



Cultural Arts Commission

Annual Report

July 1, 2025 to June 31, 2026



Overview of the Cultural Arts Commission

Purpose

The Cultural Arts Commission was established in Chapter IV Arts and Cultural Affairs Ordinance Article IV to:

1. Serve as an advocate for the Rockville community on cultural and arts activities to ensure that residents can equitably experience the benefits of the arts, such as social cohesion, personal health and well-being, and educational achievement;
2. Advise the Mayor and Council on ways to enhance Rockville's sense of community through City-sponsored cultural events;
3. Recommend to the Mayor and Council appropriate programs, activities, and utilization policies for City facilities which will contribute to the development of the City as a cultural center;
4. Recommend to the Mayor and Council grants and aid opportunities which promote cultural activity in the City;
5. Identify opportunities for students of all ages and abilities to participate in arts education programs;
6. Represent the collective interests of Rockville's arts groups and artists before the Mayor and Council;
7. Review proposals to incorporate works of art in public architecture, pursuant to Article III of this chapter;
8. Create committees and task forces from the membership of the Commission, as necessary, to focus on public art project development, artist selection, and to provide public art recommendations to the Commission to be acted on by the Commission in open meeting; and
9. Support cultural and arts activities that increase Rockville's economic prosperity.

The Cultural Arts Commission may make recommendations to the City Manager and the Mayor and Council on the annual budget, as it pertains to the arts.

Overview of the Cultural Arts Commission

Commissioners and Liaisons as of June 31, 2026

Commissioners:

Laura Andruski
Melissa Beattie
Frances Bevington (Chair)
Jerry Callistein
Emily Fucello
Howard Henry Jung, Jr.
Susan Hoffmann
Liz Ortuzar
Brian Rogers
Molly Scott
Anika Vartan



"Past to Promise," LaToya Peoples, 2025, Twinbrook Community Recreation Center Annex.

Liaisons:

Mayor Monique Ashton, The Mayor and Council Liaison
Anne O'Dell, Arts and Culture Program Manager, CAC Staff Liaison, City Manager's Office



From the FY2025 Annual Report

CAC Goals for FY2026

- Work with staff and the Art Selection Committees to approve public art projects in the Fiscal Year 2026 staff workplan.
- Discuss and work with staff to create three committees outlined in the March 2025 Staff report (Public Art Committee, Events and Programs Committee, Community Engagement Committee).
- Work with staff to build relationships needed for equitable community engagement.
- The CAC continues to advocate that the City begin the process of developing a long-term strategic plan for the arts in Rockville. As is noted in the permanent and temporary public art subcommittee reports, a strategic plan would provide much needed guidance to City's public art programs, in addition to providing a roadmap for the city to achieve other desired outcomes in the arts, such as the designation of the City as an arts and entertainment district.
- As was noted in the temporary public art subcommittee report, the CAC recommends developing a plan for diverse perspectives that represents a shared understanding among the Mayor and Council, city staff, and the CAC about expectations for community engagement in the art in public places and art in public development programs.



Administrative Updates

Cultural Arts Commission

Commissioner Cristin Cash resigned from the CAC in July 2025 at the conclusion of their term.

Commissioner Michelle Chite resigned from the CAC in January 2026 due to time constraints.

Commissioner Laura Andruski began her first term as a Cultural Arts Commissioner in January 2026.

Commission Chair, Karen Askin, resigned from the CAC in February 2026 due to relocating outside the city.

Commissioner Frances Bevington was appointed Chair on March 23, 2026.

The CAC merged the Temporary and Permanent Public Art Committees into one Public Art Committee and formed the Programs and Events Committee to fulfill two goals in the FY25 CAC Annual Report.

The CAC formed the Ordinance Committee that drafted the CAC approved comments on suggested administrative revisions to the Chapter IV Arts and Cultural Affairs Ordinance.



Accomplishments and Public Engagement

Cultural Arts Commission

Accomplishments:

In Fiscal Year 2026, Commissioners:

- Participated in the Chapter IV Arts and Cultural Affairs Ordinance revision process to provide feedback on administrative revisions proposed by staff.
- Wrote a letter to the City Manager requesting the city pursue an Arts and Entertainment District designation through the Maryland State Arts Council.
- Created a temporary Governance Committee and the role of Vice Chair at its June 2026 meeting.

Public Engagement:

Commissioners Beattie, Ortuzar, and Rogers judged the Fair Housing Month Poster Contest held by Housing and Community Development and Montgomery County Public Middle Schools. They selected the contest's winners and honorable mentions.

Commissioners Ortuzar, Rogers, and Askin volunteered as members of the Memory Walk Park and David Scull Park Art Selection Committees, respectively.

Commissioner Frances Bevington gave remarks at the dedications of "Flight of Fancy," by Andy Dahl, and "Past to Promise," by LaToya Peoples. Commissioners Askin and Hoffmann attended the dedications, respectively.



Cultural Arts Commission

Committees

Programs and Events Committee

In February 2026, the CAC voted to create the Programs and Events Committee to fulfill one of its goals in the FY25 CAC Annual Report. This committee works with staff to support city programs and events serving the arts and culture sector of Rockville.

