an initial period where memorializing is allowed to happen without a permitting process, and a defined point after which a more formal process (e.g. permit as described in the Master Plan or other ordinance) would apply.

Any process we engage in should prioritize the following, in this order:

- 1) The wishes of the Guerrero family: The family has asked that nothing be done in Johan's name without their express permission. They have not requested a permanent memorial at this time, and their wishes should be included in this process.
- 2) The perspectives of those most affected: our immigrant neighbors. Our values in our Master Plan include cultural equity. You may have heard the phrase "Nothing about us without us" that arose out of disability equity movements; meaning for this situation that no decisions about memorial, remembrance, or public art in this space should be made without the people most affected at the table.
- 3) The broader community needs and desires: Mechanics Park belongs to all of Biddeford, and public input will be vital throughout this process.

Providing ordinance level recommendations here is challenging for a number of reasons. There are some examples in other states; notably, there are no municipalities in Maine with roadside memorial ordinances that we could find. [Scarborough declined to review or pass one in 2013](#) and [a bill to regulate roadside memorials failed to pass in the State legislature in 2019](#).

These examples need to be reviewed by the city in the context of whether or not Biddeford would want to have an ordinance related to spontaneous memorials. We were not able to find guidelines around this in any of the more than twenty Public Art Master plan examples we've reviewed. This would be setting precedent in a number of ways. Commission members were generally uncomfortable naming a specific timeline for removal, or considered that decision up to City Staff with guidance from appropriate staff and officials, such as the City Solicitor, City Administration, and/or City Council.

Recommended Next Steps

1. **Identify and form a Response Team moving forward**, with a point person for critical roles with the following roles, and define decision making authority. (Immediately below, as well as in a Stakeholder Map chart on page 8.)
 - a. Guerrero family via Mayor LaFountain - For any discussions that even remotely involve conversations around Johan, honoring his memory, supporting his family, etc., we are in complete agreement that anything related to Johan specifically goes through his family. Thus far, the Mayor has served as the main point of contact to the family, and unless suggested otherwise, he would remain the point person for making requests to the family either directly or through their representatives.
 - b. Immigrant Community - We are also in agreement that centering the immigrant community is crucial. We are less sure on a specific point person or agency for this, but it is an important one to determine. We want to respectfully center the voices of the immigrant community without putting undue burden on them around decision making. We also suggest that whoever the point person/agency is

should have a plan for engaging the immigrant community in a way that is inclusive of the diversity of experiences and opinions and, in particular, prioritizes immigrants in the immediate neighborhood of Hill/Pool and Mechanics Park.

- c. City staff - Identify a central communications staff person, who would engage with city departments as necessary to facilitate internal communication, including liaising with the mayor's office. Each department (e.g. Public Works, Police, Fire, etc.) will continue to be included in the discussions and work under their specific purviews.
 - d. Neighborhood/volunteer coordination - The Ward Councilor (or designee) should be the main point of contact, and would be in regular connection with the Council President and Mayor for coordination. The Mayor and President would bring information to the full City Council as necessary. This coordinating role would serve as the direct contact and coordinator for community volunteers who would like to assist with care and upkeep of the memorial sites and for immediate neighbors of the site to share thoughts, ideas, concerns, etc.
 - e. PAC commission member - For ongoing needs that are identified in the response process, commission members will have the opportunity to either form a subcommittee or response as a whole commission. This will ensure that any actions taken are in alignment with the Public Art Master Plan.
2. **Formalize the informal community-partner response already underway, and develop a Community Response Memo, a single reference document for staff and elected officials outlining how these sites are being managed, with option to share with the public.** The community trauma-informed approach, feedback from local community, and the archival expertise of the library have advised that removal or major alteration should generally wait until a transition process is established, except where immediate safety requires action. Any significant change to the existing memorials should include a clear communication plan whenever circumstances allow. Please see the Community Response Memo section at the end of this document for further details.
3. Share the memo with Johan's family for their knowledge and, as needed, their blessing for temporary memorial management and transition. The goal is that we ask any remaining questions at one time, rather than having to do repeated outreach to the family. This does not preclude us from asking additional questions in the future if others come up as the response work continues, but seeks to reduce stress on the family at this moment.
4. Prioritize safety resources to make this process safer for community members to move through in a reasonable period of time, not just focused on removal. Look at how other cities that have faced this specific tragedy have done this and replicate any processes

