



Culture, Arts and Heritage Commission Meeting Agenda

September 10, 2026

4:30 PM

City Hall

Aspen Room, 1st Floor

415 W. 6th St

Vancouver, WA 98660

Virtual Meeting Credentials:

Microsoft Teams Meeting

Join:

<https://teams.microsoft.com/meet/2890188431108?p=hdV5S7MQtQ24J20N>
[In](#)

Meeting ID:289 018 843 110 8

Passcode:dY2n4nc6

- 1. Call to Order and Roll Call - 4:30pm**
- 2. Approval of Minutes - 4:35pm**
 - a. Approval of the minutes from the August 13 Regular Meeting, and the August 25 Special Meeting
- 3. Action Items - 4:40pm**
 - a. Officer Election: Vice Chair
- 4. Workshop - 4:45pm**
 - a. Madrona Services: Introduction and Initial Feedback (20 Minutes)
 - b. Updates on Inspire Vancouver Grant Approval Process (20 minutes)

Culture, Arts and Heritage Commission

MEMBERS

Ruby Lewis, *President*

Vacant, *Vice President*

Vacant

Ricky Gaspar

Rosalinda Mendoza

Michelle Tan

Shon-Lueiss Harris

Russell Ford, CACC

Vacant

Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services

415 W. 6th Street

Vancouver, WA 98660

TTY: 711

www.cityofvancouver.us

- c. Inspire Vancouver Grant Review Committee Process (15 Minutes)
- d. General Update on Grant Numbers (10 Minutes)
- e. Commission Recruitment Update (5 Minutes)

5. Community Forum - 6:00pm

To provide public testimony, please see instructions below.

6. Commission and Staff Reports - 6:05pm

- a. Cultural Services Manager
- b. Commission President
- c. Clark County Art Commission

7. Open Discussion & New Business - 6:15pm

8. Next Meeting - 6:25pm

9. Between Now & Then - 6:28pm

Adjournment - 6:30pm

Community Forum Instructions

Time is reserved at each Commission meeting for Community Communications. During this time, the public may speak on any issue. Each speaker will have three minutes to address the Commission. Community members who wish to submit detailed testimony that may exceed three minutes of speaking time are encouraged to email their comments so they can be included with the meeting materials.

Community Communications participants are encouraged to pre-register by email at parksrecculture@cityofvancouver.us or by phone at 360-487-8311, but may comment during this period without pre-registration; options for Community Communications are:

1. In Writing: Public comments can be submitted in writing via email to parksrecculture@cityofvancouver.us by 5:00 pm the day before the meeting.
2. Remotely: attend the Microsoft Teams meeting online; be prepared to speak online during the Commission meeting at the time of Community Communications.
3. In Person: Fill out a Public Comment form in person prior to the start of the Community Communications portion of the meeting.

City Hall is served by C-TRAN. Route information and schedules are available online at www.c-tran.com. You also may reach C-TRAN at (360) 695-0123 for more information on times, fares, and routes.

Anyone needing language interpretation services or accommodations with a disability at a Vancouver City Council meeting may contact the City Manager's staff at (360) 487-8600 (RELAY: 711). Assistive listening devices and live Closed Captioning are available for the deaf, hard of hearing and general public use. Please notify a staff person if you wish to use one of the devices. Every attempt at reasonable accommodation will be made. To request this agenda in another format, please also contact the phone numbers listed above.

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, August 13, 2026

4:30pm

City Hall, Aspen Room

415 W. 6th Street

Vancouver, WA 98660

Commissioners Present:

Lewis, Harris, Ford, Bennett, Gaspar, and Tan

Commissioners Percival and Richardson have submitted their resignations from the commission due to other commitments.

Commissioners Absent:

Commissioner Mendoza was absent.

Item 1: Call to Order

President Lewis called the August 13, 2026, meeting of the Culture, Arts & Heritage Commission to order at 4:32p.m. The Commission met in the main hall at the City Hall Aspen Room and via Microsoft Teams.

Item 2: Approval of Minutes

Motion by Ford, seconded by Bennett, and approved unanimously to adopt the CAHC minutes from July 2026.

