

# CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL ACTIVITIES

## CULTURAL COUNCIL



The Arlington Cultural Council (ACC) is a local council of the Massachusetts Cultural Council (MCC), a state agency, consisting of volunteers appointed by the Arlington Board of Selectmen for three-year terms. Council members, who may serve for as many as two consecutive terms, are charged with the responsibility of supporting and encouraging the arts, humanities and interpretive sciences in Arlington, primarily through the annual distribution of state allocated funds to applicants through a competitive grant process.

Though much of its business is related to grant cycle activities, occurring September through December, ACC is active year-round. It generally meets on second Mondays. All meetings are announced on the Town website in advance and are open to the public. During 2016 meetings took place at the Senior Center, Jefferson Cutter House, and Town Hall.

New this year is an MCC initiative whereby ACC itself can initiate its own proposal, with up to 15% of the budget of \$12,200, allocated to ACC by MCC. The ACC proposal must be considered at the same deliberation meeting with the other grant proposals submitted. ACC chose not to exercise this option in the current grant cycle just completed, but is considering doing so in the next one (October 16, 2017 deadline for 2018 grant cycle).

Also new this year was a completely electronic application and award process through MCC. This has been a great improvement, eliminating manual record-keeping, multiple paper copies and tracking of all applications going forward.

Major turnover occurred in ACC personnel this year, begun with Co-Chair Karin Blum cycling off, Nilou Moochhala resigning, Merli Guerra, the other Co-Chair resigning, Lisbet Taylor becoming Chair; and 4 new members joining: David Harris, Kimberley Harding, Asia Kepka, and Gabrielle Marroig.

On April 4, the ACC honored the 2016 Grant Recipients at a reception at the Charles H. Lyons Hearing Room in Town Hall with refreshments, displays, and speakers. About 50 guests attended the receptions, including grant recipients, government representatives, cultural organizations and Arlington residents. Arlington Board of Selectman Joe Curro announced the grant recipients. Music was provided by Scott Samenfeld and his ensemble EulipiaJazz. Refreshments were donated by Stop & Shop, FoodLink and Madrona Tree. Co-Chairs Karin Blum and Merli Guerra welcomed guests and gave remarks about cultural highlights during the past year in Arlington.

In September ACC participated in Arlington's annual Town Day celebration, with Council members highlighting the recent grantees; distributing current grant applications and guidelines; and providing information about upcoming arts events. ACC offered a free Grant Information Session on September 20th for those planning to apply for funds by the application deadline of October 17th. At the workshop, ACC members offered attendees assistance with the grant application process.

By October 17, a total of 27 grant applications from schools, individual artists, and cultural groups were submitted to ACC. Requests for funds totaled over \$31,000.

Following the application deadline, applicants were invited to public sessions in

November that provided an opportunity for them to elaborate on their projects and answer questions from council members.

On November 15, the ACC held a half-day deliberation meeting to decide which applications would be funded. Funds available for allocation by the ACC totaled \$12,200. Deliberations resulted in seventeen grants being awarded by the ACC: Applicants not receiving funds were notified by November 30, and those receiving funds were notified in January 2016 (as directed by the MCC).

### 2016 Grant Awards

Arlington Center for the Arts	\$ 1,500
Arlington Historical Society	\$ 1,375
Arlington Public Art	\$ 1,000
Belmont World Film	\$ 750
Creek River String Band	\$ 300
Cyrus E. Dallin Art Museum	\$ 600
Dan Fox	\$ 750
Dance Caliente	\$ 750
Marble Collection, Inc.	\$ 200
Music to Cure MS	\$ 500
Old Schwamb Mill	\$ 375
Opal Ensemble	\$ 750
Pamela Powell	\$ 600
Powers Music School, Inc.	\$ 250
Robbins Library	\$ 1,500
Stefanie Weber	\$ 500
Yogi Shridhare	\$ 500
	<b>\$22,200</b>

# CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL ACTIVITIES

One grantee, Weber Tap & Blues, has been delayed, due to illness in the family. It has been rescheduled for July 29 in Regent Theatre's Black Box. Another grantee, Yogi Shridhare, declined the grant award.

