



Cultural Commission - Regular Session Agenda
Creativity Center, Conference Room
107E. Chestnut St., Bloomington, IL 61701 Thursday,
September 11, 2025 - 7:30 AM

1. Call to Order

2. Roll Call

PRESENT: Commission Chair Faisal Rashid
Commissioner Angelique
Rački Commissioner Peter
Pontius
Commissioner Crystal Bricker
Commissioner Amber Collins

ABSENT: Commissioner Shweta Shukla
Commissioner Katherine
Browne Commissioner Dallas
Long

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

3. Public Comment

Mayor Dan Brady. He will be considering Cultural Commission appointments.

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.

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

It was noted that the meeting date on the minutes should be August 14, 2025, instead of August 18, 2025.

Chair Rashid directed the Staff Liaison to call roll:

Ayes: Commissioner Bricker, Commissioner Collins, Commissioner Pontius, Commissioner Racki, Chair Rashid

Motion passes.

Consideration and Action to Approve the Minutes of the August 18, 2025, Regular Cultural Commission Meeting.(Recommended Motion: The proposed Minutes be approved.)

5. Regular Agenda

A. Discussion on 2025 Bloomington Center for Performing Arts Upcoming Shows and Updates. (Recommended Motion: None; Presentation Only.)

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Director Nelson explained that the application for the Mortimer and Mimi Levitt Foundation Grant to support a series of free concerts was in the public voting stage and it will continue through September 15. The next stage after that will be the Foundation's decision on the winners for this year. Public voting results will be a big factor in their decision. He encouraged the Commission to vote for Bloomington and encourage others to do the same. Director Nelson reported the following upcoming shows at the BCPA: (1) The Four C Notes, September 12, 2025; (2) Leonid & Friends, September 18, 2025, has outsold the band Chicago in some venues; (3) AJ Croce, September 28, 2025; (4) John Cleese, October 8, 2025, which was almost sold out; (5) Napoleon Dynamite Live, October 10, 2025, was also selling well and Shadowcast movies, where a movie was shown in conjunction with live on-stage interaction, were becoming a big thing.

B. Discussion on 2025 Grossinger Motors Arena Upcoming Shows and Updates.
(Recommended Motion: None; Presentation Only.)

Director Nelson reported that the ice was being built within the next few days. He went on to inform the Commission that State Farm would have its annual State Farm's Million Meal Pack event on September 20th, where there would be 36 assembly lines to pack 1 million meals. The Midwest Food Bank would get the first two semis of packed meals, then two other organizations would get the other meals. He then reported on the following upcoming events at the Arena: A Day to Remember & Yellowcard, November 1; 2025, Dustin Lynch & Scotty McCreery, November 7, 2025; and Bloomington Bison Hockey returned for their 2025-2026 season. The Bloomington Bisons' Opening game would be against the Iowa Heartlanders on October 18, 2025.

C. Discussion on 2025 Cultural Commission Events. (Recommended Motion: None; Presentation Only.)

Discussion about 2025 Arts & Health Day

Director Nelson reported that we have a recap report on this year's event prepared by Commissioner Racki. Other organizations are doing similar events. All participating organizations want to return next year. Add for next year's event: Invite Green Top Grocery, Carle Health, Girl Scouts, Lake Run Club and Washington School to participate.

Commissioner Bricker suggested we add a nutrition component. Commissioner Collins suggested WBRP/Veggie Oasis may partner as well as Boys & Girls Club, YMCA, YWCA. Commissioner Racki offered that MaxLiving can do workshops. Also the event could direct participants to other sites for the afternoon, such as WBRP, Green Top. The event could feature a micro Mural Fest also that day or that weekend. **The date for next year's event will be July 25, 2026.**

Director Nelson suggested that the Commission spend time in December meeting to plan the event.

What went well?

We are the twentieth city to have an event. All but 4 bus passes were claimed by the end of the event. We started with 100.

What to adapt for?

* Weather: Move to a different location – Ballroom or Arena? Make a decision about a move by Wednesday noon for the Saturday event. Marketing -April/May start

* Notify CVB, A & E, Parks for Activity Booklet

- * Yard Signs "Art & Health Day this weekend" messaging can be used for later years too.
- * Press release for the 2026 event.
- * Commission Pontius offered that IWU's President Zenger wants to work together on the event - maybe students could get credit for nutrition or kinesiology programs? Shirk Center could be a rain location. Commissioner Bricker offered that we would need to be mindful of sporting events scheduled for the same day.

Other Events

- * September 27 - Worldwide Day of Play in Normal
- * Commissioner Browne performed on August 30
- * Commissioner Pontius asked whether there has been feedback to the City about the closing of the parking garage? Not much. Most traffic has moved to the Lincoln Garage on Front Street (near the Government Center).

6. New Business

Commissioner Rački reminded the Commission about a Welcoming Week (National Belonging Initiative) Event, on September 19, 2025, hosted by The Immigration Project would be held from 5-7 PM in Breaking Chains Advancing Increase's ("BCAI") space. Karli's space will be open for calmer activities. The fourth event in BCAI's Brunch series will be focused on Diwali on October 11, featuring four artists' light installations.

Commission Chair Rashid and Commissioner Shukla, who have helped organize this event, would attend the Diwali celebration.

Commissioner Rački reported on an upcoming Workshop series focused on kids, families, and groups learning American Sign Language ("ASL") and Spanish in both beginning and intermediate levels. Several art forms and trades and career paths can be explored

Commissioner Pontius discussed an upcoming 2026 TEDx Normal: "What's the 411?" presentation on April 11, 2026, at Heartland Community College. The application will be online by the end of September. If they get more speakers, there could be separate tracks. Agriculture might be a topic because Funk Seeds developed hybrid seeds here. Ecology Action Center might have a good topic also. TEDx has speaker coaches and also might be eligible for SHRM credits. Topics could also be suitable for Continuing Ed credits depending on the topic. In 2025, there were 9 speakers including Commissioner Collins. Twelve speakers might be too many. Recordings have been online since this summer. One of our speakers has had up to 75,000 views (Dr. Rebecca Hubbard). TEDx are local. TED Talks are national. Director Nelson commented that Ken Myzaska or others from Epiphany Farms might be good speakers on local agriculture. Commissioner Racki offered that the Illinois Soybean Association could talk too.

- * Commissioner Bricker suggested a Mid-year cultural musical talent event, possibly on a Saturday. She thought it could bring music to the restaurants. A possible name could be Music & Munch Series (we can't use that name because someone else already does) showcasing different musicians on different days at different restaurants—one restaurant and band per day. Possible days could be Saturdays or Sundays if businesses would open

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for it. Commissioner Collins asked if the Commission could build a working budget. Director Nelson also suggested galleries could participate too with an hour of live painting while you eat. The Commission discussed ways to fund this idea, such as Fundraising through tip jars, Dine & Donate, and grants. Best of Bloomington Battle of the Bands at the BCPA event could charge an admission fee and serve as the selection pipeline for musicians to ultimately be performers at the restaurants. Admission fees could help fund the program. Commissioner Bricker suggested a small group to kick-start planning.

Bring fundraising and vision ideas to the October Cultural Commission meeting.

7. Adjournment

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

Chair Rashid directed the Staff Liaison to call roll:

Ayes: Commissioner Bricker, Commissioner Collins, Commissioner Pontius, Commissioner Racki, Chair Rashid

Motion passes.


Meeting adjourned at 8:34 am.

City of Bloomington



Faisal Rashid, Commission Chair

Attest



Anthony Nelson, Staff Liaison

Anthony Nelson, Staff Liaison