



**Minutes  
Cultural Commission - Regular Session  
Thursday, January 8, 2026 - 7:30 AM**

The Cultural Commission convened in regular session in the Conference Room of the Creativity Center at 7:30 AM.

**1. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 7:45AM by Commission Chair Faisal Rashid.

**2. Roll Call**

**PRESENT:** Commissioner Faisal Rashid  
Commissioner Angelique Racki  
Commissioner Shweta Shukla  
Commissioner Peter Pontius  
Commissioner Dallas Long  
Commissioner Treyce' Gaston-Spears

**ABSENT:** Commissioner Katherine Browne  
Commissioner Crystal Bricker  
Commissioner Amber Collins  
Commissioner Ricardo Alvarado  
Commissioner Rakshith Reddy Venumuddala

**Staff Present:** Anthony Nelson, Director, Arts & Entertainment Department; Kathy Sawyer, Development Manager, Arts & Entertainment Department

**3. Public Comment**

Individuals wishing to provide emailed public comment must email comments to [publiccomment@cityblm.org](mailto:publiccomment@cityblm.org) at least 15 minutes before the start of the meeting. Individuals wishing to speak in-person may register at [cityblm.org/register](http://cityblm.org/register) at least 5 minutes before the start of the meeting.

No emailed Public Comment was received.

**4. Consent Agenda**

Items listed on the Consent Agenda are approved with one motion; Items pulled from the Consent Agenda are listed and voted on separately.

- A. **Consideration and Action to Approve the Minutes of the December 11, 2025, Regular Cultural Commission Meetings.** (Recommended Motion: The proposed Minutes be approved.)

**Commissioner Pontius made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Long, to approve**

the Consent Agenda with two edits. In item 5C, the discussion about 2025-26 cultural events, "Holi Moli" was edited to "Holi Festival." Also, a comment was added: Commissioner Gaston-Spears asked how Commissioners can get involved in amplifying events. To that point, Commissioners are encouraged to spread the word to their contacts about events in the community using their skills and communication channels such as announcements at gatherings, email messages, flyers and other appropriate means.

**Chair Rashid directed Kathy Sawyer to call roll:**

**Ayes:** Chair Rashid, Commissioner Gaston-Spears, Commissioner Racki, Commissioner Shukla, Commissioner Long, and Commissioner Pontius

**Motion passes.**

## 5. Regular Agenda

### A. Discussion on 2026 Bloomington Center for Performing Arts Upcoming Shows and Updates. (Recommended Motion: None; Presentation Only.)

Director Nelson explained that Trampled by Turtles was coming up January 18, 2026. A Country Tribute Night would be January 23, 2026, featuring tributes to Chris Stapleton (Tennessee Whiskey), Eric Church, and Lainey Wilson. A show called #IMOMSOHARD, based on a podcast, would be at the BCPA on January 29. Next month, Aaron Lewis would be performing at the BCPA on February 19.

### B. Discussion on 2026 Grossinger Motors Arena Upcoming Shows and Updates. (Recommended Motion: None; Presentation Only.)

Director Nelson explained that there had been a hiccup in the activities at the Arena during the ECHL strike in late December, resulting in a lost weekend of games. Those games would be rescheduled for the end of April. There were lost hours for part-time staff due to the strike, too. More recently, on January 7, 2026, the Bloomington Bison lost to Kalamazoo on January 7. Looking ahead, IHSA Cheer and Dance would have a big impact on the community during the weekends of January 30-31, 2026 and February 7-8, 2026, respectively. The IHSA Cheer weekend is the busiest for restaurants. The IHSA has a new system for booking hotels through a portal, so that will ease the workload of local hotels. The IHSA teams also rent local high school gyms and local churches for extra practice space. In February, there will be more Bison hockey games, then IHSA girls wrestling during the last weekend in February. Shows coming to the Arena this year would include the Monster X Tour on May 9, 2026, and the Goo Goo Dolls with Neon Trees on August 9, 2026.

### C. Discussion on 2026 Cultural Commission Events. (Recommended Motion: None; Presentation Only.)

Commissioner Shukla asked how the Commission can attract the Indian community to events. Director Nelson explained that Commissioners can send ideas for performers that may interest the Indian community to him. There have been past efforts to book Bollywood shows and Indian comedians for the BCPA.

Director Nelson then asked Commissioners to brainstorm about local restaurants that may be good places to host small (1-3 member) acoustic musical acts in Bloomington but outside of

downtown. These restaurants would host a dine to donate day in February or March to raise money. Fifteen percent (15%) of the money raised would go to provide compensation for the musical acts who would perform at selected restaurants during summer 2026. The commissioners would vote on 10 restaurants to participate from those who are willing.

Development Manager Sawyer would design a flyer explaining the program to be distributed to restaurants by Commissioners.

The list of restaurants to be initially approached and the Commissioner assigned is as follows:  
Signature Cafe - Chair Rashid

Crawford's Pub - Commissioner Racki  
Garden of Paradise - Commissioner Racki

Bloom Bawarchi - Commissioner Venumuddala  
Namaste Plaza - Commissioner Venumuddala

Westside BloNo - Commissioner Pontius  
Eastside BloNo - Commissioner Pontius  
Kobe - Commissioner Pontius

Pop Up Chicken - Director Nelson  
Wok to Bowl - Director Nelson  
Lil Beaver & other breweries - Director Nelson (only as a last resort if not enough positive responses from restaurants)

Reverie - Commissioner Gaston-Spears  
Wesley's - Commissioner Gaston-Spears

Lido Lounge, Scramblers, and Divine Barrel Pub (all part of The Chateau complex) -  
Commissioner Shukla

Parkview Inn - Development Manager Sawyer

Artists to approach later include:

Marcos Mendez  
Adie Mendez  
Maestro Jones  
Chris (from Nightshop)  
Bruce Moon  
Noah Hutton  
Leyons/Lyons  
DJ Jodah  
MOJO  
Rees Amarteifio (Ghana)

We will discuss event proposals and networking during the next Cultural Commission meeting.

Commissioner Racki also brought the commissioners' attention to the intercommission proposals. Kathy will bring up these proposals with Amanda Stutsman, Deputy City Clerk. The New Neighbor Welcome Event could be less frequent than quarterly, and maybe just include representatives of coalitions instead of individual representatives from each community group. These events could also include or be useful for insurance, real estate, and other community businesses to connect with new residents.

Action Items for the next Commission meeting:

- \* Read the Cultural Commission Overview
- \* Brainstorm entertainment options & name for the Restaurant and Music Series tentatively called Bloomington Meals & Music
- \* Find out the date for 2026 Make Music Normal, so we can coordinate it with 2026 Art & Health Day

**D. Discussion on the Cultural Commission Meeting Time.** (Recommended Motion: None; Presentation Only.)

Chair Rashid raised the topic of whether this Commission should change its meeting time. The day of the month would be the same Thursday, but would the turnout be better if it were after work, perhaps a start time of 5pm from April onward?

**6. New Business**

**7. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 8:40 AM.

**Commissioner Long made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Pontius.**

**Chair Rashid directed Development Manager Sawyer to call roll:**


**Ayes:** Chair Rashid, Commissioner Long, Commissioner Pontius, Commissioner Gaston-Spears, Commissioner Racki, and Commissioner Shukla

**Nays: None**

**Abstain: None**

**Motion passes.**

City of Bloomington

  
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Commission Chair, Faisal Rashid

Attest

  
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Anthony Nelson, Staff Liaison