

Watertown Public Arts and Culture Committee Minutes

Monday, March 24, 2025

Swati Biswas, Matt Hanna, Liz Helfer, Roberta Miller, Jessie Needleman, Dawn Scaltreto, Jay Wilson, Erin Webb, Sally Young, Guest Dave Harrison, WCATV

1. Opening Inspiration – Dawn discussed the report from MCC Director, Michael Bobbit, regarding the disparity of wages of people working in the creative sector. Despite the inequity in salary, creating art is undeniably rewarding and the work that we are doing on this committee is helping strengthen paid opportunities in the arts in our community.
2. Welcome and Introduction
 - a. Welcome new member approved 3/11/25 Jesse Needleman works at Boston Symphony, his passion. Introductions of the committee.
3. Approval of February Minutes. There is a motion to accept by Jay, Erin seconds, all approve (Jessie abstains as he is new).
4. Subcommittee and Project Team Reports
 - a. Governance and Funding
 - i. Nominations for Vice Chair – Swati has come forward with her nomination. Dawn moves, Sally seconds, its unanimous!
 - ii. Grant Applications
 - i. MCC Experiences Grant \$5000 for the Community Sculpture Walk
 - ii. WCF Engagement Grant \$5000 for the Community Sculpture Walk
 - b. Outreach
 - i. Monthly PACC Arts Bulletin - Danielle Drapeau is the new Cultural District Outreach Coordinator, and she will be using some of her 5 – 10 hours of work for the city creating and sending the newsletter as part of her duties.
 - ii. Last Cultural Leader’s Meeting – This monthly meeting will be folded into the Watertown Cultural District
 - i. Discussion of Mass 250th Celebration. July 18, 2026 is Treaty Day and that will be a big portion of our celebration. Watertown was the first town to incorporate a treaty with the Miq’mac and this treaty is still in use, ratified in a ceremony each Treaty Day. As it is a living treaty, this is a significant event. Many members of the Indigenous leaders from all over New England will come to to Watertown to celebrate, up to 60 people. There will be a Wetu

bark and branch structure of the Miq'mac constructed in front of Mosesian Center for the Arts, among other celebrations.

- ii. Moving organizational sharing to the Cultural District Partnership. We will have an event on a Tuesday in May hosted by WBC celebrating the arts in Watertown
- iii. Meetings of the Cultural District will be held the 2nd Monday of the month at 4 pm via Zoom
- iv. Watertown Cultural District website is live, and sharing information for any Watertown arts organizations that wish to be a part of it.
- iii. Little Local Conversations Podcast by Matt Hanna just had its 1st Birthday Celebration at Mosesian Center for the Arts, spotlighting local news, arts and communication. The podcast gets info out to the community about topics that apply to many committees including the PACC committee
- iv. PACC Representative needed for “Open for Business” program to support the businesses and residents of the East End during Mount Auburn Street reconstruction, Matt volunteers.
- v. Volunteers for Eco Fest on 5/10 (Sally and Dawn) are needed from 11 – 2 pm at the Commander’s Mansion, and for the Watertown PRIDE Festival in Saltonstall Lower Field (Dawn, who is doing face painting, and Erin) with painted flowers on 6/1 from 12 – 4 pm
- vi. Spring PSA Day at WCA studio on April 18th, 1 to 4 pm Erin will do it with Sally, Swati and Dawn. Erin asks for an appointment toward the end of the filming.
- c. Edible Watertown
 - i. Expert Pairings contracts complete and the projects underway.
 - ii. Edible Watertown 2027, selecting chefs and making a cookbook with edible plants, will be pushed to 2027 to allow more time to gather funding and connect with chefs.
- d. Murals: 100 Years of Arshile Gorky
 - i. Brandon Marshall, the artist, will be here April 15.
 - ii. Overview of commemorative events – showing this Friday, March 28, of a film by Gorky’s daughter Cosima Spencer “Without Gorky”. Art Historian Bruce Weber, artist Bill Flynn and Parker Field, Director of the Gorky Foundation, will lead discussion at Mosesian Center, a ticketed event but tickets are free. The exhibition at Mosesian Center for the Arts, Drawing and the Art of Arshile Gorky, co-curated by Bill Flynn, is currently on display in the first floor gallery. Huge opening for the exhibition and lots

of artwork is selling. Granite markers are getting installed at his residences, and there will be a guided walk and tours. There will be a show curated by Kim Terrio that will be at the Armenian Museum of America in the fall. Jack Dargon deserves kudos for assisting of the organization of the whole project. June 10 may be the opening of the mural.

e. Community Sculpture Walk

- i. Music confirmed with Rick Saunders for the reception on May 17 at 11 am, by Ken Rekers gold frame “All Style, No Substance”, Erin will be there. Kick-off

5. Old Business

- f. Porchfest is happening May 17 12 – 6 pm, and 40 hosts and 80 performers have signed up so far (was 75/150 last year). It goes out through city channels. Yard signs will happen this year, Joe Sharino professional designer did logo and sign design.
- g. Yard Art – There should be about 100 registrations, only 35 signed up so far

6. New Business

- a. Public Arts and Culture Committee will have a table on the lawn of the Browne House on May 3 from 1 – 4 pm.
- b. Watertunes will be part of the 2026 Summer Concert Series.
- c. Moesian Center for the Arts 20th Anniversary Celebration on May 22 from 6 – 8 pm – Programming at the benefit will be a sampling of all the arts that happen there. Fritz Smith will be making a light installation like his pieces from the River of Light, 20 orbs that are kinetic.
- d. Actor’s Shakespeare Project, the new theater company in residence at MCA, and Moesian Center for the Arts are giving a gift to the community of Watertown, Midsomer’s Nights Dream starting April 11, first 4 days includes 2 for 1, codeword “Watertown”

7. Visitor Input – None.

- 8. Adjourn - Erin moves, Swati seconds. Next PACC Meeting is scheduled for Monday, April 28, 2025.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dawn Scaltreto

April 16, 2025