Item 3: Workshop

a. Inspire Vancouver Foundational Program Overview / Website Review

Hull (Grants Coordinator) and Ketcham (Communications Specialist) shared in-depth updates for the CAHC regarding the 2026 Application Workshop. 2026 Inspire Vancouver Grants invest in cultural programming for our community in several ways:

- Helps local nonprofit arts, culture, heritage, and science groups bring programs to more neighborhoods and audiences in Vancouver

Members

Ruby Lewis
President

Vacant
Vice President

Michelle Tan
Ricky Gaspar
Rosalinda Mendoza
Russell Ford, CCAC
Shon-Lueiss Harris
Jeanne Bennett
Vacant

**Parks, Recreation and
Cultural Services
Department**

P.O. Box 1995
Vancouver, WA 98668
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cityofvancouver.us

- This year, we are offering grants in three categories, ranging from \$5k - \$150k
- Grants can be used to create and support public programming and/or support operating costs for an organization
- Grant funds are paid at award
- Applications will close September 10, and awards will be announced mid-October

Grant Categories:

Innovation Grants – Supporting bold ideas and creative risk-taking

- Award: \$25k or less
- 8-month grant window
- Unrestricted funds to try new things
- Examples:
 - Pilot a new program
 - Collaborating with a new partner
 - Reach a new audience
 - Explore an untested approach

Impact Grants – Strengthening and scaling what's already making a difference

- Award: \$75k or less
- 8-month grant window
- Unrestricted funds to support your work
- Examples:
 - Offer more programs
 - Expand your work to a new area
 - Host an event or festival
 - Cover the cost of program materials

Comprehensive Grants – Building stronger organizations and a thriving cultural community

- Award: \$150k or less
- 8-month grant window
- Unrestricted funds to sustain and build capacity
- Examples:
 - Support operating costs
 - Upgrade technology
 - Invest in research
 - Maintain and expand free and low-cost programs

Basic eligibility requirements for Inspire Vancouver Grants include public programs or experiences for Vancouver residents, primary purpose to advance or preserve arts, culture, heritage, or science, located within Vancouver city limits or provide at least 55% of your programs within City limits, and nonprofit groups, or group/individuals with a nonprofit fiscal sponsor.

Understanding eligibility exceptions: Eligibility is determined by organization/applicant, not project. Location exception: at least 55% of programming held within Vancouver city limits. Groups and individuals must demonstrate that their project has public benefit and is not commercial in nature.

Hull summarized frequently asked questions about grant categories, including how to select the right category for the project, whether one organization can apply in multiple categories, and whether one can apply in the same category as a group that is being sponsored.

Ketcham shared a tour of the resources available on the Inspire Vancouver website, including the Cultural Access Tax information, Meet the Commission, Equity and Access Index, Eligibility Checker, Fiscal Sponsorship, Definitions, and FAQs. The Events page will display application and grantee events to feature all projects that are being funded. The website also features a tab with information about all of the grant categories.

An overview on fiscal sponsors was given; the organizations hold primary responsibility for grant administration, receive grant funds to issue, oversee and manage records, may retain a fee of up to 10%, and can access their grantee's application and reports in the grant portal.

Organizations that can be a fiscal sponsor must have a mission aligned with the projects they sponsor, be a 501c (3) incorporated in Washington and recognized by the IRS and must have a primary purpose to advance or preserve arts, culture, heritage, or science. Eligibility is determined by the organization/applicant, not the project. The sponsored organization/applicant must meet ALL other eligibility requirements.

Betancourt shared feedback and scenarios from the community received during workshops and grant meetings. Concerns include inclusivity, accessibility, organization capacity and infrastructure.

