

CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL ACTIVITIES

ARLINGTON COMMISSION FOR ARTS AND CULTURE (ACAC)

Mission

The Arlington Commission for Arts and Culture (ACAC) 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.

Operations

ACAC is an umbrella organization including the following:

- Grants Committee (formerly the Arlington Cultural Council)
- Community Engagement (formerly two separate committees, Public Art and Programs & Festivals)
- Arlington Cultural District Managing Partnership (CDMP)
- Representative of non-profit arts community (currently Arlington Center for the Arts [ACA])
- Representative of business community (currently Arlington Chamber of Commerce)
- Representative of the local community of working artists (currently ArtLinks)
- Representative appointed by the School Committee
- Liaison from the Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD)
- At-large commissioners supporting key action committees
- Liaison to the Poet Laureate (PL) Committee

In fiscal year 2023 ACAC leveraged a \$35,000 allocation from the Town to raise an additional \$67,271 toward local arts and culture programming and infrastructure. In addition, the Grants Committee of ACAC administered \$22,164 in grants to local artists and arts organizations, for a total of \$89,435 of additional funding coming into the Town of Arlington to support audience experiences, local artists, arts and culture organizations, and local businesses by attracting potential customers to Town. ACAC works closely with the Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD) and engages two part-time contractors, a marketing coordinator who promotes Arlington-based arts and culture activities, and a public art curator focused on community engagement, as well as dozens of volunteers in projects all around town.

In 2023 ACAC underwent significant growth, refinement, and new programming directions. In addition to continuing long-popular signature programs such as Garage Band, utility box painting, plein air painting, and

youth street art banners supported by the Grace James Family, ACAC completed, launched, or grew several ambitious new projects.



Arlington Commission for Arts and Culture flyer.

Remembrance of Climate Futures

A multiyear student-led project guided by Northeastern Professor Tom Starr, saw public art markers installed town-wide, with new installations planned for additional towns throughout the Freedom's Way National Heritage Area, as featured in *Visit Arlington* and *Art New England* magazines.

Funded by a Transformative Growth grant, a new series of public engagement events helped plan the launch of future murals in Arlington, including Alex Cook's new "You Are Loved" Mural painted collaboratively with volunteers in the Arlington Heights neighborhood.

In its continuing effort to promote accessibility and cultural equity in the arts for all, ACAC partnered with such organizations as the town DEI Division, the Arlington Human Rights Commission, and Arts Connect International to support the Black Joy Project, Juneteenth celebration, Black History Month banners, the *Inspired* exhibition featuring artworks of Black Arlington artists, and the online Cultural Equity Learning Community 2.0.

In years past ACAC had emphasized activating new creative spaces in town, especially through its original public art and performance programs. With free concerts and art activities flourishing, ACAC turned its focus on supporting and augmenting programs in part-

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nership with town businesses, nonprofits and neighborhood groups. ACAC brought music to holiday Tree Lighting; supported performance, painting and poetry in Arlington Heights seasonal window-painting festivals; brought exhibitions and Friday pop-up shows to Roasted Granola; and sponsored a celebration of YourArlington's independent arts & culture coverage.



Inspired exhibition flyer.

ACAC Grants Committee

A local cultural council of Mass Cultural Council (MCC), a state agency, for FY23 received 38 applications for grants, competing for \$22,164 in funds to grant. Twenty-one grants were awarded. A celebration was held at the Regent Theater with grantees showcasing a wide range of arts: music, visual, film, dance, theater, and literature. For FY24 the ACAC Grants Committee received 64 applications for grants, a 168% increase in applications, competing for \$21,326 in funds to grant.

The Fundraising Committee refined and built on the prior year's successful models to expand regular spring and year-end appeals, including securing continued support from local businesses. The Committee also successfully applied for MCC's Cultural Districts Initiative, Cultural Sector Recovery, and Festivals & Projects grants, a Town Transformative Growth Grant, and others.

ACAC received the redesignation and funding of the Arlington Cultural District by the MCC for 5 years, with newly expanded boundaries encompassing the renovated Arlington High School.

