



**Minutes  
Cultural Commission - Regular Session  
Thursday, March 12, 2026 - 7:30 AM**

The Cultural Commission convened in regular session in the Conference Room of the Creativity Center at 7:46 AM.

**1. Call to Order**

The Cultural Commission convened in regular session in the Conference Room of the Creativity Center at 7:46am. Chair Faisal Rashid called the meeting to order.

**2. Roll Call**

**PRESENT:** Commissioner Faisal Rashid  
Commissioner Angelique Racki  
Commissioner Shweta Shukla  
Commissioner Crystal Bricker  
Commissioner Amber Collins  
Commissioner Rakshith Reddy Venumuddala  
Commissioner Treyce' Gaston-Spears

**ABSENT:** Commissioner Katherine Browne  
Commissioner Peter Pontius  
Commissioner Dallas Long

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

**3. Public Comment**

No emailed Public Comment was received.

**4. Consent Agenda**

**Commissioner Bricker made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Venumuddala, to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.**

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

**Ayes:** Chair Rashid, Commissioner Racki, Commissioner Shukla, Commissioner Bricker, Commissioner Collins, Commissioner Venumuddala, and Commissioner Gaston-Spears

**Motion passes.**

- A. **Consideration and Action to Approve the Minutes of the February 12, 2026, Regular Cultural Commission Meetings.** (Recommended Motion: The proposed Minutes be approved.)

**Commissioner Bricker made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Venumuddala, to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.**

**Chair Rashid directed the Staff Liaison Kathy Sawyer to call roll:**

**Ayes:** Commissioner Rashid, Commissioner Racki, Commissioner Shukla, Commissioner Bricker, Commissioner Collins, Commissioner Venumuddala, Commissioner Gaston-Spears

**Motion passes.**

## **5. Regular Agenda**

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

Christopher Cross would be March 19

Trisha Yearwood would be March 19, breaking the venue record for gross sales at the BCPA with a sellout show.

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

Keith Sweat and Ginuwine would be at the Arena April 2.

The Bloomington Bison would have hockey games April 3, April 5, April 17, and April 18.

Monster Trucks would be at the Arena May 9 for two shows.

Autorama would be at the Arena June 6.

Men at Work and Toad the Wet Sprocket would be at the Arena August 6.

Goo Goo Dolls with Neon Trees would be at the Arena August 9.

In January and February, the IHSA events hosted had an economic impact of \$2.5 million between all three events combined, considering the number of hotel beds occupied, restaurants filled, and other activities.

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

#### **Meals & Music:**

These are the restaurants who are currently interested in hosting an artist or musician this summer:

- \* Signature Cafe
- \* Crawford's Pub (after the beer garden in open)
- \* Eastside BloNo (former Crafted)
- \* JJ Fish and Chicken - with henna
- \* Flame@Bloom
- \* Bloom Bawarchi (enough space for 1 person as artist or musician)
- \* 1 of Shweta's 3: Scrambers, Divine Barrel Pub, or Lido Lounge

#### **Meals & Music Action Items:**

- \* Kathy will update and circulate the flyer along with the contact form for artists and musicians.
- \* The Commission will identify musicians and artists to be at each restaurant on a specific date in late May/June/July through a call out to musicians and artists to submit some representative work that they've done. We have a musician form to circulate. It's important to have the restaurants' dates decided first before approaching the artists so that the restaurant knows to hold space for the artist and for the artist to be able to check a calendar for the artist's availability. Is there a local band network to notify? One artist source is the BN Artists group listserv.
- \* Once we identify musicians we can match them up with spaces in restaurants.  
An example: Bloom Bawarchi does a dine to donate event, and makes an announcement leading up to and during that event that a specific artist will be performing on a specific date. Then the public comes out to the dine to donate event date and also to the future date to see the artist. The artist gets paid from 15% of what is earned during the dine to donate event.

### **Abbey Mural Prize:**

Application process for this national grant is open from now until May 18. The grant supports designing and executing a mural in a specific place with an identified muralist or team. The project can be to create or restore a mural for promoting accessibility and serving local audiences. The prize committee is interested in broadening or expanding the definition of contemporary murals.

### **Abbey Mural Prize Action Items:**

- \* Form a 2-3 person committee to develop this application: gather locations, send to Anthony.
- \* Anthony will look for the list of locations the City has identified for a mural. This list was a document of blank areas or choice locations for future murals, such as the top brick facade along Main Street, and the building next to the old Elks building that is in view of the Arena.
- \* Kathy will send the link for the April 15 informational webinar to Angelique. Kathy is already registered for this.
- \* Identify local artists and people who are already working on a mural. Murals already planned can be a focus for this grant; the mural that gets funded doesn't have to be new.

### **Arts & Health Day: Saturday, July 18**

Set up by 2 months before (May 18), send a press release out at that time, then get the word out again 2-3 weeks ahead of the Day (June 27).

### **Holi:**

Town of Normal's event will be at Uptown Circle on April 18 (2 meetings from now) - we can attend and see what works for their event and what we'd include in the future.  
For Holi in 2027, we can hold it on the BCPA Lawn, start planning 2 months in advance

### **Bollywood Techno:**

Plan this event for summer 2026.

### **Juneteenth and CultureFest:**

For Juneteenth and CultureFest, the Commission can best provide extra support where Tony Jones needs support. We would function best assisting events and identifying gaps where we can help.

**Juneteenth and CultureFest Action Items:**

\* Invite Tony Jones to a Cultural Commission meeting before June to present how his planning is going and what he'll need help with.

- D. **Consideration and action on a proposal to change the Regular Session Cultural Commission meeting time from 7:30am to 5:00pm on the second Thursday of every month.** (Recommended Motion: Recommended Motion: Motion to approve changing the regularly-scheduled meeting time for the Bloomington cultural commission to 5pm for the remainder of calendar year 2026.)

**Commissioner Gaston-Spears made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Shukla.**

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

**Ayes:** Commissioner Bricker, Commissioner Gaston-Spears, Commissioner Racki, Commissioner Collins, Commissioner Shukla, Commissioner Venumuddala, and Chair Rashid

**Nayes:** None

**Abstain:** None

**Motion passes.**

**6. New Business**

Commissioner Racki offered that BCAI Cultural Arts & Humanities would have part 2 of its 2-part workshop as part of the Envisioning Justice B-N hub on Saturday, March 28 from 10am-1pm. This part of the workshop would focus on youth, and giving them a chance to develop their stories through songwriting and storytelling. Also, on Friday, April 24 from 6-9pm BCAI Cultural Arts & Humanities would have its annual fundraiser. It would be a gala-style fundraiser at Hansen Student Center at Illinois Wesleyan University.

**7. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 AM.

**CITY OF BLOOMINGTON**

**ATTEST**

  
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 Faisal Rashid, Commission Chair

  
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 Anthony Nelson, Staff Liaison