



# Culture, Arts & Heritage Commission

## Meeting Minutes

Thursday, December 11, 2025

12 p.m.

Vancouver City Hall

Aspen Room

415 W. 6th Street

Vancouver, WA

### Commissioners Present:

Richardson, Reid, Harris, Ford, Tan, Rafferty, Mendoza, Gaspar

### Commissioners Absent:

Percival

### Item 1: Call to Order

President Richardson called the December 11, 2025, meeting of the Culture, Arts & Heritage Commission to order at 12:03 p.m. The Commission met in Aspen Room at Vancouver City Hall and via Microsoft Teams.

### Item 2: Approval of Minutes

**Motion** by Harris, seconded by Ford, and approved unanimously to adopt the minutes from November 13, 2025.

### Item 3: Action Items

None.

## Members

**Brad Richardson**  
President

**Linda Reid**  
Vice President

Lee Rafferty  
Michelle Tan  
Rebekah Percival  
Ricky Gaspar  
Rosalinda Mendoza  
Russell Ford, CCAC  
Shon-Lueiss Harris

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#### **Item 4: Workshop**

##### **a. Introduction to Jeff Towery**

Perlick introduced Deputy City Manager, Jeff Towery, Deputy City Manager, and shared some background in his career in previous City Manager roles. Towery has spent most of his career in Oregon and is excited to now be part of the Vancouver community. He thanked the commissioners for their service and commitment to the community in our work at the City.

##### **b. Performing Arts Center Update**

Natasha Ramras shared an overview of the status of the performing arts center and thanked commissioner Tan for her work as a stakeholder on the project. Her valuable feedback and expertise have been well received by the project team.

Commissioners were encouraged to watch the upcoming Council workshop taking place this following Monday at 4pm in the Council Chambers to learn more current information about the project direction, pro forma, performance types, and facility cost.

Ramras outlined that the City has conducted multiple studies about the type and size of a facility that would be best supported in Vancouver. In 2024, the recommendation from our consultant was to consider 3 different sized facilities to accommodate local demand. As the small venue, the Arts Hub addresses the needs of emerging organizations that cannot yet generate a lot of sales, serving as a place for performing and rehearsal needs. A medium, 400-600-seat auditorium would serve as a venue for organizations in the middle stages. Finally, there is a strong demand for a 1000-1200-seat auditorium for large scale performances.

These needs were shared with Council in 2024, and staff were directed to create a stakeholder group to ensure representation among different sectors on the committee. Engaging with the consultant, the committee drafted a pro forma, operating model, and governance structure. The consultant, AMS, has an extensive background in analysis in performing arts centers across Washington and the country, and access to case studies and relevant construction data. They also were involved with the Portland 5 venues as well as the Patricia Reser Center for the Arts.

Venue flexibility was a priority to allow for accommodating both large and medium-sized events. The proposed site is south of the Weber building near City hall.

Tan shared that her experience in the sessions was reminiscent of having gone through pioneering building a new arts center in Singapore on a waterfront in 2002. Though there were many challenges, stakeholders and the community saw the need for the realization of the project, which is now being expanded to include more capacity. She emphasized how capacity building doesn't happen overnight and takes time. It will be vital to manage expectations, keep the community informed and involved, and focus on growing the ecosystem that contributes to further economic and cultural vitality in our area.

Reid asked if there will be other uses for the building to bring in revenue during non-event days. Ramras confirmed that there will be a rental model, as well as opportunities for philanthropic donations. It was confirmed that the arts group in east Vancouver were approached but will not be participating in the project. Rafferty thanked Tan for her representation on the committee. Ford inquired whether parking will be part of the facility, and Ramras said there is a requirement in city code to provide a certain amount of parking. There are more discussions to come to address site parking requirements.

Harris asked what steps we are taking to ensure small groups with limited budgets can participate. Consultants recommend the Arts Hub as the appropriate venue to meet the needs of smaller groups. Tan added that we

can create awareness and interest by promoting the Arts Hub as an incubator for those groups. Christine Richardson agreed that part of the education process is demonstrating how this project is not going to be duplicating or competing with the work of smaller groups.

### **c. End of Year Arts Hub Review**

Christine Richardson shared an overview of the Arts Hub usage in 2025.

In 2025 the Arts Hub welcomed several monthly and weekly groups, spanning all of the art forms. This list has expanded this year, totaling to 2,167 hours of community use in 2025. Community participation was measured at 14,886 times where arts/culture users and guests walked through the door.

To ensure culturally informed programming, theARTScentered tracked the following information voluntarily provided by participants:

- 6 spoken languages, with 29% speaking a language other than English at home
- Ages:
  - Youth (3-18) 32%
  - Young & Mid-Adults (19-54) 45%
  - Older Adults/Seniors (55-96) 38%
- Other identities:
  - 12% of users were born outside the US
  - 12.5% identify as having a disability
  - 0.8% are veterans
- 8 Ethnic Identities

Arts data includes 35% representing visual arts, 30% representing performing arts, 20% representing literary arts, and 15% representing fiber arts.

