

Posted online 1/30/25



Power of culture

**MASS CULTURAL COUNCIL
ADVANCEMENT COMMITTEE**

**WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2025
10:00AM
ON-LINE MEETING**

MEETING WILL BE LIVESTREAMED AT

[HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/LIVE/ER_O3VQ5LFS](https://www.youtube.com/live/er_o3vq5lfs)

MEETING MATERIALS WILL BE POSTED ONLINE AT

**[HTTPS://MASSCULTURALCOUNCIL.ORG/ABOUT/BOARD/](https://massculturalcouncil.org/about/board/)
UNDER "FEBRUARY 5, 2025 ADVANCEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING"**

AGENDA

VOTE

-
- | | |
|---|----------|
| 1. Call to Order- Open Meeting Law Notice | |
| 2. Minutes October 30, 2024 Meeting | X |
| 3. Report from Co-Chairs | |
| 4. Executive Director Report | |
| a. Work with Governor's Cultural Policy Development Advisory
Committee | |
| 5. Legislative Update | |
| 6. Report on Advancement Activities | |
| 7. Planning for Massachusetts Medal of Arts | |
| 8. Adjourn | |

OPEN MEETING LAW STATEMENT

Please note that this meeting is an open meeting of a public body subject to the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law. A notice of this meeting together with the agenda was posted on Mass Cultural Council's website 48 or more hours ago (excluding weekends and holidays).

This meeting shall be open and accessible to all members of the public except at such times when this body has voted to go into closed executive session under the Open Meeting Law.

This meeting is a virtual meeting held under the Open Meeting Law as modified under current law to permit online meetings. This meeting is being broadcast to the public on a publicly available YouTube channel as described in the posted meeting notice.

Instructions on how to contact the Council with questions or problems accessing the broadcast are also included in such notice. Only Council members, staff and invited guests will be provided access to the Zoom platform hosting the meeting. As a safety measure, in order to prevent disruption of the meeting or non-public communications among the participants, the Chair, Vice Chair and Executive Committee of Mass Cultural Council has asked staff to implement the following protocols for participants in on-line meetings of Mass Cultural Council or its committees:

- Any "chat" or similar function on the Zoom platform hosting the meeting shall be disabled.
- Other than Council members or participants specifically recognized by the Chair of the meeting, all Zoom platform participants will be muted and have no ability to share media or documents or project or type images or text.
- All participants in the Zoom platform may be required to enter a waiting room and digitally sign-in before being admitted.

- Any attendee in the Zoom platform who nonetheless causes a disruption will be summarily removed from the meeting at the discretion of the Chair.

This meeting is not a public hearing and public testimony will not be taken. Individuals may not address the meeting without permission of the Chair.

Any member of the public may record this meeting provided that they do not interfere with the meeting.

Draft minutes of the open session of this meeting shall be kept and shall be posted on Mass Cultural Council's website no later than 30 days after the meeting provided that such minutes shall not be considered official until they have been approved by this body in open session. Individuals asserting a violation of the Open Meeting Law may file a complaint with this body within 30 days or with the Attorney General's office thereafter.

**TIPS FOR PARTICIPATING IN A VIRTUAL OPEN MEETING USING ZOOM OR OTHER
VIDEOCONFERENCING PLATFORMS WHEN THERE ARE SEVERAL PARTICIPANTS**

(adapted from several sources)

- In order to minimize background noise, please mute microphone when not speaking.
- Please raise hand in order to be recognized by the chair.
- In order for all members to have an opportunity to speak and be heard, please wait to speak until specifically recognized by the chair.
- If there are questions, please direct them to the chair and the chair will then recognize the appropriate person to respond.
- Please limit statements to three minutes.
- The chair will reserve the right to limit discussion in order to allow sufficient time for every member to be heard who wishes to speak.
- Modify Video Settings to “Hide all non-video participants”- this will make it easier to follow who is speaking and participating
- In the event of a service interruption during a Zoom call due to hackers, so-called “zoom bombing” or other technical difficulties, staff will indicate the call is to be terminated. Please exit the call and staff will circulate instructions by email for a new Zoom call to continue the meeting.

