



**REGIONAL ARTS
COMMISSION**
OF ST. LOUIS

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**Regional Arts Commission
Public Arts Committee Minutes
March 5, 2026 via ZOOM
9:00 a.m.**

Call to Order & Committee Members in Attendance

Chair Wilson called the March 5, 2026, Public Arts Committee meeting to order at 9:02 a.m. and asked Sutherland to conduct the Committee roll call.

Committee Members in Attendance

David Wilson, chair, Anita Hagerman, *Meridith McKinley, *Mallory Rukhsana Nezam, *Tom Stancliffe, *Brianna McIntyre (*Non-Voting Committee Member)

Yea – Wilson, Hagerman, (McKinley, Rukhsana Nezam, Stancliffe, McIntyre, acknowledged)

Nay – none

Abstain - none

Committee Members Absent

Jerry Gennaria

Tino Ochoa, ex-officio

Staff Attendees

Vanessa Cooksey, Ann Haubrich, Chloe Higgins, Tracey Morgan-Harris

Approval of Minutes

Chair Wilson acknowledged (1) the June 5, 2025 Public Arts Committee meeting minutes - and notes that those minutes were approved via email by the 2025 Public Arts Committee voting members; (2) 2025 Chair Andréa Purnell emailed a committee update in place of the November 24, 2025 meeting, which was not held due to lack of a quorum; and (3) both the June 5, 2025 minutes and November 24, 2025 update were included in the packet for this meeting.

Introductions

Chair Wilson called for committee member introductions and expressed gratitude to all participants, especially those who are not commissioners, for sharing their expertise.

Chair Wilson then called for the following reports:

RAC Grant/Organization Updates

Cooksey provided the following updates: (1) FY26 - no new grant applications accepted; grants for FY25 will be provided; (2) grant emphasis aligned with the new strategic roadmap; (3) anticipated decrease in Hotel/Motel Tax





Revenue; (4) grants payments moved to Q4 to ensure full awards; (5) grants team is working very diligently to organize and update RAC's process and applications; and (6) grantmaking opportunities for FY27 will be announced in July.

Higgins added the following: (1) public art grants available through a budget line item for FY25 projects; (2) support for public art will be opportunistic, with no specific funding targets set as yet; (3) no current public art-specific grant programs outside ARPA-funded projects; and (4) future funding opportunities for public art are anticipated.

Forest Park Tree Commission – Halted

Higgins reported the following: (1) the Forest Park Tree Commission was a project; (2) she shared the proposal with this committee in late January; and (3) unfortunately, project has been halted/placed on hold due to artist timing and ongoing challenges with the park.

Hagerman asked for the meaning of 'on hold.'

Cooksey explained (1) the Forest Park Tree project [commissioned by The Gateway Foundation] has been halted due to scheduling conflicts and logistical challenges; (2) clarification provided that the project is postponed, not canceled; (3) no impact on RAC funds; and (4) The Gateway Foundation's public art project is on hold with no current funding or timeline.

Board of Public Service (BPS) Developments

Public Art Submission (Change in Process) and Ordinance Reform

Higgins reported the following: (1) RAC typically handles public art proposals, received mainly from agencies; (2) engaged in discussions with Board of Public Service [BPS] regarding process changes and ordinance reforms; (3) extensive work done to understand the current ordinance and will update this committee after talks with BPS.

Chair Wilson asked if everyone was familiar with the ordinance.

Hagerman noted that she plans to study the ordinance, has a basic understanding of the framework, and asked about the percentage of public art activity that is city versus county.

Cooksey clarified that current discussions and content are specific to the City of St. Louis.

Wilson highlighted the importance of Public Art Policy and future opportunities as follows: (1) importance of policy and planning; (2) both city and county are committed but processes are complex; (3) recalled a late 1990s effort by the RAC founder to establish a "Percent for Art" ordinance requiring 1% of city construction projects for public art; and (4) noted enforcement issues and that RAC's role isn't clearly defined in current policies.

