



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, April 9, 2025 | 6:30 pm

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

1. Approve Agenda
2. Share: Community Check in (15 min)
 - a. Ben – playing at PorchFest
 - b. Ada – joined a comic book club
 - c. Heather – art retreat in NYC
 - d. Rachel – saw some good Mexican art. Learned about Collective Futures Fund (collectivefuturesfund.org)
 - e. Sarah – finally sworn in at City Hall! Looking forward to SPL poetry open mic, April is National Poetry Month
 - f. Christine – also sworn in now, went to see Impossible Music exhibit at Tufts University Art Galleries (multimedia!)
 - g. Yorgos – went to an art fair, art opening at MassArt including some of his work, ICA new exhibit on the 15th!
 - h. Joe – Civic Day, most people love it, some people don't, spoke with Will at Somerville City workforce development, saw Harvard Artfinity Augmented Reality exhibit includes historical monuments and dancers. Maybe have an AR hackathon for SAC, or LCC grant!
 - i. Emily – there will be a party where artists are invited to add to installation, funded by SomerNova, dance event called "O" coming soon. A lot of dance performances about 35 applications for ArtBeat!
3. Report Back: MAR 20th Arts advocacy meeting, Civic day experience, Intercambio (20 min)

- a. Intercambio: Been around for 12 years, conversations and cultural exchange, native English speakers paired with non-English speakers and ask questions about cultural experiences. Unstructured, community bonding, getting to know neighbors. Over 40 people applied this time. Many non-English speakers stayed on this year. Mayor attended one of the sessions. There was a mini play. No summer sessions. Will invite some participants to apply for LCC grants.
 - b. March 20th Arts Advocacy – Ben went in person, people sought assurance about ACE space, wanted PLA and community benefits, over 100 speakers in-person and on zoom.
 - c. Civic Day – maybe businesses can sponsor PorchFest, maybe bands can submit request for a stipend. How to take the money to give to bands? Maybe go towards a music charity or LCC music panel. Diverse crowd of families, teens in performance groups, non-English speakers, some older people
4. Onward: Upcoming advocacy meetings & events (10 min)
 - a. April 21st Preservation Party 57 Central Fundraiser
 - b. April 23rd Art exchange at Warehouse XI, artist from Georgia
 - c. April 25th Rachel honored at the Armory, GlowBall
 - d. April 29th Open Poetry night
 - e. April 30th Musicians meet-up
5. Budget Explanation as pertains to LCC and SAC work (10 min)
 - a. LCC funds mostly comes from the state
 - b. If you want to advocate, check the mass creative website! They're doing a huddle tomorrow April 10th, 2025
6. LCC new budget item: paying panelists w/ MOU, & precedents. (10 min)
 - a. Historically volunteer work. Cambridge pays their panelists. Would need a written agreement.
 - b. 7 panels, about 3-4 panelists = about 25 total panelists, 200 each,
 - i. Board has voted yes
 - ii. How this will be done, will be for later discussion
 - c. MOU = memorandum of understanding
7. LCC preparation: LCC prep workshops, panel chairs, outline timeline and set time for process for new members. (20 Min)
 - a. Panelists do not need to be residents
 - b. Potential panelists from pool of LCC grantees: 2 year gap between now and when they got the grant before they can be recruitment
8. Update: ArtBeat volunteer needs? (5 min)
 - a. Shifting the time by 1 hour. Heather may need running-around support early in the day.