The ACC is pleased to report that a variety of cultural events occurred in Arlington during 2016 that were funded in part by the ACC. One that garnered tremendous public interest was the "East Arlington Public Art Initiative," presented by Arlington Public Art and the Town of Arlington. This project provided "experimental temporary pop-up art" outdoors on East Arlington buildings. The art highlighted the history of local businesses and their owners, while enlivening the spaces, building community, drawing fascinated visitors and strengthened senses of identity and place.

Plans for 2017 include the annual "Celebration of Arts and Culture" in April; Town Day booth in September; the annual Grant Cycle, with 2018 grant applications due on October 16, 2017; and a new initiative: Arts and Culture Plan for the Town of Arlington, being developed by MAPC and ACAC. As Chair, Lisbet Taylor is a working member of the Planning Committee.

## COMMISSION ON ARTS & CULTURE (ACAC)

The mission of Arlington Commission on Arts and Culture (ACAC) is to advocate for arts and cultural opportunities throughout Arlington and advise the Town on matters of a cultural and artistic nature.

The Commission meets monthly, on the first Thursday of the month in the Jefferson Cutter Gallery. All meetings are open to the public.

### Cultural District Designation Application

In 2016, with continued input from members of ACAC and under administrative leadership of Andrea Nicolay, Director of Libraries, members of the Managing Partnership (MP) of the proposed Cultural District completed the application for cultural district designation to the Massachusetts Cultural Council (MCC). *The Cultural District Managing Partnership currently includes The Arlington Libraries, The Chamber of Commerce, Arlington Center for the Arts, Arlington Friends of the Drama, The Book Rack representing the Center Business Association, Arlington Department of Planning and Community Development, Artbeat representing the Capitol Square District, Artful Heart, Cyrus Dallin Art Museum, Arlington Historical Society, and St. John's Coffeehouse.* After the Board of Selectmen approved the application and submitted a resolution, a public meeting was held at the ACA in March to solicit wider input from members of the Town on ideas for programming and goals of a cultural district, to be included in the application. The proposed cultural district extends from the Jason Russell House

and Mill Street in Arlington Center to Milton Street in East Arlington. The application was submitted to the MCC in June, and given a requirement that a cultural district be walkable, representatives of the MCC came to Arlington in July for a roundtable meeting with Town officials, and a walking tour along the length of the district, stopping in at some of the arts and cultural points of interest along the way. Members of the Managing Partnership and other stakeholders met after the walk with MCC representatives to review final points. The MCC is expected to make a determination of the cultural district application in early 2017. The goal of the Cultural District is to have an area of concentration that brings attention to Arlington as a cultural destination, and use it to launch a coordinated marketing plan that promotes arts and culture in all parts of town, both in and beyond the District's borders.

### Bike Path Projects

The MCC had advised ACAC and the MP to think about how to make the Cultural District feel continuous from Arlington Center to East Arlington, so ACAC engaged Cecily Miller, public art consultant who has been working with APA. Miller advised that the area between Mass Ave and Arlington Center would be a longer term, larger budget process and suggested starting by mounting smaller scale public art on the bike path. On behalf of ACAC, Miller solicited proposals from 9 artists. Proposals were reviewed for consideration and prioritization for implementation, contingent on fundraising. Also on Miller's advice, ACAC applied to the Arlington Cultural Council for a pilot grant to start with just two or three public art projects for the same bike path area that could be mounted this spring/summer.

### Town-wide Arts and Culture Action Plan

ACAC applied for and received a \$25,000 in-kind grant from the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) to support the arts and culture planning process, in collaboration with the Town's Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD), to gather public input through an online survey, focus group meetings, and public meetings. A working group was established in ACAC's work with DPCD and MAPC to include representatives of other town arts and culture organizations, and proposed Cultural District Managing Partners: the Chamber of Commerce, Board of Selectmen, Town Libraries, Arlington Center for the Arts, Arlington Cultural Council, and others.

DPCD also made available, through its Community Block Development Grant, \$5,000 for the portion of the arts and culture planning process to focus on organizational planning, to explore how the various town arts and culture organizations could best coordinate their efforts. The Arlington Cultural Council has expressed interest in more coordination and information sharing with ACAC.

# CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL ACTIVITIES

The DPCD/MAPC/ACAC collaboration toward an Arts and Culture Action Plan had its public kickoff at Town Day, at both ACAC and DPCD booths (with involvement from a community engagement staffperson from MAPC). An ACAC member, Adria Arch, appeared before BoS in December to inform them of the online survey, working group, and focus groups. The survey has been publicized widely in the press and town-wide email lists as well as by distribution of printed flyers and postcards. By the end of 2016, over 500 people had responded to the survey.