Nezam agreed, and noted the following: (1) suggested now is a good time to revive conversations with decision-makers about the ordinance and to engage artists interested in public art; (2) excited about the dialogue in 2026 as an opportunity to listen and reconnect; (3) mentioned that nationally, "Percent for Public Art" programs are



common in similar-sized cities; (4) emphasized storytelling and sharing info to build support for funding; and (5) highlighted a pipeline of talented St. Louis artists who could contribute.

Stancliffe cited data showing the economic benefits of public art, such as revitalization and fostering a creative culture.

Hagerman asked about examples of public art beyond murals and sculptures and what defines “public art.”

Stancliffe shared the following considerations: (1) funding sources [public tax dollars or private]; (2) visibility - public spaces or art on private property but accessible; and (3) noted that generally, public art is in public spaces but can include art on private property if funded and visible.

McKinley highlighted that the source of funding affects what qualifies as public art and suggested exploring models from other cities, such as Washington D.C.'s grant-based approach and Alexandria, VA annual lump sum, to benefit St. Louis.

Discussion held on whether funds like Rams money could be used and emphasized understanding the political landscape, and how increased public art can enhance tourism and economic vitality nationally and globally.

Wilson noted that these insights would inform the upcoming BPS meeting, and that RAC will continue engaging with this committee and others to develop policies, models, and strategies for advancing public art in St. Louis.

2026 Action Items

Higgins highlighted the list of potential for workshops 2026, included in the packet for this meeting, with a focus on planning a six-part workshop series led by Public Art Committee members to equip artists with practical skills, knowledge, and language for public art projects.

Discussion held regarding enhancing artists' capacity through increasing visibility, providing technical support, and offering educational workshops to help them succeed.

Higgins highlighted a low budget but impactful support for local artists and plans to engage past participants of the St. Louis Mural Project to understand their project statuses and offer resources.

McKinley stressed the importance of elevating project visibility and community engagement.

Stancliffe underscored the need for workshops to address artists' lack of technical knowledge.

McIntyre noted that understanding materials, durability, and the public art process is a major hurdle, and suggested informal critique sessions and checklists to aid artists.

Brief discussion held on how to empower artists through targeted support and education to foster success in public art.



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Sutherlin left for another meeting @ 10:02a; Cooksey provided admin support for the remainder of the meeting.

Higgins invited additional feedback from the Committee and proposed organizing informal roundtable conversations to engage artists and stakeholders about their projects, challenges, and funding.

McIntyre suggested structuring roundtable meetings with smaller groups (3-5 people) to allow impactful conversations and facilitate one-on-one discussions with experts on topics like fabrication, community involvement, and materials.

Stancliffe supported the idea of small, ongoing series of informal meetings, perhaps two or three times a year, where participants could share projects and learn collectively.

Wilson noted that regional collaboration could be valuable, suggesting RAC could convene a semi-regular group with representatives from Kranzberg, City of St. Louis, Gateway, St. Louis County, Clayton, and Missouri Arts Council to strategize and push public art initiatives forward.

Nezam suggested that these gatherings include local and national voices, balancing perspectives and encouraging cross-sector understanding. She also highlighted the importance of mixing different stakeholders—artists, developers, funders—to strengthen the public art ecosystem, advocating for mixers or networking events that foster collaboration.

Hagerman proposed piggybacking on existing efforts like RAC's drop-in hours to create more informal networking opportunities, emphasizing that targeted workshops could attract artists already interested in public art, while broader community members might need different engagement formats.

Roll Call & Adjournment

Chair Wilson called for a motion to adjourn.

Motion made by Hagerman, seconded by Wilson, and unanimously approved to adjourn the March 5, 2026 Public Arts Committee meeting at 10:17 a.m. Votes were as follows:

Yea – Wilson, Hagerman, (McKinley, Rukhsana Nezam, Stancliffe, McIntyre, acknowledged)

Nay – none

Abstain - none

Submitted by

L. Sutherlin, Exec. Asst. & Commission Administrator

Attachments





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- Public Art Committee Minutes, March 6, 2025
- List of 2025 ASG Public Art Grantees
- Potential for Workshops 2026

