

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, April 9, 2026

4:30pm

Vancouver Arts Hub

1007 E Mill Plain Blvd
Vancouver, WA 98663

Commissioners Present:

Ford, Harris, Lewis, Gaspar, Richardson, Percival, Tan

Commissioners Absent:

Mendoza

Item 1: Call to Order

President Lewis called the April 9, 2026, meeting of the Culture, Arts & Heritage Commission to order at 4:33p.m. The Commission met in the main hall at Vancouver Arts Hub and via Microsoft Teams.

Item 2: Approval of Minutes

Motion by Ford, seconded by Richardson, and approved unanimously to adopt the minutes from March 12, 2026.

Item 3: Action Items

None presented.

Item 4: Workshop

a. Cultural Stakeholder Asset Mapping Update

Cooley shared that his team is advancing goals around comprehensive cultural mapping to gather data on local stakeholders and community assets. Meeting invitations have gone out to commissioners and other community stakeholders to share feedback and recommendations for organizations and individuals to add to the master contact list.

Members

Ruby Lewis
President

Brad Richardson
Vice President

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

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It was noted that we will need to add tags and categories to the known arts organizations to create a more refined search system. There are other lists that need to be incorporated, namely from local school-led groups and contacts and groups of faith communities.

Commissioners were welcomed to add to and share the list provided. Next week the meetings with commissioners will start. There is an online form for those in the community who are interested in joining the list.

Lewis asked how organizations can join the list. Cooley confirmed that there is the ability for folks to add themselves to the list and his team could create a link with a current list for the public to track. An open discussion was held regarding deciding factors for including and highlighting individuals, businesses, spaces, and venues that could be updated in the database. Ford asked how to use existing email lists to share information without oversaturating. Cooley shared that there are filters in the spreadsheet that will allow us to categorize messaging to tailored groups in the community list. Lewis commended the inclusivity and diversity of the organizations on the stakeholder list so far as a collective effort.

Gaspar asked about security and protection of the contact information on stakeholder lists. Cooley confirmed that teams will need to be thoughtful about where lists are published, and that no personal information is shared, and that formal record requests will need to be made to obtain internal information. Lewis encouraged artists with personal home addresses attached to their businesses to consider PO boxes as a resource. Richardson added the merit of adding consent in the process for use of information as we collect contact information. An open discussion was held regarding the usage of preferred contact information on the intake form.

b. Vancouver Arts Hub Update

Stacey Donovan (PRCS Cultural Services Manager) and Kevin Kearns (Capital Projects Project Manager, General Services) gave an overview of the Vancouver Arts Hub project background and next steps.

The project journey from historic library building to a community arts building was outlined, highlighting the Culture, Arts & Heritage plan adoption in 2028, relocation of the library administration and City building ownership in 2020-2021, building reuse study in 2022, and assessment of critical building repairs. In 2024, the initial building activation was launched with theARTscentered, with budget approval for critical repairs.

The building reuse study involved a broad community survey with over 1,000 responses, stakeholder interviews, community engagement events, exploration of operating plans from other organizations, and creating early design concepts. Final outcomes of the building reuse study revealed strong community support, a better understanding of needs and opportunities, endorsement from City Council, and funding for critical repairs.

The building assessment, completed by MENG in 2022, showed that the building is in generally good condition, but some deficiencies were identified including a failing roof, hazardous materials, and lack of fire suppression. Based on the findings of the Building Reuse Study, City Council approved limited funding in the 2025-2026 budget to address priority projects including roof replacement and emergency HVAC upgrades. These projects are focused on structural preservation and maintaining building comfort and are not intended to guide or constrain future design.

Goals for initial activation include open space to support current community needs, development of proof of concept for future operations, understanding community needs and capacity to inform future planning, and building excitement and investment in the project. Donovan shared upcoming [workshops and events](#) at the Arts Hub that are available to the public.

Initial activation outcomes have shown an established environment that welcomes a wide range of local artists and organizations. We have developed stronger relationships and renewed community trust by providing critical available space for artists and organizations to thrive.

