

# CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL ACTIVITIES

## ARLINGTON COMMISSION FOR ARTS & CULTURE (ACAC)

### Mission

The Arlington Commission for Arts and Culture cultivates a sustainable and supportive environment for the arts and enlivens public space with accessible creative experiences to strengthen and enrich our community, create opportunities for artists, and invigorate the local economy.



Hardy School students with their dolphin puppets at the Fox Festival Parade; Photo credit: Greg Cook

### Operations

ACAC is an umbrella organization including the following:

- Grants Committee (formerly the Arlington Cultural Council)
- Community Engagement Committee
- Cultural District Managing Partnership (CDMP)
- Representative of non-profit arts community from Arlington Center for the Arts
- Representative of business community from the Chamber of Commerce
- Representative of the local community of working artists, elected by ArtLinks
- Representative appointed by the School Committee
- Liaison from the Department of Planning and Community Development
- And 3 at-large members

In fiscal year 2019, ACAC leveraged a \$40,000 allocation from the Town to raise an additional \$25,790 toward local arts and culture programming and infrastructure. Funds were raised via the Mass Cultural Council (MCC), programming grants, beloved annual events like Chairful Where You Sit, and donations from local businesses and individuals.

In 2019 ACAC updated its mission and vision state-

ments and adopted three-year strategic and operations plans. The strategic plan can be found at [artsarlington.org](http://artsarlington.org) in the "About Us" section. ACAC works closely with the Department of Planning and Community Development and employs two part-time contractors, a marketing coordinator who promotes Arlington-based arts and culture activities, and a public art curator focused on community engagement.

While the focus of this report is ACAC's work, it's important to note that ACAC is one part of a diverse community of arts and culture non-profits, for-profits, and individual artists striving to help Arlington thrive.



Freedom Baird and a volunteer in Freedom's piece Room to Grow; Photo credit: Johnny Lapham

### Cultivating the Arts and Culture Environment

ACAC maintains [artsarlington.org](http://artsarlington.org), an invaluable resource for audience members discovering, and artists and arts organizations promoting, cultural activities. The site features a cultural calendar powered by Arts Boston, and a comprehensive listing of Arlington's arts and culture assets. The Arts Arlington monthly newsletter is sent to over 1,000 subscribers. From Jan 1 – Dec 1 2019, [artsarlington.org](http://artsarlington.org) had 7,472 users, 11,195 Sessions and 48,171 Page views, more than quadrupling the numbers from 2018.

In 2019, ACAC launched a major effort on destination marketing, which resulted in a 13.28% increase in regional, MA traffic from outside of town. Statewide traffic now constitutes 54.78% of [artsarlington.org](http://artsarlington.org) users. ACAC programming was featured in The Boston Globe, on WBUR's *Artery* blog, regularly on ACMi, and in [YourArlington.com](http://YourArlington.com), and in a variety of regional arts and news media and statewide inbound tourism media. ACAC is committed to building on these efforts in 2020.

The Grants Committee, a local council of the MCC, a state agency, received 30 applications and funded 16 projects, distributing over \$15,000 in state funds to local arts organizations and artists. In 2019 174 artists and over 15,000 audience members participated in programs funded by the Grants Committee.

Using funds from a 2019 MCC grant to Cultural

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Brochure for Arlington's Cultural District

Districts, the CDMP hired a coordinator for the Feast of the East festival and created a brochure to draw traffic to the Cultural District, featuring cultural assets and local businesses throughout the district. The brochure has been distributed to local hotels, libraries, banks, local businesses and in Chamber of Commerce “Welcome to Arlington” totes.

merous audience members who came out specifically because of the cultural activity, some coming from as far away as Reading, Concord, and New Hampshire. Live Arts audience members and local business owners reported that patrons spent more time and more money locally because of the cultural programming.

## Enlivening Public Space to Strengthen and Enrich our Community

In 2019 ACAC continued its longstanding Public Art (APA) programming and piloted Live Arts Arlington, a new initiative bringing performance to public spaces, especially in commercial areas. Through its programming, the ACAC reached hundreds of thousands of Arlington residents and visitors to town; activated 15 public spaces, including Spy Pond Park, Uncle Sam Plaza, the lawn of Jason Russell House, and the Minuteman Bikeway; and collaborated with over 400 participant artists and more than 30 town organizations and local businesses.

Volunteers for Live Arts Arlington documented nu-

Please see short program descriptions on the next page and visit [artsarlington.org](http://artsarlington.org) for more detail.