Partner events included First Fridays, Freeform, theARTScentered programming, the Pollinator Festival, Sacred Winds & Timeless Strings Candlelight Concert, Fiber Arts, Watercolor Society, and Native Made Holiday Market. The center was also utilized as a winter shelter last winter.

Christine highlighted that commissioners can help by connecting with community members and encouraging them to reach out to theARTScentered if they are looking for space. Commissioners can also advocate for funding in future phases of building repair, and join in on the events.

Reid thanked Christine for all of her hours activating the space and remarked on the impressive numbers that were tracked. She asked where the revenue is used, and Christine provided that there is a sliding scale fee based on the organization's size and needs to ensure that folks can collectively build capacity while keeping the facility activated. Perlick added that we are currently in the consultant selection process, and we are excited about the firms we are reviewing. As part of the community engagement process, there will be further work sessions with local organizations. Ford commented that he is glad to see engagement with so many youth, and that it is a great location to have near a school.

### **d. Inspire Vancouver Branding Plan**

Harris and Burton introduced the branding plan for the cultural access program and gave an overview of who is involved, and their respective roles and responsibilities.

- Stakeholders: Representing the City, defining the ask and determining what the branding must include. Informing the project early on.
- Work Group: Guiding the work, collaborating with the agency partners to determine how to solve the ask. Intermediary between stakeholders and agencies, involved more in the day-to-day.
- Agency Partners: Creating the brand guidelines, website, templates, and other necessary access to equip the City for this project.

Burton shared that the branding group status reports from November and December are available in the meeting packets. We are aiming to launch and announce the program publicly in March. Work will be ongoing to ensure the brand components represent Arts, Culture, Heritage & Science. In building the user experience, simplicity will be key to ensure they can get the information they need.

Another update is anticipated in January, with a presentation in February for brand approval. A formal request was made to recommend 3 commissioners to join the subcommittee. Donovan added that this subcommittee would be meeting independently and keeping the task force informed. Tan, Ford, and Mendoza volunteered.

**MOTION:** Reid moved to create a subcommittee to review branding results before proposed to the full commission, with Tan, Ford, and Mendoza as active members. The motion was seconded by Rafferty and unanimously approved.

Burton will be in touch with subcommittee members in January with follow-up information.

#### **Item 5: Community Forum**

None presented.

#### **Item 6: Commission and Staff Reports**

##### **a. Cultural Services Manager**

Donovan gave the following updates:

- We have completed our sponsorship packages for VAMF and will email them out to commissioners. Different levels are represented. We have a call for artists and vendors that will be released soon and open through January.
- Big shoutout to Rafferty and Reid for serving on the commission for 6 years after putting CAHC together in 2018. Donovan expressed gratitude for their dedication, time and energy, serving in various roles in the public art committee as well as officers. They were thanked for uplifting the creative community with the impact of their work, including developing the CAH Plan, expanding the arts district, partnering with CAHC-supported public art projects, restoring the grant program, advising on art in public spaces, advising on the original ArtsHQ and now the future arts center, and helping bring Inspire Vancouver to fruition.
- A reminder that a non-meeting happy hour for commissioners will be held at Grant house at 5pm this evening.

##### **b. Commission President**

Reid congratulated Richardson for his new appointment as Commissioner for the Port of Camas Washougal.

##### **c. Clark County Arts Commission (CCAC)**

Ford gave the following updates:

- CCAC had the idea of using different facilities around county to have regular monthly art conversations, as a way to get folks out in the county.
- CCAC asked schools if they would be interested in artists from CCOS (Clark County Open Studios, ARTSTRA). This year they will initiate the program at VSAA, starting workshops in early February. The first project will involve students conducting historical research for clay projects as part of a permanent sculpture garden. Reid recommended tying this in with an America250 event.

**Item 7: Open Discussion and New Business**

Public Art Committee: we will look at the public art plan (staff), to support what we are anticipating, will likely hear about it in the spring at earliest.

Staff are examining the public art plan in anticipation of reinstating the Public Art Committee. Further updates will likely come in the spring at the earliest.

Ruby Lewis was selected as our newest commissioner and will start in January. At next month's meeting we will also be holding elections for the Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary seats. Rafferty will also be leaving the vacancy open, and we will be working to recruit.

Tan shared an update on FVRL regarding concerns regarding the mission and values of the library. She will share details of their next upcoming board meeting with Nilo to distribute to commissioners.

**Item 8: Next Meeting – January 11, 2025**

Richardson gave a brief summary of agenda items planned for the December meeting.

**Item 9: Between Now & Then**

PUBLIC NOTICE: Commissioners from the Parks & Recreation Advisory Commission and the Culture, Arts & Heritage Commission are invited to attend an optional holiday social gathering to acknowledge offboarding members on December 11th. In accordance with Section 42.30.070 of the Open Public Meetings Act, no action as defined in the Act will be taken during this social event

**Adjourned**

This meeting adjourned at 1:38pm.