The team gave an overview of current and future work:

- Engagement – Hear from building users and the community. This will include building on previous input through targeted outreach, as well as broader community outreach.
- Analysis – Use what we've learned to inform future plans to develop an activity profile to inform the building program, conceptual design, and implementation plan. This will guide the operational strategy recommendations and financial operating forecast.
- Design – Create a phased approach for design and construction. This includes development of up to three options supported by stakeholder feedback and initial cost estimates. A preferred option will be identified, followed by the development of a multiphase implementation plan.
- Operating – Recommend an operating plan with cost recovery.
 - Goals:
 - Serve all in the community
 - Activity day and night
 - Financial stability and scalability
 - Private/public partnerships
 - Flexibility
 - Lines of Business:
 - Studio rentals and memberships
 - Education programs and classes
 - Events and space rentals
 - Retail/concessions
 - Contributed support

The design team is made up of Opsis (conceptual design), AMS (business and operational planning), and Framework (stakeholder and community outreach). Phase 1 Masterplan begins in the spring of 2026 through fall of 2026. Phase 2 will include design and implementation, starting in fall 2026 with phased construction set to begin in fall of 2027.

Kearns introduced key project team members: Steve Nelson (Design Team Project Manager, Opsis), Joe Baldwin (Principal, Opsis), Jim Kavelage (Founder, Opsis), Bill Blake (AMS Planning & Research), and Leslie Bane (Framework).

Masterplan schedule and future engagement with CAHC was outlined:

- April
 - CAHC Kickoff
 - Information gathering
 - Stakeholder interviews
- May - Stakeholder interviews
- June
 - Council update
 - CAHC update
- July - CAHC Update of draft plan
- August - Council Presentation
- September – CAHC update of final plan

Commission involvement was highlighted. Commissioners can attend committee meetings, help increase community awareness, provide guidance to staff on design and operating recommendations before City Council consideration, and advocate for continued investment in the project and build community stakeholder support.

An open discussion was held regarding accessibility to public transportation in proximity to the building and parking solutions. Gaspar noted the importance of creating synergy to support the small local organizations as an incubator and resource and not duplicate or compete with existing efforts. Richardson encouraged the team to consider gaps and needs in the creative economy and ecosystem. Kearns noted that design flexibility and adaptability will be critical.

c. Inspire Vancouver Update

Commissioners were reminded to sign up for the ambassador training for Inspire Vancouver. Donovan announced that the inspire Vancouver website is live as of today and can be viewed online at <http://www.inspirevancouver.org/>.

Burton shared that the eligibility checker will be launched next week as a tool for organizations to learn more about grants on the project website. The grant process workgroup also held its first meeting to develop grant reporting, application process, and performance metrics. More updates from the grant process workgroup will come next month. We currently are waiting to get the software contract finalized.

d. America250 Update

Richardson shared that the committee met to coordinate existing events that are aligned with the larger event.

Item 4: Community Forum

None presented.

Item 5: Commission and Staff Reports

a. Cultural Services Manager

Donovan gave the following updates:

- The open seat for the vacant commissioner position is open until 4/15. At next month's meeting, the review committee will give recommendations to present to CAHC and city council.

b. Commission President

President Lewis gave the following updates:

- Artists: if you have any art, please reach out to other artists VAMF has a call for artists. The deadline is coming up in June for submissions.
- A reminder to commissioners to please check your city emails on a regular basis for time-sensitive projects.
- Please RSVP to Nilo before meetings to indicate online or in person attendance.

c. Clark County Arts Commission

Ford gave the following updates on CCAC:

- May 1, First Friday, this space will host 40 local sculptors and 3 arts educators giving artist talks on the benefits 3D art and sculpting. 6 week show, running through mid-June.

Item 6: Open Discussion and New Business

Richardson asked for an update on legal Council, Donovan shared that we are waiting to hear back from the lead City attorney.

Previous commissioner Lee Rafferty shared that she met a local Vancouver on her travels who excitedly shared about the old library being repurposed into the Arts Hub.

Item 7: Next Meeting – May 14, 2026

Donovan gave a brief summary of agenda items planned for the May meeting.

Item 8: Between Now & Then

Commissioners and Staff shared any known events:

- Staff will be sending commissioners calendar invitations for the work group.
- African Fashion Show PDX is hosting this year in Vancouver on 4/18 from 12:30pm – 6pm, tickets are available on their website.
- Ricky's space is hosting a show on First Friday featuring Polynesian artwork.
- Richardson shared a shoutout that it is National Poetry Month!

This meeting adjourned at 6:44pm.