CULTURAL/HISTORIC



Garage Band at Arlington Service Station; Photo credit: Johnny Lapham

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Program Name	Description	Collaborators and Funders
ARTIST in RESIDENCE	Launched in December 2019, ACAC's first Artist-in-Residence is Michelle Lougee, who began using plastic bags as material over 10 years ago to draw attention to plastic pollution in our oceans. Through this residency Michelle is working for the first time with volunteer craftivists to create public art. Over a dozen participatory workshops will be held from January through June. The work will be installed in Summer 2020 along the Minuteman Bikeway.	Arlington's Libraries, ACMi, Arlington Bicycle Advisory Committee, Arlington Center for the Arts, Arlington Council on Aging, Arlington Department of Public Works, Arlington Knitting Brigade, APS Green Teams, Arlington Recycles, Arlington Scouts, Sustainable Arlington, 13Forest Gallery, Fox Library, Zero Waste Committee, Roasted Granola Café, MCC, the ACAC Grants Committee and Friends of the Fox Library
FOX FESTIVAL WORKSHOPS AND PARADE	Afterschool art making workshops held at Thompson and Hardy schools; family workshops at the Fox Library; parade kicking off the Feast of the East with brass band.	Over 200 students and their families; visual artists Sara Peattie and Kari Percival, Friends of Spy Pond Park, Fox Library, Friends of the Fox Library, Hardy School PTO
GARAGE BAND	2 pop-up outdoor dance parties following ACA's Porchfest and Town Day	Over 100 performers, Arlington Center for the Arts, Arlington Service Station and Column Health
LESLIE WILCOX INSTALLATION	Installation on the Jason Russell House Lawn for one year Fall 2019 – Fall 2020.	Arlington Historical Society
LIVE ARTS	10 diverse street performance events in Arlington Center. Program will expand town-wide in 2020.	50 artists including musicians, visual artists, a dancer and a puppeteer, and Morningside Music Studio
PAINTED TRANSFORMER BOXES	Five more transformer boxes throughout town were painted this year, sponsored by local businesses	5 artists and Kickstand Cafe, Zhen Ren Chuan Martial Arts, Arlington Center for the Arts, Ellenhorn, and Custom Contracting
PATHWAYS	Public Art projects on the Bike Path included Colony by Christopher Frost Room to Grow by Freedom Baird, Dots and Dashes by Johnny Lapham, ExtraOrdinary Birds by Resa Blatman, and Bikeway Haiku	Over 100 artists, musicians and poets, MCC, ACAC Grants Committee, and National Park Service
POET LAUREATE	Steven Ratiner was appointed Arlington's Poet Laureate in August 2019. He is developing programs to expand the ways audiences experience poetry and the arts and promoting educational partnerships between schools and artists.	Poet Laureate Committee and Arlington's Libraries
YOUTH BANNER PROJECT	95 young people – the most ever! - in grades 6-12 submitted designs. 20 designs have been chosen to be printed on banners hung in Arlington Center in the Spring and Summer 2020.	The Arlington Public Schools and the Gracie James Foundation

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## 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 2019 the Commissions met twelve (12) times to hold hearings for property owners seeking approval for certificates for exterior work to be conducted on their properties or to discuss ongoing litigation. During the year they entered into Executive Session one (1) time to discuss pending or ongoing litigation. Part of the regular meetings included twelve (12) Informal Hearings held for property owners seeking advice or resource information for work to be conducted and twenty-seven (27) Formal Hearings. As a result of those meetings and additional CONA applications not requiring a hearing, twenty-seven (27) Certificates of Appropriateness (COA) and forty (40) Certificates of Non-Applicability (CONA) to be undertaken were granted. In addition, there were two (2) Application Denials for new construction.

During the year the Commissioners also worked on educating the public on the role of the Historic District Commission, fostering preservation pursuant to the Town's Master Plan and the Community Preservation Act, and with the Town to plan streetscape standards for use throughout the local Historic Districts.

## 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 Laws, 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 reviews and acts upon any applications for building permits that involve changes to historically or architecturally significant structures in Arlington under the Town's demolition-delay bylaw.

To accomplish these goals the Commission maintains Arlington's *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 seven inventoried properties in 2019: 20 Belton Street, 17 Brantwood Road, 15 Kensington Road, 44 Kensington Road, 44 Lockland Avenue, 30 Orvis Road, and 151 Warren Street.

Monitored properties included the ones listed above plus : 36 Draper Avenue, 32 Kensington Road, 96 Jason Street, 81 Hillside Avenue, 3-11 Lakeview Street, 418 Massachusetts Avenue, 47 Mystic Lake Drive, 21 Teel Street.

In addition to property hearings, the Commission held formal hearings for approval of new signs in the Arlington Center National Register Historic District at: - 311 Broadway, 325 Broadway, 451 Massachusetts Avenue, 630 Massachusetts Avenue, 474 Massachusetts Avenue, 456A Massachusetts Avenue, and 635 Massachusetts Avenue.

### Arlington Community Preservation Act (CPA)

The Historical Commission is actively supporting historic preservation grants approved by the CPA Committee and Town Meeting in 2017 and 2018. Members of the Commission worked with the Master Plan Imple-

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mentation Committee's Historic Resources Working Group on a Survey Master Plan. In addition CPA-funded projects include the restoration of the Whittemore-Robbins Cottage and the preservation of the Old Burying Ground.