UNOFFICIAL DRAFT SUBJECT TO APPROVAL BY THE COMMITTEE AT ITS NEXT MEETING

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

**MASS CULTURAL COUNCIL
ADVANCEMENT COMMITTEE**

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 30TH, 2024

ONLINE MEETING

Committee Members Present were

Ché Anderson, Co-Chair
Rhonda Anderson
Diane Asadorian Masters
Anika Lopes
Allyce Najimy
Marc Carroll – ex officio
Jo-Ann Davis – ex officio

Staff Members Present were

Michael J. Bobbitt, Executive Director
David Slatery, Deputy Executive Director
Jen Lawless, Senior Director of Program Operations
Catherine Cheng-Anderson, Senior Director of Business Operations & Chief Financial Officer
Bethann Steiner, Senior Director of Public Affairs
Ann Petruccelli Moon, Deputy Chief of Staff
Carmen Plazas, Communications & Community Engagement Manager
Christian Kelly, Public Relations & Events Manager

Co-Chair Ché Anderson called the meeting to order at 10:04am and asked Deputy Executive Director David Slatery to read the Open Meeting Law statement.

Ché thanked David and asked Committee Members if they'd reviewed the minutes from their last meeting held on May 15, 2024. If they had, he would look for a motion and a second to approve those minutes. Council Chair Marc Carroll moved to approve the minutes, Rhonda Anderson seconded the motion. By roll call vote and noting that Committee Co-Chair Iván Espinoza-Madrigal was absent it was unanimously

RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the May 15, 2024 Advancement Committee Meeting in the form presented.

Ché let Committee Members know he'd spoken with his Co-Chair, Iván in preparation for his report today. He began his report by giving kudos to the staff nothing that it seems Mass Cultural Council is everywhere advancing the cultural sector and enhancing the public perception of the Agency and its work. He then noted that in this age of virtual meetings and opportunities to connect digitally, there should be an opportunity for the Committee and the full Council to get together for networking and idea sharing in person. Plans for a gathering will begin soon, with the number one question being location. Ché also noted the amazing number of opportunities presented to the Committee from the staff for participation in events, speaking engagements, and meetings. He would also like to see Committee Members be proactive and seek out opportunities to participate in events and meetings in their communities and to share those opportunities with each other and with the staff. He then asked Executive Director Michael Bobbitt for his report.

Michael began by congratulating Committee Member Allyce Najimy who recently received the Big Sister Association of Greater Boston's Deborah Re Believe in Girls Award. He then let Committee Members know the Cultural Policy Development Advisory Council held its first meeting in late September. Additional members are being added and the group has been divided into four working groups: workforce development, creative placemaking, economic development, and community support. The groups are led by Chair Paul Park, Chair Mindy Domb, Joyce Linehan, and Michael. The goal is to present policy recommendations to the Governor in the spring. There is a meeting next week between the Agency and the Executive Office of Economic Development to more clearly define their partnership. Senior staff is close to making an offer for the Advancement & Strategic Partnerships Manager position. Arts Consulting Group has been hired as a fundraising consultant to conduct research on what federal grants might be available to Mass Cultural Council – the idea is not to take funding opportunities away from the cultural sector, but rather to seek out additional funds to further support it. The research will help determine whether or not the Agency will hire a full-time staff member to work on grant writing and fundraising. Arts prescriptions continues to scale and spread around the country. Michael is speaking on many panels and at several events and receiving interest from a myriad of groups. Michael and Chris Appleton of Art Pharmacy will give a presentation to Boston Medical Center tomorrow. An event in collaboration with the Health Equity Compact is being planned for January. Staff is working with the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities on a grant program to bring art into housing projects. A conversation is scheduled with the Department of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance (DCAMM) to discuss Percent for Art – a program wherein 1% of all construction budgets is devoted to putting art into projects. A re-design of the Cultural Districts Initiative is underway; Civic Moxie has been contracted to consult on that project. A conversation with the Department of Conservation and Recreation is ongoing regarding the scaling of its historic curatorship program. The Agency is being courted by the Department of Homeland Security to apply for a large grant focused on how the arts can mitigate violence and domestic terrorism.

Ché thanked Michael for his report and mentioned that he has two meetings about arts prescriptions this week alone; it's great to see its reach expanding. He then asked Senior Director of Public Affairs Bethann Steiner for her report.

Bethann explained that for many years the Agency produced a bi-annual awards ceremony called the Commonwealth Awards focused on celebrating and advocating for the sector. It was frequently held in the State House. In 2020 the Agency had a leadership transition, and the pandemic began, and the awards ceremony was put on hold. Michael has charged the staff with rethinking the awards ceremony so that it mirrors the Agency's current strategic plan and equity goals. Bethann then asked Public Relations & Events Manager Christian Kelly to say more about the plans.