Poet Laureate Jean Flanagan hit the ground running in her first year with her "Small Acts of Kindness" collaborative community poetry project unveiled at the Arlington Heights Spring Fling Festival.

ACAC's ArtsArlington.org website, newsletter, and other communications channels remain a valuable resource for audiences discovering – and artists and arts organizations promoting – town cultural activities.

ACAC has been actively engaged in local and regional planning for activities related to Arlington 250

and the 250th Anniversary celebrations of the American Revolution, which will remain an important area of focus through 2026 including opportunities to collaborate with other organizations and committees within and beyond Arlington.

HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSIONS

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 Commissions (AHDC) are required by law to review the architectural appropriateness of most proposed exterior design changes, whether they be a minor alteration, new additions or structures. Each Commission consists of qualified volunteers appointed by the Select Board 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 2023 the Commissions met ten (10) times to hold hearings for property owners seeking approval for certificates on exterior work to be conducted on their properties or to discuss ongoing litigation. They also met in a joint session with the Arlington Historical Commission on 6/12/2023. The July 27 and November 16, 2023 meetings were cancelled. During the year they entered into Executive Session three (3) times to discuss pending or ongoing litigation. Part of the regular meetings included sixteen (16) Informal Hearings held for property owners seeking advice or resource information for work to be conducted and nineteen (19) Formal Hearings. As a result of those meetings and additional CONA applications not requiring a hearing, twenty (20) Certificates of Appropriateness (COA) and forty (40) Certificates of Non-Applicability (CONA) to be undertaken were granted. In addition, during 2023, an appeal of a 2022 Commission Denial in the Jason-Gray

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District was filed in the Superior Court and subsequently dismissed by the court. There were two (2) Application Denials issued.

During the year the Commissioners gave input and sent recommendations on a number of Community Preservation Act (CPA) Projects including the Jason Russell House, The Shea and the Jarvis Houses. They conducted all meetings remotely on ZOOM and began to investigate the option to move to a hybrid format. The AHDC would also like to note the resignation this past year of Alison Frank Johnson. Her tact, energy, and insights were significant and invaluable contributions to the Commissions and are very much recognized, appreciated and will be greatly missed. Community outreach for commissioners to fill the vacant seats in Jason/Gray, Mt Gilboa/Crescent Hill and Central Street Historic Districts continues.

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, other historic objects, and landmarks.
- Provides guidance and advice to owners of historic and architecturally significant properties.
- Participates in the management and maintenance of historic resources owned by the Town, e.g., Arlington Town Hall, the Whittemore-Robbins House, the Town Hall Gardens and others.

In addition, the Commission reviews and acts upon any applications for building permits that involve changes to 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.

The Commission conducted hearings for 18 inventoried properties in 2023.

In addition, in 2023 the Commission continued to re-evaluate and refine the Inventory to ensure that demolished structures are being removed from the list, address changes are reflected, and other important changes and updates are made to The Inventory on a regular basis. The Inventory can be found on the Historical Commission website at arlingtonma.gov.

The Commission issued a revised and updated list of Design Principles adapted from the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties to help property owners better understand and prepare for working with the Commission.

The Commission continues to work closely with Inspectional Services Director and his staff to make sure property owners are made aware of the The Inventory when they apply for a building permit, and to help resolve issues when property owners proceed with renovations without Commission review.

To address the growing need to adapt historic structures for modern energy systems, Associate Commissioner Kim Goldinger researched and produced guidelines to help property owners add solar panels to historic structures without compromising the integrity of the building.

Historic Markers

The Historical Commission provides plaques through the historic house marker program 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 and describes the process for hearings before the Commission as well as listing our publications and projects at www.arlingtonhistoricalcommission.org.

Commissioner Eric Stange managed the redesign and update of the website in 2023 with substantial help from Arlington resident and web designer Lukas Gianocostas. The Arlington Historical Society generously provided historic images for the website.

Other Activities

The Commission distributed a letter to the Town's realtors and real estate agencies urging them to alert clients to the possibility that a property might be on The Inventory when considering purchasing a property.

