



**Minutes  
Cultural Commission - Regular Session  
Thursday, April 9, 2026 - 5:00 PM**

The Cultural Commission convened in regular session in the Conference Room of the Creativity Center at 5:00 PM.

**1. Call to Order**

The Cultural Commission convened in regular session in the Conference Room of the Creativity Center at 5:17pm. Chair Faisal Rashid called the meeting to order.

**2. Roll Call**

**PRESENT:** Commissioner Faisal Rashid  
Commissioner Angelique Racki  
Commissioner Shweta Shukla  
Commissioner Katherine Browne  
Commissioner Rakshith Reddy Venumuddala

**ABSENT:** Commissioner Crystal Bricker  
Commissioner ~~Dallas Long~~  
Commissioner ~~Amber Collins~~  
Commissioner Treyce' Gaston-Spears

**Staff Present:** Kathy Sawyer, Arts & Entertainment Department Development Manager

**3. Public Comment**

No emailed Public Comment was received.

**4. Consent Agenda**

- A. **Consideration and Action to Approve the Minutes of the March 19, 2026, Regular Cultural Commission Meetings.** (Recommended Motion: The proposed Minutes be approved.)

Commissioner Browne made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Racki, to approve the Consent Agenda with the edits that, in Item 5C, the restaurants listed should read, in part, "Crawford's Pub (after the beer garden is open) " AND Item 6, New Business, BCAL's March 28 workshop was part of the Illinois Humanities' Envisioning Justice Initiative, not part of the Envisioning Justice B-N Hub.

Chair Rashid called roll:

**Ayes:** Chair Rashid, Commissioner Browne, Commissioner Racki, Commissioner Shukla, and Commissioner Venumuddala

**Motion passes.**

## 5. Regular Agenda

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

Kathy Sawyer commented that the Trisha Yearwood show at the BCPA broke the existing record for gross sales. Tonight's show (on April 9) would be The Naked Magicians, and on April 17 would be Arrival from Sweden, with a pre-show Feedback with Friends event so that current Friends of the BCPA can meet other Friends and staff and Board. Prospective Friends would be invited as well.

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

Kathy Sawyer commented that at Grossinger Arena, the Bison may make the ECHL playoffs this year. Several events and concerts are scheduled for summer: Autorama would return to the Arena on June 6, Men at Work and Toad the Wet Sprocket with Shonen Knife would be August 6, and the GooGoo Dolls with Neon Trees would be August 9, and the Beach Boys would be August 13.

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

**Bloomington Meals & Music:** One possible format is to hold Dine & Donate dates at each participating restaurant, then pay the musicians 15% of what's raised. This is the idea the Commission had discussed previously. Commissioner Browne is interested in the event in general but wondered if splitting up the money-raising time and the musical entertainment would get the best turnout. Commissioner Browne is also a member of a FaceBook group of local musicians she can contact.

Another option for format is:

- \* 15% of what's raised the day of the performance goes to the musicians
- \* Anyone dining that day will count (no need for showing a flyer, but the Commission, the restaurants, and the musicians can do publicity). Commissioner Venumuddala would volunteer to do flyers if needed.
- \* The Bloom restaurant group will contribute 25% of the door at the Bloom location(s) participating
- \* Another revenue model would be \$150-\$400 up front goes to the musician/artist (\$150 for a singer/songwriter or \$400 for a band with their own sound equipment.
- \*Note for comparison: The Bloomington Farmers' Market pays \$100 for a 2-hour gig
- \* There also may be musicians who are filling out their season and want to do something for the City.
- \* Commissioners need to contact the restaurants they reached out to and find out if a percentage or a flat fee works best for them to contribute

\* Another option is to create an online option to purchase a voucher of a certain amount, then a percentage of that goes to the musician

Hannah Horn (at the City of Bloomington) and Morgan Schulte (at the Town of Normal) would be good contacts to help spread the word and find out about other musicians, perhaps connected to the Downtown Farmers' Market and Make Music Normal.

Choe Alexander is a musician (singer and guitarist) that Commissioner Venumuddala knows. The Indian Student Association at ISU may be interested in helping in some way. Chair Rashid would have a contact.

Chair Rashid would also have a contact for an Indian group with a guitar.

Another idea would be a City-sponsored musician, supported by marketing.

Restaurants participating could have a smaller number of items on their menu, items that are quick to prepare, for the event to speed up service

Flame @ Bloom on a Sunday would be a good option for a performance inside.

#### Details about specific restaurants:

\* The parking lot where Body of Bloomington and Signature Cafe are could be a good space for an outdoor event in this series. They have done creative things there during the pandemic for instance and would likely be willing to do so again. Signature Cafe is BYOB. The Bloom restaurant group would pay any corkage fees.

\* JJ Fish and Amreen would be willing to participate

\* Scramblers could pair with Kate acoustic or with a 4-piece band

\* The list of willing restaurants:

- \* Signature Cafe
- \* JJ Fish & Chicken
- \* Scramblers
- \* Crawford's Pub
- \* Bloom Bawarchi
- \* Flame @ Bloom
- \* Eastside BloNo (formerly Crafted)

#### **Other activities:**

Saturday, April 11: TedXNormal. Tickets are \$10 each at [TedXNormal.net](https://www.tedxnormal.net)

Bloomington Meals & Music: Soon (May - July)

June 2026 (Not June 5 or 20): During a Sunday, to be over by 6pm. TechnoBollywood on the BCPA Lawn (with sponsors and a vibe) Commissioner Venumuddala thinks it would be simple to set up.

July 25, 2026: Arts & Health Day

Nov. 6-8: Diwali

Spring 2027: Engage students from ISU and IWU - What are they doing that we can help amplify?

Vision for the Cultural Commission: Commissioners went around the table to say what their own vision for the Commission is:

Commissioner Browne: To identify and facilitate grants for cultural events. (Added: we need a cohesive vision of the City perspective that these actions are important.)

Commissioner Venumuddala: To sponsor events

Commissioner Shukla: To promote diversity, the variety of cultures in Bloomington need to be blended and uplifted

Commissioner Racki: For community actualization, to amplify unseen efforts

There's a database of organizations who convened pre-Covid - find it and add diversity. It grew out of a conference of artists at the BCPA

The Abbey Mural Prize:

To apply, we need everything in place or identified

A location idea: Namaste building

**6. New Business**

**7. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 6:15 PM.

**Commissioner Browne made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Racki, to adjourn the meeting.**

**Chair Rashid directed the roll call:**

**Ayes:** Chair Rashid, Commissioner Browne, Commissioner Racki, Commissioner Shukla, Commissioner Venumuddala

**Motion passes.**

**CITY OF BLOOMINGTON**

**ATTEST**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Commission Chair

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Anthony Nelson, Staff Liaison