



City of Ann Arbor

Meeting Minutes - Draft

Ann Arbor Public Art Commission

301 E. Huron St.
Ann Arbor, MI 48104
[http://a2gov.legistar.com/
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Wednesday, February 4, 2026

7:00 PM

Larcom City Hall, 301 E Huron St, Second
floor, City Council Chambers

This meeting will air live on CTN Channel 16, ATT Channel 99, and online at a2gov.org/watchCTN. To speak at public comment, call 888-788-0099 or 877-853-5247 (Toll Free), enter Meeting ID: 932 8112 0347 and Passcode: 199831

I.) CALL TO ORDER (Mary Thiefels) (1 Minute)

Chair Thiefels called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

II.) ROLL CALL (Christopher Cespedes) (2 Minutes)

Present city staff, speakers, and/or guests:

- Christopher Cespedes (City Staff)

Present: 7 - Peggy Wier-Leonard, Marianetta Porter, Jamall Bufford, Cynthia Harrison, Mary Thiefels, John Kotarski, and Jenna Carter

Absent: 3 - Allison Buck, Sarah Fuller, and John Jourden

III.) CONSENT AGENDA (Mary Thiefels)(2 Minutes)

III.A.) Approval of Agenda

III.B.) Approval of Minutes

26-0370 AAPAC - JAN 2026 Minutes

Attachments: AAPAC - JAN 2026 Meeting Minutes.pdf

A motion was made by Commissioner Kotarski, seconded by Commissioner Porter, to approve the meeting agenda and the previous meeting minutes as presented. On a unanimous voice vote, the Chair declared the motion carried.

IV.) PUBLIC COMMENT - 3 MINUTES PER SPEAKER (Christopher Cespedes)

Public comment was opened. No members of the public spoke during public comment.

V.) BUSINESS

V.A.) Public Art Commission 2026 Annual Plan (Mary Thiefels) (20 minutes)

26-0369 Ann Arbor Public Art Commission 2026 Work Plan

Attachments: AAPAC- 2026 Work Plan .pdf

Discussion Highlights:

- *City staff noted updates to the draft 2026 Work Plan, including removal of the Design Review Board meeting item.*
- *Staff referenced incorporating edits and formatting updates prior to final submission.*
- *Commissioners indicated readiness to move the plan forward to City Council.*
- *No objections or amendments were raised prior to the motion.*

A motion was made by Commissioner Kotarski, seconded by Commissioner Carter, to forward the 2026 Ann Arbor Public Art Commission Plan to City Council as the Commission’s annual plan submission. Following a voice vote, the Chair declared the motion carried.

VI.) INFORMATION OR DISCUSSION

VI.A.) Community Foundation Update - Mini Grant (Mary Thiefels) (15 minutes)

Discussion Highlights

- *The Chair reported that the Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation database lists the fund as the Art in Public Places Endowment Fund.*
- *The current fund balance was stated as approximately \$178,000.*
- *Annual estimated spendable distributions were described as approximately \$5,000 per year, dependent on earnings.*
- *It was noted that approximately \$27,000 in accumulated spendable funds may be currently available.*
- *The Chair explained that distributions are not automatic and must be formally requested.*
- *Staff indicated that the City currently lacks capacity to administer a separate grant distribution account.*
- *Discussion included exploring whether a compliant pathway may exist for funds to be administered by a third-party nonprofit partner, subject to legal and financial review.*
- *Staff reported plans to meet with Creative Washtenaw to assess organizational capacity and alignment with the fund's purpose.*
- *Commissioners discussed ensuring alignment with broader City initiatives and maintaining clear public communication regarding the program.*

VII.) COMMUNICATIONS

VII.A.) Staff Report and Updates (Christopher Cespedes) (10 Minutes)

Discussion Highlights:

- *Staff referenced prior discussion regarding development of a broader citywide public art plan.*
- *Staff reported that current staff capacity remains focused on core capital and operational priorities.*
- *It was noted that advancement of a comprehensive public art plan would likely require additional resources or direction from City leadership.*
- *Staff clarified that the concept remains exploratory and is not being dismissed, but would require Commission support and leadership alignment before moving forward.*

VII.B.) Commission Member Communications (Mary Thiefels) (10 minutes)

Discussion Highlights:

- *The Chair referenced a recent article regarding the City receiving approximately \$4.3 million in grant funding for placemaking projects near the Blake Transit Center.*
- *Commissioners discussed whether public art elements may be incorporated into those projects and the potential for follow-up.*
- *Commissioners noted the opportunity to engage with the Downtown Development Authority on placemaking and public art coordination.*
- *Commissioner Bufford announced an additional screening of the documentary "A Letter to the West Side."*
- *The Chair mentioned upcoming downtown activities, including Main Street events and window art installations.*

VII.C.) Reports from Working Groups (Mary Thiefels) (30 minutes)

Discussion Highlights:

- *The Capital Improvement Projects working group reported that a recent meeting was canceled and that prior recommendations may be carried forward.*
- *The Chair asked whether CIP-related items were reflected in the 2026 Work Plan draft. Staff indicated the draft was prepared based on provided updates.*
- *The Fundraising working group noted continued discussion of the Mini Grant Program and an upcoming meeting with Creative Washtenaw.*
- *The Nominations/Leadership working group reported no updates.*
- *The Special Projects working group discussed next steps for the Golden Paintbrush Awards, including communications, website updates, and potential City Council recognition.*

VIII. Next Agenda Items (Mary Thiefels) (3 minutes)

The Chair invited commissioners to suggest future agenda items. No specific items were identified.

IX. Adjournment (Mary Thiefels) – 2 minutes

A motion was made by Commissioner Kotarski, seconded by Commissioner Carter, to adjourn the meeting. Following a voice vote, the Chair declared the motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 7:51 p.m.

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City Clerk's Office
301 E. Huron St.
Ann Arbor, MI 48104

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