Commissioners represent the Historical Commission on various municipal boards and historic organizations, including the Arlington Historical Society (Pamela Meister), the Arlington Community Preservation Act Committee (JoAnn Robinson) and the Historic and Cultural Resources Working Group formed by the Master Plan (Dianne Schaefer and JoAnn Robinson).

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CYRUS E. DALLIN ART MUSEUM BOARD OF TRUSTEES



The Cyrus Dallin Art Museum (CDAM) promotes new insights into our shared history by exploring the life, work, and values of a celebrated American sculptor. The Museum's mission is deeply informed by Cyrus Dallin's commitment to social justice, education, and artistic expression. The museum seeks to make art accessible to all and to provide experiences that enrich and inspire while promoting mutual respect, understanding, and empathy.

Visitors to the Dallin Museum are introduced to over ninety artworks spanning the sculptor's sixty-year career. The museum archive is the country's leading repository for historical research on the legacy of Cyrus Dallin and the Dallin family. It comprises more than 6,000 items including photographs, correspondence, sketches, journals, and exhibition catalogues.

The museum completed several large projects including the launch of a searchable online database of digitized collections, video recording of museum volunteers reading from transcribed oral history interviews of people who interacted with Dallin during his lifetime, unveilings of new acquisitions and professionally restored sculptures and paintings, and the installation of new exterior signs and banners.

After several years of mostly online programming, the museum was delighted to be able to offer many in-person programs this year. Programs included walking tours, poetry readings, children's sculpture workshop, family-friendly art in the park, educational talks, and annual events such as Patriot's Day Celebration, Art on the Green on Town Day, and First Lights with the Chamber of Commerce.

2023 Achievements

- Provided public online access to the digitized Rell Francis Collection, the papers of Dallin's biographer, with the support of Community Preservation Act funding.
- With ACMI, recorded and premiered readings of the transcribed oral history interviews that museum founder James McGough had conducted with friends, students and neighbors of Cyrus and Vittoria Dallin twenty years ago.
- Active social media engagement resulted in

a 15 percent increase in followers on Instagram and a 52 percent increase in total views of museum program and curatorial content on YouTube.

- Unveiled new acquisition of *Chief Washakie*, an equestrian statue and portrait of the Shoshone tribal leader. Produced an educational video featuring John Washakie, the great-grandson of this historic American figure.
- Designed and installed art banners for display outside the museum.
- Unveiled the cleaned and restored oil painting, *The Bird Bath – Autumn*, one of a series of four garden landscapes at the Dallin home in Arlington Heights. This project was supported with Mass Cultural Council funds through a grant approved by the Arlington Cultural Council.



Museum Trustee, Geri Tremblay, unveils a restored oil painting on Town Day, Sept. 2023.

2023 Activities and Programs

- Marked Patriots Day with presentations about the history of the Battle of Menotomy and reading of Longfellow's poem, *Paul Revere's Ride*.
- Led summer walking tours in Arlington Center highlighting sculptures by Dallin and other local landmarks.
- Hosted youth from the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota that were visiting Boston as part of the Lakota YouthStay Program based in Medford, Mass. The youth toured the museum, provided helpful feedback about the Indigenous Peoples Gallery then took part in a hands-on sculpture workshop.
- Museum trustee Chris Costello gave a talk at the Old Schwamb Mill about the US Mint's American Women Quarters.
- Celebrated Indigenous Peoples Day with Robbins Library, Arlington Human Rights

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Commission, and the Old Schwamb Mill by hosting Sagamore Strong Bear Medicine who gave a talk about the Nashoba Praying Indians.



Young residents of the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota traveled to Boston as part of the Lakota YouthStay Program and visited the Dallin Museum as part of their itinerary.

Goals for 2024

- Complete the digitization process of Dallin's personal papers and make them available online. The collection includes primary source materials documenting Dallin's career, family life, advocacy work and friendships.
- Install a bronze cast of Dallin's *Paul Revere* on a new granite plinth in the west garden outside the museum. This will complete the projects supported by the Transformative Growth Grant Program.
- Design, stock, and launch an Indigenous-themed Little Free Library.
- Fund and plan a full re-design of the History gallery.



Town Day vendor Mud Dove Pottery displayed hand crafted ceramics at Art on the Green on Town Day.