that proved helpful; for example, the addition of more cones / ropes to make the community feel safe during this transition process.

- a. Cities that navigated spontaneous memorials after high-profile deaths: Boston (Marathon bombing), Orlando (Pulse), Newtown (Sandy Hook), and Minneapolis (George Floyd Square) converged on a consistent pattern: an immediate light-touch phase, systematic photographic documentation before removal, direct coordination with the family on preservation and disposition, and a clear, published end-date or transition process to avoid an indefinite, unmanaged site.
5. Share with the public the community response around memorial management, item collection, and preservation/archiving plans - this is not the end; the memorial work is continuing. Memorial items transitioning into our community's archives; the family will have the opportunity to retrieve items of value to them; and remaining items could remain in the permanent public collection at the McArthur Library, or another location if needed that would offer free and public access to the community. Some items may be appropriate to consider including in future community led public art, memorial, or remembrance projects. Share details on the process for how artists/residents/community groups can propose projects in the future as the Master Plan is adopted.
6. Explore in earnest other meaningful and viable alternatives, such as a permission wall. Where possible, this should be in coordination and with support from stakeholder groups.

"There is also a more immediate role where the Commission's assistance may be valuable. Following consultation with our public safety staff, and provided that any involvement is consistent with their guidance, the Commission may consider a role in helping steward the temporary memorials that have formed in recent weeks. In coordination with City staff, this could include assisting with their care, upkeep, and thoughtful curation, as well as helping determine how materials might eventually be respectfully collected, preserved, documented, or otherwise handled when the time comes for these temporary memorials to transition."

The City staff and representatives should avoid curating, selecting, editing, or endorsing specific memorial content outside of safety / size / space guidelines; doing so risks converting private speech into government speech. Keeping memorials privately created and privately maintained, even when the City provides space or logistical support, helps preserve their legal status as private expression.

There is an existing process for collecting, documenting, and archiving memorial materials led by the Library, and that process should continue with community and stakeholder involvement, in coordination with the Response Team.

If the City has concerns in the interim, consider adding a disclaimer to memorial signage stating that memorials are privately created and do not represent an endorsement or message of the City.

“The circumstances under which a more permanent memorial might be considered”

Aside from the mural that was painted downtown, the family has not requested a permanent memorial at this time. That said, the community has its own grief process and there should be conversations about memorials, including permanent ones, that would honor that grief without specifically mentioning Johan.

The guidelines in the Master Plan would offer a framework for this process either as a gift or through the Community Arts Works process.

Recommended Next Steps:

- Master Plan Review by Policy Committee and City Council; with coordinated efforts to communicate with stakeholders (see *Stakeholder Map*) the expected schedule and a reminder of how to provide public comment

Stakeholder Map

Adapted from the PLAN–CARE–HEAL stakeholder-mapping tool. This is a starting point for the response team to fill in and correct - particularly the immigrant-community point person, which is still open. This list may not be comprehensive, and we welcome additions that may have been missed unintentionally.