Christian let Committee Members know a memo outlining the current plans was available in their meeting materials. The revised awards ceremony will be rebranded and redeveloped and used as an advancement tool to celebrate partnerships with entities outside the cultural sector who have been leaders in efforts that advance the cultural sector. The goal is to hold an event in March 2026 and bi-annually thereafter. Full details are available in the memo, and it is the hope of the staff that the Advancement Committee will play a crucial role in the shaping of the new awards ceremony.

Anika Lopes expressed her support and excitement about the event. Allyce echoed Anika's remarks and asked if the event would be a fundraiser for the cultural sector, what the budget might be, and where the event will be held.

The event will be held in Boston. Michael explained that it will not be a fundraiser but rather an opportunity to build new connections. In the past Michael felt the awards ceremony pitted theaters against other theaters so-to-speak, this event will focus more on bringing leaders from outside of the sector into the room. The budget for the event will come from the Agency's annual allocation.

Chair Marc Carroll asked for more information about how the staff envisioned the Advancement Committee helping with the project and how large the event is expected to be.

Michael explained that the Committee's input will be very important in identifying the scope of each award. The Committee will also approve the award recipients and help recruit leaders across the state to attend the event. Michael envisions approximately 1,000 guests at the event.

Vice Chair Jo-Ann Davis expressed her support for the awards ceremony and asked if the staff had considered an award for a member of the business community. Christian thanked Jo-Ann for her feedback and will explore the possibility of breaking the partnership award into two categories: public sector and private sector.

There were no further questions and Ché asked Michael for his Advancement report.

Michael explained that most of the Agency's advancement efforts were summarized in his previous report. He added that for the last year the efforts have been very broad; a rolodex of new contacts and partners was built. This year the team is determining what specific areas to focus on. A big part of the work is the Cultural Policy Development Advisory Council; the recommendations that come out of that effort will serve as another jumping off point for the Agency's advancement work. Michael still advises that Committee Members invite staff to meetings and events they believe might benefit the sector and/or the Agency.

Allyce asked for an example of a great room Michael has been invited to join.

Michael shared that he was invited to attend the Commonwealth Summit – an annual cross-sector gathering of Massachusetts leaders – for the last two years and has now joined the planning committee for this year's summit.

Allyce shared that she and Chair Marc Carroll attended an event at The Quin House earlier in the fall and Secretary of Economic Development Yvonne Hao spoke about the importance of weaving the creative economy into all sectors.

Ché then asked if Chair Marc Carroll would like to say more about Council engagement before the meeting adjourned. Marc echoed Ché's earlier comments about planning an opportunity for Council Members to network with one another. Marc is pleased to have an extraordinary group of Council Members and would like to make sure their knowledge and skills are known and utilized. He is eager to hear what the Advancement Committee proposes in terms of this Council engagement opportunity.

That brought the Committee to the end of its agenda and Ché as Chair adjourned the meeting at 10:48am.

Awards Celebration Planning

To: Mass Cultural Council Advancement Committee
Fr: Michael Bobbitt, Dave Slatery, Bethann Steiner, Christian Kelly, Ann Petruccelli Moon
Dt: February 5, 2025
Re: Update: Mass Cultural Council's new award celebration

Name. We plan to name this event, and the awards that are presented, the Massachusetts Medal of Arts. We feel this name conveys the prestige and honor that we hope that the award will carry.

Timeline. We are still targeting March 2026 for this event. With that in mind, we have developed a rough planning timeline, including when we plan to engage this Committee:

- **February 2025** – Set award names, descriptions
- **Spring 2025** – Develop survey and call for nominations
- **Spring 2025 Committee Meeting** – Finalize call for nominations; release survey shortly following Advancement Committee meeting
- **Early Summer 2025** – Nominations collected
- **Late Summer 2025** – Staff team reviews nominations, develops short list of finalists to present to Advancement Committee
- **Summer 2025 Committee Meeting** – Committee reviews finalists, votes to recommend chosen candidates to full Council
- **Summer 2025 Full Council Meeting** – Council votes to confirm awardees
- **Fall 2025 / Winter 2026** – Notification to awardees, production of video packages, planning for event, logistics, publicity, etc.
- **March 2026** – Inaugural Massachusetts Medal of Arts Ceremony

The Award. As we are moving forward with this being the Massachusetts Medal of Arts, we intend to design an actual medal that can be presented to recipients. We have begun preliminary conversations with local businesses that may be interested in a partnership and becoming

the “Official Producer of the Massachusetts Medal of Arts” and we will provide an update to this Committee at a future meeting.

