



CITY OF APPLETON

MEMORANDUM

Date: April 1, 2026
To: Public Arts Committee
From: Steph Lynaugh, Economic Development Specialist
Subject: Select Layout for Photos to be Displayed on Houdini Welcome Tower

GENERAL INFORMATION

Owner: City of Appleton

Address/Parcel Number: Welcome Tower in Houdini Plaza, 121 W. College Avenue (Parcel #31-2-0065-00)

Request: The Public Arts Committee should select a layout for the 2026 Update to Houdini Tower.

PROJECT DETAILS

At the previous Public Arts Committee meeting, the Committee decided to pursue the “Year of Houdini” theme. Creative Downtown Appleton Inc., in cooperation with the *Year of Houdini* volunteer group, are proposing to install photos of Harry Houdini to honor the 100th anniversary of Houdini’s passing. 2026 is being dubbed the “Year of Houdini” and the Society of American Magicians are hosting a convention in Appleton the first week of July. The panels will be paid for by private funds through Creative Downtown Appleton Inc. and installed by the City. The panels will be given to the Committee for future use. An agreement will need to be drafted between the City and Creative Downtown Appleton Inc. to memorialize the arrangement.

The motion at the March meeting directed the applicants, Creative Downtown Appleton, Inc. and the *Year of Houdini* volunteer group to submit approximately 30 images (original and suggested crop/color, etc.) and documentation that the images are within the public domain to staff by March 20th. A google document with the images and the sources was sent to staff on March 20th. Staff compiled the submitted photos into a document and sent out a Survey Monkey link for the Public Arts Committee members to vote on their top 12 images by March 30th. The top images will be presented at the April 1st, 2026 meeting where the Committee members are recommended to decide whether the images should be edited (cropped/ color corrected/ etc.) and the placement of the tiles on the tower.

Appleton Public Arts Committee Action:

Review the top images resulting from the Committee member voting, determine the layout on the tower, and detail any potential edits to the tiles. Whatever the determination of the Committee, that decision should be recommended to the Parks and Recreation Committee.

Next Steps:

- March 4th, 2026 – Houdini theme chosen by Appleton Public Arts Committee
- April 1st, 2026 – Committee selects images and any edits to tiles proposed by Creative Downtown Appleton Inc. and *Year of Houdini* volunteers and recommends decision to Parks and Recreation Committee (P&R)
- April 6th, 2026 – P&R reviews APAC recommendation and forwards to Common Council
- April 22nd, 2026 – Common Council approves recommendation
- May-June 2026 – Production / Installation of updated photo tiles
- Photo tiles to be installed by **June 30th, 2026**