## Arts Advocacy

ACAC continued to support organizations, including the Arlington Center for the Arts and A-Town Jazzfest, in their requests with the Town and worked with Arlington Public Art (APA) and the Town to submit a warrant article for FY18 funding for a public art consultant. The consultant would continue the work that was started in East Arlington and spread it to other parts of Town. The consultant would also continue to seek grant funding to use the bike path as a cultural connector between East Arlington and Arlington Center.

## Attendance at Americans for the Arts Conference

Members of ACAC took advantage of the unusual opportunity of this year's Boston location for the 2016 Americans for the Arts Conference by sharing one registration for the 3-day conference in June, which enabled making many connections to cultural planning consultants and representatives of other communities pursuing cultural planning and other arts and culture programming.

## Additional Commissioners Added

ACAC put forth an article to the 2016 Town Meeting to allow two additional places to be added to the size of the Commission, from 7 to 9, given the many responsibilities foreseen especially in terms of taking on an arts and culture action planning process.

## Goals for 2017

- Implementation of Arts and Culture Action Plan (expected June 2017), working closely with DPCD
- Assist in the launch of an Arlington Cultural District, if so designated by the MCC
- Increased collaboration among cultural organizations in Arlington.
- One-stop source of information about cultural events and programs for Town residents and visitors.
- Continue to advocate for arts and cultural activities and institutions within the Town as well as to promote Arlington as an arts and culture destination.

## HISTORICAL COMMISSION

The Arlington Historical Commission (AHC) was established in 1970 as the Town agency responsible for community-wide preservation planning as described in Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 40, Section 8D.

- The Commission is an advocate for historic preservation in Arlington, and
- Encourages appropriate maintenance and restoration of the Town's historic structures and open spaces.
- Educates and advises municipal departments, boards, commissions, and citizens on historic preservation and the significance of Arlington's historic buildings, landscapes, objects, documents and other landmarks.
- Provides guidance and advice to owners of historically significant properties.
- Participates in the management and maintenance of historic resources owned by the Town, e.g., Arlington Town Hall, the Whittemore-Robbins House.

In addition the Commission is responsible to review and act upon any applications for building permits that involve changes to historically or architecturally significant structures in Arlington under the Town's demolition-delay bylaw, Title VI, Article 6.

To accomplish these goals, the Commission maintains an *Inventory of Historically and/or Architecturally Significant Properties* and administers the demolition delay bylaw through formal public hearings and informal meetings with owners of inventoried properties.

## Hearings and Property Monitoring

The Commission conducted formal hearings on ten inventoried properties in 2016:

122 Claremont Avenue, 187 Forest Avenue, 252 Gray Street, 18 Kensington Road, 3-11 Lakeview Street, 1210 Massachusetts Avenue, 7 Medford Street, 47 Mystic Lake Drive, 22 Williams Street and the Whittemore-Robbins Carriage House in addition to three informal hearings on inventoried properties.

Oversight on the properties from 2012-16 hearings continued throughout the year. Monitored properties included the ones listed above plus, 61 Brantwood Road, 30 Franklin Street, 42 Henderson Street, 38 Kensington Park, 41 Kensington Road, 129 Lake Street, 1167 Massachusetts Avenue, 1173 Massachusetts Avenue, 163 Park Avenue, 246 Park Avenue, 64 Park Street, 18 Robin Hood Road, 13 Winter Street, and the Whittemore-Robbins House and Cottage (670R Massachusetts Avenue).

# CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL ACTIVITIES

## Arlington Community Preservation Act (CPA)

The Historical Commission has actively supported CPA applications for historic preservation grants in Arlington. Members of the Commission are working with the Town on the implementation of the grants and to advise on the preservation of Arlington's historic resources. In 2016 Commissioner Patrick Guthrie worked on the Arlington CPA project to stabilize the Whittemore-Robbins Carriage House.

## Historic Markers

The historic house marker program is for all Arlington properties on the *Inventary*. Each plaque displays the year the property was built and a historic house name, if any.

