



MINUTES
CULTURAL COMMISSION - SPECIAL SESSION
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2024, 7:30 AM

The Cultural Commission convened in special session at 7:30 AM, November 14, 2024. Chair Faisal Rashid called the meeting to order.

Roll Call

Attendee Name	Title	Status
Katherine Browne	Commissioner	Present
Faisal Rashid	Commission Chair	Present
Angelique Racki	Commissioner	Present
Shweta Shukla	Commissioner	Present
Dallas Long	Commissioner	Present
Peter Pontius	Commissioner	Present
Crystal Bricker	Commissioner	Absent
Cindy Termuende	Commissioner	Absent
Jeffrey Pitzer	Commissioner	Absent

Staff Present: Arts and Entertainment: Anthony Nelson, Director; Kathy Sawyer, Development Manager; Greg Wilson, Community Relations Manager. Special guest: Tony Jones, Miller Park Cultural Fest Organizer

Public Comment

No public comment.

Consent Agenda

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

Item 4.A. Consideration and Action to Approve a new permanent start time of 7:30 A.M. for the 2025 Regular Cultural Commission Meetings.

Commission Chair Rashid made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Pontius, to approve the item as presented. Chair Rashid directed the clerk to call roll:

AYES: Rashid; Racki; Shukla; Long; Pontius; Browne

Motion carried.

Item 4.B. Consideration and Action to Approve the Minutes of the October 10, 2024,
Regular Cultural Commission Meeting.

Commissioner Long made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Pontius, to approve the item as presented.

Chair Rashid directed the clerk to call roll:

AYES: Rashid; Racki; Shukla; Long; Pontius; Browne

Motion carried.

Regular Agenda

The following item was presented:

Item 5.A. Discussion on 2024 Bloomington Center for Performing Arts upcoming shows and updates.

Nelson highlighted the following shows: Menopause 2 November 13 had only 9 seats open, and Toast is November 14. The Songwriters event November 15 is a VenuWorks co-pro. VenuWorks have routed good shows recently, including PostModern Jukebox and others at a volume discount. Co-pros have also helped at the Arena. Craig Ferguson November 16, Celtic Christmas November 18, HipHop Nutcracker November 21, Stephen Percy and Quiet Riot November 22. Josh Gates, November 23, has sold about 800 tickets so far and 150 meet and greets that will just be a picture for \$125 each on top of the ticket. Charlie Brown Christmas November 27, Night Ranger December 5, Holiday Spectacular December 7 and 8, Steven Curtis Chapman December 10. Nelson said that the department started going to TikTok via our connections with radio stations. Ads there cost 2-6 cents. Facebook has been the biggest bang for the buck. Instagram is also more visible, and easy to track. We're also doing more billboards. Nelson said Hive has been a good marketing tool and has provided big email blasts. It tracks TicketMaster purchases and does matches based on those purchases. We also do cold emails and have SMS texts but for very targeted text messages.

The following item was presented:

Item 5.B. Discussion on 2024 Grossinger Motors Arena upcoming shows and updates.

Nelson highlighted the following shows at the arena: REO Speedwagon sold out with about 4500 tickets even after adding seats when the band announced they were breaking up after this tour. REO was the second show with a production company called Pepper. The next day, Pepper sent more shows for us to consider in March. Nelson commented that catering has changed at the arena. Earlier, HyVee was our caterer when needed. Lately we've been going with A to Z for catering and they have been great. Nelson mentioned upcoming hockey games. Saturday will be Country Night, with barbecue on the menu and the Bisons' opponent will be Cincinnati. For Sunday's match against Iowa, kids eat free and will be able to participate in a post-game skate with the Bison. The Bison have also developed a \$79 family package deal that includes a \$10 merchandise credit, some food, and other things in addition to tickets to a hockey game.

Nelson went on to say that IHSA will be happening soon, with Dance, Cheer, and Wrestling events on separate weekends.

