

# Watertown Square Cultural District Partnership Minutes - Monday, June 9, 2025

Remote: Zoom link: <https://watertown-ma.zoom.us/j/83683744923>

Meeting ID: 836 8374 4923 Call in: +16465588656

**Attendees:** Jeanette Belcher-Schepsis (Co-Secretary), Jack Dargon, Danielle Drapeau, Nicole Gardner, Jamie Gordon, Kristen Hansen, Liz Helfer, Morgan Henderson, Susan B. Joney, Kristen Kenny (Chair), Leah Kotok, Roberta Miller, Lois Pond (Co-Secretary), Erin Rathe, Andrea Santopietro, Richard Saunders, Jason Sohigian, Matthew Stephens

1. **Welcome:** Kristen Kenny called the meeting to order at 4:08pm. Slight delay due to the lack of a quorum.

2. **Acceptance of May Minutes:** Roberta Miller motioned to accept the minutes; Nicole Gardner seconded

### 3. Annual Partner Report (due July 1):

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeXAlGDeJxcKRJh3czxpegx225bKeyrQOxJ9TbZA8mrJ-Ulw/viewform?usp=sf\\_link](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeXAlGDeJxcKRJh3czxpegx225bKeyrQOxJ9TbZA8mrJ-Ulw/viewform?usp=sf_link)

Liz Helfer asked that all participants please complete the survey; link is above. Survey completion is important to maintain Cultural District status. Liz acknowledged that all question may not apply to all members; please complete the areas that pertain to your organization.

4. **Watertown Business Coalition:** Report on 5/21 event at Bar'Cino - Celebrating the State of the Arts on May 21 was well attended, very good mood. Venue manager was very accommodating. Mosesian 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary gala was held the next evening on May 22. Also worked out very well.

### 5. Outreach:

a. Community Engagement Specialist Report - Community Engagement Specialist Danielle Drapeau talked briefly about the Cultural District website.

b. Please ensure your events are on the Cultural District website: [www.watertownmaculture.com](http://www.watertownmaculture.com). Anyone needing help should contact Liz.

### 6. Porchfest :

a. Kristen Kenny reported on Porchefest held on 5/17; 74 locations and 185 performance groups; <https://watertownporchfest.org>

b. "After Hours" at WCA-TV and Ritcey East; both successful and will inform planning for next year.

c. Already obtained a Watertown Community Foundation Grant for 2026 (\$3000)

d. Just under 4K attended

e. No corporate sponsorship, some grants from Watertown Foundation, Watertown Public Art, and Watertown Cultural Council.

f. All volunteer event; 2026 Porchfest May 16, the weekend after Somerville

g. \$1.6K fee to use the event software

h. Recommendations, 2026 - Retain URL; redirect user to Cultural District website.

i. Porchfest 2025 was successful. This upcoming year Kristen Kenny intends to Zoom with other towns re: their Porchfests with the goal of figuring out how to better spread the volunteer duties within the Porchfest Committee. Towns currently include Bristol, RI; Belmont; Arlington; Dorchester (Dorchfest).

#### **7. YardArt Discussion and Vote**

- a. Core group loves it, but participation has diminished.
- b. Started as a pandemic activity and has never again reached initial level of participation.
- c. Currently a leadership vacuum; needs promotion on a larger scale. Committee and volunteers are gating factors.
- d. Schools already have a robust arts curriculum.
- f. **VOTE** - Susan Jones made a motion to bury the YardArt project with honor; seconded by Nicole Gardner. Vote was overwhelmingly positive, with one abstention. YardArt's last year was April 2025.

#### **8. Old Business:**

- a. Watertown Pride on 6/1 from 12-4pm was well attended. WHS band marched in the parade.
- b. Watertown Arts Market is scheduled for August 9 at Arsenal Park. Registration is open.  
<https://www.watertownartsmarket.com>
- c. Faire on the Square, schedule for September 13, is a good place to distribute promotional material. Registration is open <https://www.faireonthesquare.com>

#### **9. New Business:**

Erin Rathe is working with Meet Boston to publicize and showcase events in Watertown and asks for information on organizations and events to showcase Watertown. Meet Boston will accept events from surrounding cities and towns, particularly if they are free to the public. [LINK?]  
Erin's current projects include "Made in Watertown" which highlights Watertown businesses. Part of Watertown's economic development effort. Please follow on Instagram.

#### **10. Upcoming Events and Programs:**

- a. MCA's "Studios and Stages" program for kids still has some openings. MCA also has openings for high school age counselors; can count as community service credits.
- b. Gore Place "Puppet Show Picnic" is scheduled for Thursday, June 26.
- c. Watertown's free concerts are Wednesdays at Saltonstall Park.
- d. Mt. Auburn Cemetery's "Summer Solstice Celebration" occurs on June 21. It's a series of day-long activities including yoga, poetry, crafts, and music. The day is a mix of free and paid events.
- e. MCA's "Earful" is held on the Branch Line patio every Tuesday in June. Tickets are still available.
- f. Unveiling of Gorky mural on June 10.
- g. Watertown's own Summer concert series on Wednesday nights.

**Next meeting on Monday, July 14, 2025, at 4pm**

Respectfully submitted,  
Lois Pond