Stakeholder	Point Person	Needs / Role	Risk if Excluded	Channel
Guerrero family	Mayor LaFountain (sole point of contact)	Consent before any action naming Johan; right of first refusal on archived materials	Re-traumatization; loss of trust in the City	Direct, in person or via family's representative only
Immigrant community	TBD — priority to identify	Voice in decisions about Mechanics Park and Hill/Pool without being burdened as decision-makers	Process perceived as excluding those most affected	TBD; consider trusted community organizations as intermediaries
City Council / Ward 2	Ward Councilor (Hill/Pool); Council President (coordination)	Constituent liaison; volunteer coordination	Neighbor concerns go unheard	Regular check-ins with Mayor's office
City staff (Police, Fire, DPW, Recreation, Code Enforcement)	Central communications staff lead	Enforce existing ordinances; flag safety hazards	Inconsistent enforcement; liability exposure	Response-team coordination meetings
McArthur Library	Library archivist	Leads item preservation and permanent collection intake	Materials lost or improperly handled	Direct coordination with response team
Biddeford Community Gardens	Garden coordinator	Compost flowers that cannot be preserved	Backlog of perishable items	As-needed pickup coordination
Local chaplains	UU Pastor Lori	Spiritual and community care; cleansing ceremony support	Community grief goes unsupported	Direct coordination with Mayor's office and family
Peer institutions (Lewiston/MTA, 9/11 Memorial, Minneapolis, Boston Marathon consultant)	PAC Chair / archivist	Comparative guidance on precedent and pitfalls	Reinventing lessons already learned elsewhere	As-needed consultation
General public / Biddeford residents	Communications staff lead	Transparency on process and timeline; avenues for comment	Rumor, mistrust, competing informal narratives	Community Response Memo; public comment periods
Heart of Biddeford/Art of Biddeford	Delilah and Larry via PAC	Supporting on-going community needs and events	Missed opportunity to include downtown input	Connection through their channels and local businesses

Framework source: PLAN–CARE–HEAL, spontaneoussmemorials.org.

Community Response Memo

As noted in the plan, the Community Response Memo is a single reference document for staff and elected officials outlining how these sites are being managed, with the option to share with the public. This section provides more detail on how this helps the immediate situation:

- Gives the Commission's memorial framework a defined home. Questions the Commission is being asked to advise/resolve (duration limits, family coordination, transition and removal) are trauma response questions as much as art commission questions. A parent document lets the memorial policy sit as one component of a larger plan, rather than asking an arts body to independently resolve public safety, mental health, and grief management questions outside its core expertise.
- Establishes a central coordination and accountability framework, so decisions about Mechanics Park are not made piecemeal by whichever department is closest to the issue at a given time.
- Creates a shared timeline and an "off ramp." Just as the Commission's memorial framework needs a defined duration and transition process, the City's broader response benefits from an explicit statement of what moving forward looks like and when, giving residents, staff, and Council a shared understanding of the arc of response rather than an open ended process.
- Gives Policy Committee and Council a clear vehicle for authorizing resources: budget, staff time, or partnership funding (expanded mental health services, translation and interpretation support given the immigration enforcement context, community listening sessions), rather than ad hoc requests arriving from individual departments or boards.
- Reflects practice elsewhere: cities that experienced comparable community trauma have generally paired memorialization guidance with a broader recovery or healing framework rather than leaving a public art commission to carry it alone. Examples include Orlando's OneOrlando Fund and long-term recovery plan after the Pulse shooting, the Eagles' Haven wellness center and community healing initiative in Parkland/Coral Springs after Marjory Stoneman Douglas, and Buffalo's community healing and victim support framework after the Tops shooting. In each case a citywide document defined mental health resources, communications protocols, memorialization guidelines, and a review timeline together, rather than as separate efforts.

Draft Site Management, Collections, and Archiving Plan

Mechanics Park:

- Post plans for transition, guided by the recommendations in this document. If transition is immediate, offer a 1-2 week period for voluntary compliance, remove items out of ordinance beyond that point. Removal may be conducted by city staff, library staff, and/or volunteers; we recommend that all these stakeholder groups take part in the process.