Depending on these conversations, we may issue an RFP to solicit designs from Massachusetts artists.

Award Names/Descriptions. At this time, we welcome this Committee's guidance on determining the actual award names and descriptions that will be celebrated at the event. This does not need to be finalized at this meeting, and we can revisit in May 2025. You'll find below that we have prepared some suggested names and descriptions, however we welcome your input in developing this language:

A group or individual advocate for arts and culture

This award honors an outstanding group or individual who has demonstrated exceptional advocacy for arts and culture, championing creativity as a cornerstone of vibrant, inclusive communities. It recognizes those who have made significant contributions to advancing public awareness, policy, and resources that support the arts. Whether through visionary leadership, grassroots organizing, or impactful storytelling, recipients of this award embody the transformative power of advocacy in strengthening the cultural fabric of society and inspiring others to join the cause.

Potential names:

- The Creative Voice Award
- The Culture Catalyst Award
- The Arts Advocate Awards
- Others?

An equity leader

This award recognizes an individual or organization that has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to advancing equity in arts and culture. It celebrates those who actively work to dismantle barriers, promote inclusion, and uplift underrepresented voices within the creative sector. Recipients exemplify the belief that access to the arts is a fundamental right and a vital tool for building more just and inclusive communities. Through their leadership, advocacy, and innovation, they inspire meaningful change and set a powerful example of how the arts can be a catalyst for equity and social progress.

Naming:

- We thought that this might be a good award to name after an inspiring, historical figure from Massachusetts. We would welcome your input on this. We can finalize this at the May meeting.

A public or private sector partner (intended to be an agency or organization)

This award honors a public or private sector partner organization that has demonstrated an exceptional commitment to advancing the arts. It celebrates an organization from the public or private sector that recognizes the transformative power of fostering cultural vitality. Whether through innovative partnerships, funding, or engagement, recipients exemplify how collaboration between sectors can drive impactful change, elevate creative voices, and ensure that the arts remain an integral part of our society.

Potential names:

- The Advancement Award
- The Bridge Builder Award
- The Innovation in Action Award
- Others?

A community/municipality

This award celebrates a city or town that has demonstrated exceptional innovation and leadership in local arts and culture. It recognizes a municipality that has made bold investments, implemented visionary policies, or forged impactful partnerships to foster creativity and enrich community life. Honorees exemplify how the arts can be leveraged to drive economic growth and enhance the quality of life for residents and visitors alike. Recipients set a powerful example of how local governments can build vibrant, inclusive, and culturally rich communities.

Potential names:

- The Community Impact Award
- The Cultural Leadership Award
- The Beacon of Culture Award
- Others?

A policymaker

This award recognizes a policymaker who has shown extraordinary leadership and dedication to advancing arts and culture as essential components of a thriving society. It honors a leader whose vision, advocacy, and policy initiatives have expanded access to the arts,

supported creative professionals, and strengthened cultural institutions. Through their work, recipients have demonstrated a profound understanding of the transformative power of creativity to enrich lives, foster community resilience, and drive economic and social progress. Their efforts serve as a model of how thoughtful policy can elevate the arts and ensure their enduring impact for generations to come.

Potential names:

- The Cultural Policy Leadership Award
- The Champion of Creativity Award
- The Cultural Stewardship Award
- Others?

The Council/Chair's award (which will be given at the sole discretion of the Council/Chair)

This award is presented at the sole discretion of Mass Cultural Council's Governing Council/Chair. It honors significant and lasting impact in advancing arts and culture. It celebrates vision, passion, and dedication to elevating the creative sector, whether through innovative projects, community engagement, advocacy, or something else. Recipients have shown a commitment to fostering artistic expression, nurturing talent, and enhancing cultural vibrancy, ensuring that the arts remain a vital force for personal, social, and economic transformation.

Potential names:

- The Council Award
- The Chair Award
- Others?

Note: For this award, we should determine whether it is being chosen by the Council as a whole or solely by the Chair.