Eligibility interpretation (guidance needed) – policy states “Fiscal Sponsor must have a mission aligned with advancing or preserving arts, culture, heritage, or science”

- Should this be interpreted
 - **Narrowly** – fiscal sponsors must have culture, arts, heritage, or science as their primary purpose, OR
 - **More broadly** - fiscal sponsors must do culture, arts, heritage, or science activities, but they can have a different primary purpose
 - Organizations that do NOT do cultural activities remain ineligible

Potential impacts of interpretation – discussion on who would benefit, and who would be left out

- Asking groups who already have a mission-aligned fiscal sponsor to find a new sponsor could limit program accessibility
- New, large sources of funding could expose gaps in administration capacity at eligible fiscal sponsor organizations
- Orgs that already offer fiscal sponsorship could have an advantage
- Orgs that already offer fiscal sponsorship could be stretched too thin

The floor was open for discussion on fiscal sponsorship and feedback from community members asking for recommendations for fiscal sponsorship to ensure success of the program and capacity building. Commissioners discussed reconsidering the broader interpretation to minimize restrictions upon tapping into existing relationships with potential fiscal sponsors. Betancourt highlighted that the tight timeframe is also a strong factor for this cycle's development and reiterated that organizations that do NOT do cultural activities would remain ineligible.

Bennett pondered what we can do to help local organizations become eligible fiscal sponsors with the tools to succeed. Betancourt shared that we would facilitate workshops to continue to provide support and build infrastructure for our local organizations.

Gaspar asked if there are limitations that can be placed on fiscal sponsors who would have the advantage of sponsoring multiple projects. Perlick shared that a 10% fee is a standard practice, and any changes to that would require adoption of amended policy. Lewis suggested postponing this vote into the next cycle, since the current cycle is now open for applications; she added that legal representation for CAHC will be available in October.

Betancourt shared that 32 accounts have been made in the application portal so far.

b. Fund Distribution Overview

Stokke (Senior Management Analyst) shared an overview of Inspire Vancouver Funding.

Cultural Access Tax – Local Sales Tax Fund

- Tax adopted by City Council in Dec. 2024
- Fund established in Jan. 2025
- Tax collection began in April 2025
- Two-month delay between tax collection and City receiving revenue
- First revenue received in June 2025
- This fund can only be used for Inspire Vancouver grants and administration

Current projections: Estimated Revenue Collections (Year One program allocation) are currently allocated at \$7,000,000, with actual/awarded amount currently at \$7,221,446.

- Impact (\$700,000)
- Innovation (\$350,000)
- Comprehensive (\$700,000)
- School Transportation (\$700,000)
- Administration (\$700,000)
- Flexible (\$700,000)

Total: \$3,850,000

Projected Carryforward to Year Two: \$3,150,000

Next Steps – staff will continue tracking actual revenue vs. projections, work through the City's budget process, and develop an annual report (July-June) for Commission.

Donovan reiterated that Capital grants and School opportunity grants will be opened in the next grant cycle. Perlick shared that while the 7-year grant window covers the collection of the tax, the grant expenditures are anticipated to spend-down beyond that period (impacts and programs will not have a harsh cut-off date exactly 7 years from now).

Rollout for the first cycle was discussed. Perlick reiterated that the year one cycle recommendations were approved by CAHC at the July 9, 2026, meeting, and moved to City Council on July 20. Gaspar inquired about increasing allocated grant categories, Perlick highlighted that this would require City Council approval of an amendment before the award period in October. Harris acknowledged that feedback received called for smaller grant sizes in the pilot cycle of the program.

It was determined that a motion to change fiscal sponsorship to a broader interpretation can be revisited at a later time, if necessary.

c. Review and Approve GRC Recommendations

Commissioner Harris shared that considerations for the top 5 applicants for the GRC included grant writing, fundraising expertise, and program participation.

Based on the criteria determined by the selection committee, candidates Carol Mabbott and Aliess Kingsley were highlighted for their backgrounds in fundraising, connection to the arts and culture sector, and knowledge about the Inspire Vancouver program and policy. In addition, they bring program evaluation, community connection, and commitment to racial equity and youth mentorship.

Action: Bennett made a motion to approve the recommended candidates for primary and secondary positions in the GRC. The motion was seconded by Ford and unanimously approved.

Item 4: Community Forum

None presented.

Item 5: Commission and Staff Reports

a. Cultural Services Manager

Donovan had no updates at this time.

b. Commission President

President Lewis had no updates at this time.

c. Clark County Arts Commission

Ford had no updates at this time.

