



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
ARTS COUNCIL
KATJANA BALLANTYNE
MAYOR

Somerville Arts Council Board Meeting Minutes
City Hall Annex conference room, 1st floor
50 Evergreen Ave., Somerville MA 02145

Wednesday, March 12, 2025 | 6:30 pm

In attendance: Heather Balchunas, Joe Burgio, Becky Donner, Ada Ren-Mitchell, Gregory Jenkins, Emily Beattie, Ben Cuba, Sarah Beckmann, Christine Hayes, Yorgos Efthymiadis,

1. Approve minutes (5 min)

- Welcoming new up and coming members, Ben, Christine, and Sarah

2. Community News (20 min)

- SAC updated website is finally up, still work in progress, hopefully having a more functionally integrated community calendar, and better forms and systems
- The pit in Teele Square might get developed
- Our Yorgos is famous and won a big prize from the ICA!
- Milk Row Studio is working on bigger presence in Open Studios and other large events.
- Some performances are coming up at the Hive, SomArt Spaces.
- Potential poetry salon coming up.
- People are excited for PorchFest, and underground music festival (Aug 7-9th)
- A lot of local interest in open mic (Cambridge Poetry, Moth, Suitcase Stories by Global Arts)
- City Council Meeting link:
https://somervillema.granicus.com/player/clip/2636?view_id=1&redirect=true

3. LCC Celebration Recap (10 min)

- Quite the shindig! Good feelings, smiles, really important to get panel together with recipients. Color coding was a good idea but hard to find. Suggesting encouraging people to chat across disciplines.
- It was really great having the Mayor at the event.
- How might LCC change in the coming year?

4. Advocacy: Central Street Studios, Cultural Capacity Plan, Somernova Development (15 min)

- Armory will be seeking advisory board.

- Great win: Mayor plans to support Central Street Studios, to purchase it and keep it affordable. Art Stays Here is helping to organize the tenant association. Great precedent for a way to support studios that may experience similar situations.
- Cultural Capacity Plan, finally out, trying to keep an ongoing ambassador program as it has been a recurring theme/need, but hard to hire new people to organize this.
 - Upcoming music meetings to support local musicians to share knowledge
 - City will continue to explore what a cultural trust, and figure out financial mechanism.
- Somernova: **Land use committee hearing** later in **March 20th 6:30pm at City Hall and online**, will propose revision of ACE definition, additional overlays protect arts community. Union Sq Neighborhood Council is negotiating a community benefit agreement, and there will be a vote. Free and fast to be a member:
<https://sites.google.com/view/usnc/join?authuser=0>

5. Events: Art Beat dates & Porchfest updates (10 min)

- ArtBeat July 19th
- PorchFest: major change: not allowing porch performances on major thoroughfare streets, encourages neighborly exchanges!

6. Volunteering: Civic Day, Art Beat, other festivals (15 min)

- Civic Day, Sat April 5th, 2025, Noon – 4pm at city hall.
 - SAC event zine? (Ada, maybe Emily) Ada will ideate and talk to Greg
 - People can help with prep