## Website

The Commission continues to maintain its own web site that provides a copy of the *Inventary of Historically and/or Architecturally Significant Properties* and describes the process for hearings before the Commission as well as listing our publications and projects. [www.arlingtonhistoricalcommission.org](http://www.arlingtonhistoricalcommission.org).

## Education and Outreach

Throughout the year, Commissioners participate in activities that educate and inform citizens about historic preservation. The AHC participated in Town Day with a booth.

## Other Activities

The Commission continues to work with other Town agencies on the maintenance and restoration of the Whittemore-Robbins House and its outbuildings, the Winfield Robbins Memorial Gardens, the Town Hall and its grounds.

Commissioners represented the Historical Commission on various municipal boards and historic organizations in Arlington, including the Arlington Preservation Fund (Patrick Guthrie and Dianne Schaefer) the Arlington Historical Society (Pamela Meister), and the Arlington Community Preservation Act Committee (JoAnn Robinson).



Cupola atop of Whittemore-Robbins House.

## HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

The Historic Districts Act, M.G.L. Chapter 40C, was created to protect and preserve the historic resources of the Commonwealth through a local review system that encourages and ensures compatible improvement and development. Over 340 Local Historic Commissions across Massachusetts are already established and working closely with the Massachusetts Historical Commission. They serve as local preservation advocates and as an important resource for information about their community's cultural resources and preservation activities.

Arlington has seven established historic districts that include approximately 351 properties that the community has recognized as unique resources worthy of protection. The seven districts and the dates they were established or most recently enlarged are: Avon Place, 1996; Broadway, 1991; Central Street, 1982; Jason/Gray, 1998; Mount Gilboa/Crescent Hill, 1991; Pleasant Street, 2006; and Russell, 1983.

The Arlington Historic District Commission (AHDC) is required by law to review the architectural appropriateness of most proposed exterior design changes, whether they be a minor alteration, new additions, or removal of trim or structures. The Commission consists of qualified volunteers appointed by the Board of Selectmen and always includes a property owner or resident of each District (if one is willing to serve), an architect, a real estate professional, and a representative from the Arlington Historical Society. During 2016 the Commission met twelve (12) times to hold hearings for property owners seeking approval for certificates for exterior work to be conducted on their properties. Part of the regular meetings included eleven (11) Informal Hearings held for property owners seeking advice or resource information for work to be conducted and twenty-two (22) Formal Hearings. As a result of those meetings and additional CONA applications not requiring a hearing, nineteen (19) Certificates of Appropriateness (COA), forty-one (41) Certificates of Non-Applicability (CONA) to be undertaken were granted. In addition, there were four (3) Application Denials (59 Jason & 85 Irving St., 53 Academy St. and 139-141 Westminster Ave.).

During the year the Commissioners also worked on educating the public on the role of the Historic District Commission, updating maps of the Historic Districts and on the Town's Master Plan and Community Preservation Act. Letters of support were sent on various CPA applications.

## Commissioner Changes in 2016

Jonathan Nyberg stepped down in November as a Commissioner-at-large after many years of service as

# CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL ACTIVITIES

the Board's appointed "realtor". A letter has been sent to the Greater Boston Area of Realtors (GBAR) asking for a potential replacement candidate.



## CYRUS E. DALLIN ART MUSEUM BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The Cyrus Dallin Art Museum promotes new insights into our shared history by exploring the life, work, and values of this celebrated sculptor of Arlington. The values of the Museum are shaped by Cyrus Dallin's own values, as manifest in his life and work. As we seek to live Dallin's values, the Museum instills pride in the community where Dallin dedicated his time and talents; makes art accessible to all; provides opportunities for learning and exploration; works in partnership with others who share Dallin's commitment to artistic expression, education, and social justice, and reflects America's shared, albeit complicated, history.

Over 600 people from around the world visited the Museum in 2016, despite the Museum being closed for exterior renovations March 31<sup>st</sup> through August 6<sup>th</sup>. The Museum is open Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays from 12:00 to 4:00 p.m. throughout the year. Volunteer docents offer tours during regular hours and at other times by appointment. Tours are tailored for adults and children with consideration for each group's area of special interest. The museum is located in the Jefferson Cutter House at 611 Massachusetts Avenue. Contact the Museum at [info@dallin.org](mailto:info@dallin.org) or call 781-641-0747. The web address is [www.dallin.org](http://www.dallin.org).