Item 6: Open Discussion and New Business

Update

Item 7: Next Meeting – September 10, 2026

Donovan gave a brief summary of agenda items planned for the September meeting, including a recruitment update.

This meeting adjourned at 6:31pm.

Special Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, August 25, 2026

5:30pm

Microsoft Teams Online

Commissioners Present:

Ford, Bennett, Mendoza, Gaspar, Tan, and Harris

Commissioners Absent:

Lewis

Guests:

David Linehan (Madrona Law Group, PLLC)

Item 1: Call to Order

Commissioner Bennett made a motion to call August 25, 2026, Special Meeting of the Culture, Arts & Heritage Commission to order at 5:32p.m. The motion was seconded by Gaspar and unanimously approved in the absence of President Lewis.

The Commission met via Microsoft Teams.

Item 2: Introduction to Madrona Law & Legal Services Overview

Perlick provided background on the City Attorney's Office determined that CAHC operates as a separate legal entity as a Public Development Authority. We received recommendations about a number of firms who could provide legal support to CAHC, and staff held an initial interview after research and contacting multiple firms.

Perlick introduced David Linehan from Madrona Law Group, PLLC. Linehan shared his practice and exclusive background in municipal law advice, intellectual property, and code enforcement matters. He has practiced law for over 25 years, representing public and private clients across a broad range of legal issues.

Members

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Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Department

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Linehan brings experience in matters of culture and arts, culturally relevant projects, art festivals, museum openings, and artists of all levels in securing copyright and trademark rights.

Rachel Turpin, also from Madrona Law Group, would be serving the CAHC. While Turpin was unable to attend, she has experience working for parks departments with cultural programs, public arts, and has helped facilitate negotiations in public-private partnerships. Both would be available for future meetings and would serve as CAHC's legal team if selected.

As specialists in general municipal law, Linehan and Turpin have expressed interest in serving the CAHC for its robust program and high community impact and come highly recommended by PRCS staff.

An open Q&A was held for commissioner questions. Tan asked for clarification regarding whether the Client in the Madrona contract represents the CAHC as a governing body, or the President. Perlick clarified that the client is the CAHC collectively, and the contract represents the President's signature as authorized by the CAHC. Perlick also shared that the City is responsible for the contract invoices.

Bennett asked for examples of issues coming up to CAHC that would require legal counsel. Perlick noted navigation of potential conflicts of interest as an example. Other examples include grant approvals and outlining roles and responsibilities according to what is ordained by City Council. If selected, Madrona's duties would serve the Commission as its own entity, operating by consensus to direct work.

Ford and Gaspar asked for clarification around confidentiality. As a governing body working under the OPMA, Madrona can help determine whether the requested topic is appropriate for discussing in an open meeting, or in an executive session.

Gaspar asked if the services extend to the Grant Review Committee (GRC). If authorized, Madrona can work with the GRC. The Madrona team would follow the client's objectives and goals, and it was recommended going through legal review for consideration before any commission agreements or RFPs.

Perlick added that staff are committed to City legal counsel and Commission legal counsel working in collaboration to support our work.

Commissioners thanked city staff for bringing Madrona before the commission for consideration, and thanked Linehan for his time and expressed enthusiasm for the team's background.

Upon conclusion of the commission's questions, Linehan withdrew from the meeting to allow for open discussion among commissioners. Commissioner Bennett also left the meeting prior to action items due to a scheduling conflict.

Item 3: Action Items

Gaspar commented that Turpin and Linehan's backgrounds will serve as an asset. Gaspar asked if there is a budget limit for communication with Madrona. Perlick acknowledged that billing rates will be investment for Madrona to complete initial research, review agendas, and attend every meeting. It was agreed that the commission check in after a quarter to assess if the services are meeting commission needs.

Tan expressed appreciation of the City's offer of legal support, commenting on the timeliness. She posed that the team consider support for subcommittees if the need arises. Mendoza and Ford expressed appreciation and enthusiasm for working with Madrona. Harris added that they would be valuable for onboarding new commissioners in the future.