The following item was presented:

Item 5.C. Discussion on 2024 Cultural Commission events.

Tony Jones distributed two articles from The Pantagraph that highlighted Juneteenth and Cultural Fest in 2024. Jones highlighted the successes from 2024: Crowd participation, education and entertainment, good attendance numbers. A goal of Juneteenth was to attract a diverse crowd. A goal of Cultural Fest was involvement from a variety of groups in the community. Jones said that during the Juneteenth event, three awards were presented to Barb Atkins, Pastor Frank McSwain, and Henry Gay, Sr., who was 100 years old as of August 2024.

Jones requested help from the Commission by spreading the word to Commissioners' networks, bringing forward groups to perform or table, and by aiding with set-up of the events and behind-the-scenes volunteers. More volunteers are needed than were present last year for set-up and tear-down. Jones said that there is no fee for nonprofit organizations who sign up early to have a table, then the fee goes up on a sliding scale to \$20. For businesses, the fee for a table is \$20. A sign-up form will be created about a month before each event on a website. Tony recommends a good diversity of groups be present at the events.

Jones said set-up for each event would be early the morning of each event.

Commissioner Pontius suggested Jones try to have one community tent for many organizations (or all the organizations). The concern of the cost of a large tent was raised. The events would need a sponsor for the large tent(s). Jones asked what the Commission's goals were for the events. Jones would like to start planning for Juneteenth and Cultural Fest in February because until then he will be busy with the January 11 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. event.

Anthony Nelson said that the City would add the dates of these events to City websites. Nelson would like to book an event a week before the 2025 Juneteenth event and the Friday night before the Cultural Fest so that the City can make an effort to drive participation in Juneteenth and Cultural Fest.

New Business

Nelson explained that Beth Whisman, Director of the Town of Normal's Cultural Arts Department, and Adam Fox, Town of Normal Civic Arts Manager, would be invited for next month's meeting. Nelson went on to say that Connect Transit would be approached about providing transportation between Bloomington and Normal on the day of the Arts & Health Fair.

Regarding Art Walk, Nelson said that he saw the report and believes it was well attended. The Witches and Warlocks event weeks before Halloween was also well attended.

In addition, Nelson mentioned The Thanksgiving Farmers' Market will be the Saturday before Thanksgiving at the BCPA. The Christmas Farmers' Market will be Saturday, December 7 at the Arena.

Commissioner Racki highlighted Saturday, November 9, BCAI hosted the first Brunch Music Series to showcase Dia de Los Muertos, Diwali, and Samhain. The event featured

a DJ, dancefloor, and cultural conversations between exhibitors and attendees. WEEK-TV 25 and The Pantagraph reported on the event. WGLT was invited but couldn't attend. Commissioner Racki said Commissioner Shukla was a key participant with her connections to Fusion Crunch and Diwali-focused activities and vendors. Commissioner Rashid assisted with marketing.

Commissioner Racki pointed to a key win of the event, that relationships were created and strengthened with and between cultural organizations in the community. One factor that Commissioner Racki believes depressed turnout was the fear in minority communities brought on by the political situation. Commissioner Racki announced that the next event theme will be coffee – drinking coffee, art with coffee, and social justice and equity concerns connected to coffee production.

Commissioners raised the question of whether meetings could be held virtually if the weather gets bad. Anthony will check with Amanda Stutsman to see if that is currently allowed, as policies that allowed virtual meetings during Covid-19 may have changed back after Covid-19.

Adjournment

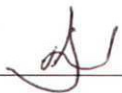
Commissioner Long made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Pontius, to adjourn the meeting.

Chair Rashid directed the clerk to call roll:

AYES: Rashid; Racki; Shukla; Long; Pontius; Browne **Motion carried.**

The Meeting Adjourned at 8:26 A.M.

CITY OF BLOOMINGTON



Faisal Rashid, Chair



Anthony Nelson, Staff Liaison