## **Historic Markers**

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

## **Website**

The Commission continues to maintain its own website that provides a copy of the *Inventory 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 Garden, 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).

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## CYRUS E. DALLIN ART MUSEUM BOARD OF TRUSTEES

April 26, 2020 marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Town Meeting's 1995 vote to establish the Board of Trustees with the purpose of "establishing an art museum to store, repair, collect, maintain, preserve, acquire and display the sculptures, pieces of art and archives of Cyrus E. Dallin; to educate the residents of Arlington and the general public in the importance of Cyrus Dallin as an artist and to oversee and administer the collection and museum." The museum opened only three years later in October 1998.

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. In accordance with Dallin's ideals, the museum 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 interprets our country's complicated history.

Museum visitors in 2019 totaled 1,052—an increase over last year of 33 percent. A concerted effort to increase group tours and publicity accounts for this impressive boost to our numbers. The museum is open year-round on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays from 12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., and for group tours at other times by appointment. Dedicated volunteer docents make this all possible with the gift of their time and talents. 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 [dallin.org](http://dallin.org).

### 2019 Achievements

- Created a Friends group to advise the museum and build strategic partnerships.
- Acquired two new paintings by Dallin, *Mrs. Hall's Letter* and a self-portrait of the artist.
- Increased the number of group tours to the museum with outreach to other museums, alumni associations and adult learning orga-



MFA Senior Associates with Board of Directors President and Trustee Geri Tremblay and Trustee Emeritus James McGough.

nizations. Pictured is a group of MFA, Boston Senior Associates. These MFA guides came for a tour of the Dallin Museum and enjoyed learning more about Cyrus Dallin, artist of the *Appeal to the Great Spirit* sculpture located at the Huntington Avenue entrance to the MFA.

- Boston *Globe* highlighted the Dallin Museum along with six other museums in the state that focus on the works of a single artist.
- Received a grant from the Arlington Cultural Commission for \$1,000 to clean and restore the ca. 1890 French landscape painting by Dallin, entitled "Village Road, Auvers-sur-Oise," which will be unveiled to the public at an event this spring.
- Continued an affiliation with the North American Reciprocal Membership organization, which offers discounted or free admission at over 1,100 participating institutions.



Lakota YouthStay program participants visited Massachusetts from South Dakota. The group toured the museum and learned basic sculpture building techniques. Pictured L to R are: Deshawneigh Iron Cloud and Erica Clairmont.

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## 2019 Activities and Programs

- Heather Leavell, Director and Curator of the museum, was invited by the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston to participate in a panel discussion of the implications of Dallin's *Appeal to the Great Spirit* (1912) as a public commemoration of Native American history and experience. The sold-out event took place in the Remis Auditorium at the MFA. The other panelists were Emily Burns of Auburn University and Jami Powell of the Hood Museum of Art.
- Patriot's Day readings of Longfellow's epic poem, *Paul Revere's Ride*.
- Provided a tour of the museum to eleven Lakota youth from the Pine Ridge reservation in South Dakota. A new group of youth visit the Boston area each summer as part of the Medford-based Lakota YouthStay program. After the tour, a hands-on workshop taught the young visitors basic hand-building clay sculpture techniques.
- Collaborated with the Town, Friends of Robbins Town Gardens, Arlington Historical Commission, and the Arlington Garden Club to celebrate the restoration of the refecting pool and the *Menotomy Hunter* sculpture in the Winfield Robbins Memorial Garden.
- Hosted the fifteenth-annual Art on the Green in Whittemore Park on Town Day. The event gives area artists and authors an opportunity to exhibit and sell their works.

## Future Goals

- Redesign the website including a virtual tour of the Museum galleries and collections.
- Maintain visitor numbers during landscape reconstruction work in Whittemore Park
- Seek funding for the interior restoration of the Jefferson Cutter House.
- Upcoming spring events: Kids Sculpture Workshop (February). Reading of Longfellow's *Paul Revere's Ride* (April). Spring fundraising Gala to feature the premiere of a play produced by Arlington Friends of the Drama about Dallin's 57-year quest to compete the iconic *Paul Revere Monument*.

## Remembering Paul McGaffigan

The museum lost a dear friend this year. Paul McGaffigan, treasurer of the non-profit arm of the museum since 2007, was steadfastly dedicated to the growth and prosperity of our small organization. He was both incredibly detail oriented and able to see the big picture. The museum prospered under his sound financial guidance. In addition to his treasurer duties, Paul was always happy to help with museum events such as the Art on the Green and Summer Soiree. He often enlisted the help of other members of his family including his wife daughter and grandchildren. Paul was also invested in the broader Arlington community, having served as a Town Meeting Member and on the Finance Committee. We will miss his quiet, reassuring presence, his expert guidance and unwavering support.



Paul McGaffigan and his granddaughter Lauryn White, at 2017 museum Soiree.