In addition to offering many activities and programs for visitors of all ages, the Museum made significant progress on goals established by the strategic plan adopted in 2014.

### Goals Achieved

- Successfully completed the exterior restoration of the Jefferson Cutter House, funded in part by a Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund grant from the Massachusetts Historical Commission and by Town funds including Community Development Block Grant funding.
- In collaboration with Town organizations and businesses, submitted the Cultural District

application and participated in the Town tour for the Massachusetts Cultural Council representatives. The Cyrus Dallin Art Museum is a member of the Managing Partnership for the proposed Arlington Cultural District.

- Supported fundraising efforts of the museum's non-profit board to allow for an increase to the paid hours of the Curator/Director.
- Resolved pest management issues caused by maintenance problems of the building.
- Expanded educational programming including Art Venture for Arlington school children and their families.
- Collaborated with community partners to host Picnic in the Park, a community concert, with the Creek River String Band, and Chairful Where You Sit. The performance was partially funded by a grant from the Arlington Cultural Commission



*Jefferson Cutter House in May 2016. Scaffolding was erected as part of a full exterior restoration of the building including new roof, refurbished windows, shutters, doors, and repairs to rotted exterior clapboards and trim. Photo courtesy of Sarah Burks.*

### Activities and Programs

- Board of Trustees Chair Emeritus, James McGough, gave a lecture in January about Dallin's Civil War Monuments. The lecture was recorded by and broadcast on ACMI television.
- Hosted lectures on the American Renaissance of Coin Design by Chris Costello, a US Mint Artist Infusion Program artist and museum trustee.
- A children's sculpture workshop took place in February during school vacation week. This popular program offers an age-appropriate tour of the galleries and a hand-building sculpture class during which children build armatures and work with clay to create their own animals and other figures.

# CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL ACTIVITIES



The Cyrus Dallin Art Museum reopened in mid-summer after completion of the exterior renovation of the Jefferson Cutter House. Photo courtesy of Sarah Burks.

- The ArtVenture program for Arlington public and private school K-5 children was significantly expanded in 2016. Over 100 families participated in the weekend-long program in March.
- Joined the Freedom's Way National Heritage Area's regional *Hidden Treasures* program to promote Arlington and its cultural amenities by hosting a walking tour of Dallin sculptures in the center of Town.
- Organized a museum tour for Boston By Foot guides to encourage tourism in Arlington; guides were also led on a walk from Arlington Center to the Jason Russell House. Boston By Foot is a non-profit organization that offers tours promoting broader public awareness of Boston's history and architecture. Three of Dallin's Boston sculptures are on some of their most popular tours: Paul Revere, Appeal to the Great Spirit, and Anne Hutchinson.
- Hosted a lecture at Town Hall in October by John Raimondi, one of America's most prominent contemporary sculptors.
- Organized a free community-wide summer event, Picnic in the Park, with music by the Creek River String Band.
- Assisted the museum non-profit with the second annual Summer Soiree Gala fundraiser.
- The Museum's busiest day of the year, Art on the Green, is an important part of Town Day celebrations. The John Mirak Foundation sponsored the event. For seventeen years, the Museum has given artists an opportunity

to exhibit and sell their works. Artists and craftsman offered a colorful display of original works. Local writers were on location for book signings. The Museum raised money for educational programming with its Town Day raffle, supported by the generous contribution of prizes by the local business community.

## Future Goals

- Participate in next steps for the nominated Arlington Cultural District as a member of the Managing Partnership.
- Expand educational programs and activities including advanced sculpture workshops, sketching in the galleries, and ArtVenture for Arlington school children and their families.
- Continue progress made on the creation of space for changing exhibits and the renovation of existing galleries.
- Complete new object labeling and printed Gallery Guide, funded in part through a grant from the Arlington Cultural Council.
- Host a tour for MFA exterior guides to share information about Cyrus Dallin, his sculpture career, and the Cyrus Dallin Art Museum to these MFA volunteers who reach thousands of Boston museum visitors each year.

## In Recognition

Dorothy Burt (1929-2016) was a long-time supporter of the Museum. The Museum would like to recognize Dottie's contributions as a volunteer docent. She was one of our longest serving volunteers, who kindly remembered the museum as a donor even after she was no longer able to continue as a tour guide.



James McGough and Dorothy (Dottie) Burt in the CDAM museum galleries in 2000.