Members: Laura Andruski (Committee Chair), Jerry Callistein, Howard Jung, Molly Scott

Public Art Committee

The Public Art Committee leads the nomination process for public art project awards. The committee Chair serves as Chair of each project's Art Selection Committee, and works with staff on the implementation of public art projects. The CAC and the Public Art Committee work with the City to define sites and general themes for Public Art projects utilizing public input and emphasizing highly visible locations.

Member: Liz Ortuzar (Committee Chair), Melissa Beattie, Frances Bevington, Emily Fucello, Anika Vartan



Accomplishments and Updates

Public Art Committee

Public Art Committee

Public Engagement: Commissioner Ortuzar volunteered in the community arts project led by local artist Luke Walters at Rocktoberfest 2025.

Administrative Activities: The Public Art Committee met with staff bi-monthly. Commissioner Ortuzar chaired the Art Selection Committees for the Memory Walk Park and David Scull Park Public Art Projects and worked with staff to create the Art Selection Committee guidelines and welcome packet. Commissioner Bevington volunteered for the PRIDE 2025 Art Selection Committee. Commissioners increased the committee numbers from one commissioner to five. Commissioners Beattie and Bevington joined the Public Art Committee in March 2026. Commissioners Fucello and Vartan joined the Public Art Committee in June 2026.

Accomplishments and Updates continued

Public Art Committee

Completed Public Art Projects

- "Flight of Fancy," Andy Dahl. Installed at the College Gardens Park pavilion, July 2025. Dedicated September 2025.
- "Past to Present," LaToya Peoples. Installed at the Twinbrook Community Recreation Center Annex, November 2025. Dedicated February 2026.



"Flight of Fancy," Andy Dahl, 2025, College Gardens Park.

Accomplishments and Updates continued

Public Art Committee

New Public Art Projects

- Title to be determined, Dina Fisher, artist.
- Memory Walk Park, Lincoln Park Neighborhood.
- Installation expected in Fall 2026.



Rendering, Artwork Title to be determined, Dina Fisher, Memory Walk Park.

Accomplishments and Updates continued

Public Art Committee

New Public Art Projects

- "Shared Passage," CJRDesign, artist.
- David Scull Park, David Scull Neighborhood.
- Installation expected Fall 2027.



Rendering, "Shared Passage," CJRDesign, David Scull Park, rendering.



Accomplishments and Updates

Programs and Events Committee

Programs and Events Committee

Public Engagement: Commissioner Andruski was a presenter and CAC representative at the first Rockville Arts and Culture Leaders' Exchange in March 2026.

Administrative Activities:

Beginning in March 2026, the Programs and Events Committee met with staff bi-monthly. Commissioner Jung joined the committee in March 2026. Commissioners Callistein and Scott joined the committee in May 2026.



Goals for Fiscal Year 2027

Cultural Arts Commission

- Work with staff to map Rockville's arts and culture assets in preparation for an Arts and Culture Strategic Plan.
- Create the position of Vice Chair to provide support when the Chair cannot fulfill responsibilities. (The role of Vice Chair was created at the CAC's June 2026 meeting. A commissioner will be appointed at the CAC's July 2026 meeting.)
- Create a temporary Governance Committee to create commission guidelines and procedures that will be voted on and adopted by the full commission, define the role of Vice Chair, lead a discussion about what business is elevated to the full commission, expectations for serving in roles, and align commission agendas with regular workflow.
- Increase the number of commissioners on committees to at least three, but no more than five, per committee.
- The committees will create guidelines and procedures to guide their work.
- Work with staff through the Public Art Committee for AIPP projects in the staff workplan.
- Ask CAC commissioners to consider assuming an additional role of committee member or liaison to another commission.

Goals for Fiscal Year 2027

Programs and Events Committee

Public Engagement:

- Commissioners on this committee will engage with the public through programs and events that support the staff workplan and culture mapping project.

Administrative Updates:

- The committee will create guidelines and procedures to guide its work.
- The committee will work with staff on its role in the CAC FY27 Workplan.

Commissioner Activities:

- Commissioners will participate in activities as needed.

Goals for Fiscal Year 2027

Public Art Committee

Public Engagement:

- Commissioners on this committee will engage with the public through community engagement opportunities for public art projects and cultural mapping project.

Administrative Activities – The committee will:

- Work with staff to adopt and implement the 2027-2031 Art In Public Places Implementation Plan.
- Create guidelines and procedures to guide its work.
- Work with staff on its role in the FY27 CAC Workplan.

Commissioner Activities:

- Will participate in activities as needed.



Goals for Fiscal Year 2027

Governance Committee

Administrative Activities – The committee will:

- Create commission guidelines and procedures that will be voted on and adopted by the full commission.
- Define the role of Vice Chair.
- Lead a discussion about what business is elevated to the full commission and expectations for serving in roles.
- Align commission agendas with regular workflow.

Commissioner Activities:

- Will participate in activities as needed.

Members:

- Frances Bevington (Chair), Jerry Callistein, Emily Fucello, Anika Vartan