Action: The commission held a vote to direct the President to sign the engagement letter for contract with Madrona Law, PLLC for CAHC legal counsel; contingent on consent from commissioner Bennett to ensure quorum. The pending motion was made by Gaspar, seconded by Tan, and unanimously approved.

The motion was later approved by Bennett and unanimously passed.

Item 4: New Business – Volunteers Needed

Perlick shared that the City of Vancouver will be holding a Boards & Commissions Open House on September 9 at the Cascade Park Community Library to boost board recruitment and engagement. The event will be held from 2:30pm – 4:30pm. Nilo will email commissioners more details about the event in the request for volunteers to represent CAHC.

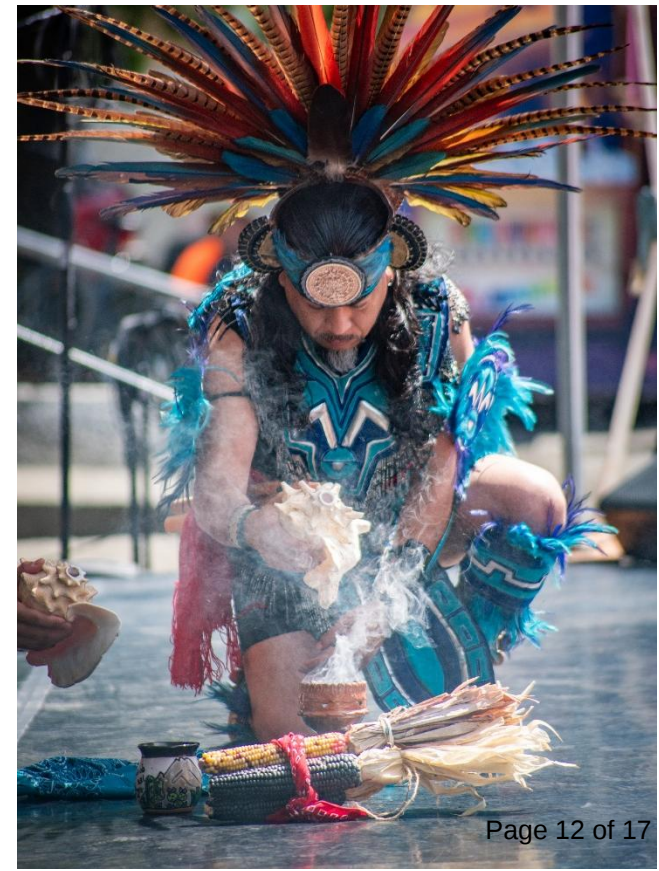
Tan shared that she submitted letter of resignation due to work responsibilities with the City of Beaverton. She has kindly offered to stay on to ensure that we meet quorum, and support as needed.

Next Regular Meeting: September 10, 2026

This meeting adjourned at 6:28pm.

Grant Review Committee

- **All 5 selected applicants accepted**
- 4/5 alternates accepted
- **Meeting #1 – Orientation**
September 18
- **Meeting #2 – Recalibration**
September 24
- **Meeting #3 – Final Voting**
October 6





**Inspire
Vancouver**

2026 Application Numbers

Diana Betancourt
Inspire Vancouver Program Supervisor

Number of applications received

Applications due September 10 at 11:59 pm

Applications from eligible grantees	55
Innovation applications	15
Impact applications	19
Comprehensive applications	21
Applications with fiscal sponsors, all categories	13

55 applications were submitted by eligible grantees as of noon today.



Number of eligible grantees

Applications due September 10 at 11:59 pm

Eligible grantees	38
Organizations	28
Groups with a fiscal sponsor	7
Individuals with a fiscal sponsor	3
Organizations serving as a fiscal sponsor	6

38 eligible grantees have submitted applications as of noon today.



Total requests for funding

Applications due September 10 at 11:59 pm

Total all categories	\$3.93M
Innovation applications	\$327k
Impact applications	\$1.11M
Comprehensive applications	\$2.49M

\$3,933,905 has been requested as of noon today.



Thank You



Diana Betancourt, Inspire Vancouver Program Supervisor

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