- Signage (laminated paper is sufficient) explains the process and who to contact, referencing the response team and, where available, a link or QR code to the Community Response Memo.
- Explore opportunities to educate the public about allowable activities in the park; supporting First Amendment Rights while also encouraging creative expression (e.g. tell people where they can make chalk art; see examples from other Cities).
- Continue discussions on the installation of more permanent and aesthetic barriers, which would replace the temporary jersey barriers.

Hill/Pool:

- Due to the sensitive nature of the site, allow community response plans to continue; coordinate timeline via Response Team. Prioritize safety for residents engaging in memorial activities, care, and maintenance, and transition to archives/other permitted activities.
- City resources to prioritize safety of residents engaging in this process.
- For this site, the key contacts are the property owner and Johan's family, and any plans should be made in consultation with both. Our understanding is that the mayor is in touch with both parties.
- In the event of any future discussion or approvals by the family of a permanent memorial at this site, considerations should be made regarding traffic and pedestrian safety in areas of public right of way.
- Coordinate with key stakeholders via Response Team; Local chaplains, led by UU Pastor Lori, have been providing spiritual and community care and bring prior experience with mass-casualty event response.
- Ensure there is a clear outline that explains how site management will occur, particularly around the archiving process that is already occurring and keeping the sidewalk clean and safe.
- Install signage (continuing to use laminated paper is sufficient) that outlines these details and who to contact with questions, using the response team as a contact guide and potentially including a link/QR code to the Community Response Memo.
- Finalize response to address where the blood had been on the pavement. The proposal is to have a more formal cleaning/cleansing event in collaboration with local chaplains. The mayor is getting in touch with the family for their blessing and to see if they wish to be present (and if so, whether they would prefer it to be private). If not private, recommend that there be traffic and safety control of some kind during the ceremony.
 - Once this is complete, remove memorial items from the street. Ensure there is public messaging on the site and in public communications about the cleansing. This would decommission the street itself as a spot to place memorial items.
- Avoid a total, permanent ban at the actual site. Courts have also found that removing memorials from the specific location where a death occurred can burden the memorial-makers' free speech rights, since the site itself carries meaning that can't be replicated elsewhere.

Maintenance and Collection

- Regular community led volunteer cleanup will occur on a weekly basis
- If a safety report comes in (e.g., broken glass), the response team coordinates addressing it directly.
- If rain is forecast, paper and other fragile items are removed for preservation ahead of the weather.

Archiving and Healing

- The McArthur Library archivist is leading item preservation and letting best practices and archiving ethics lead:
 - The family will be contacted and has right of first refusal on all archived materials before anything moves to the Library's permanent, publicly accessible collection.
 - Archives should remain in the library for long term public access as public stewards of our community's history.
 - Plastic and similar materials are saved for potential use in a future public art project, as has been done elsewhere after tragedies such as the Lewiston shooting.
 - Some dried flowers have been preserved for the family; others will be composted at the Biddeford Community Gardens to feed our community. *Note that flowers cannot be added to the Library's permanent archives as they continue to decompose/attract bugs and threaten other items in the collection.
 - The archivist, Councilor Woods, and I (as PAC Chair) are connected with archivists from comparable responses elsewhere - Maine MILL/Lewiston, the 9/11 Memorial, a contact in Minneapolis, and a museum consultant who worked on the Boston Marathon bombing memorial.

Draft Timeline

August 4 2026	Request to PAC announced at City Council Meeting
August 10 2026	Request made to PAC via email
August 13 2026	Public Art Commission Regular Monthly Meeting
August 11 - 21 2026	PAC Meetings with department heads PAC drafts and presents recommendations Staff Reviews PAC recommendations
August 24 - 31 2026	Response Team Formed
August 24 2026	Policy Committee Meeting - Master Plan Review #1
September 10 2026	Public Art Commission Regular Monthly Meeting
September 28 2026	Policy Committee Meeting - Master Plan Review #2
October 6 2026	City Council Meeting - Master Plan Reading #1
October 20 2026	City Council Meeting - Master Plan Reading #2