

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

**MINUTES OF THE
ONE HUNDRED-SIXTY SECOND MEETING OF MASS CULTURAL COUNCIL
& COUNCIL RETREAT**

THURSDAY, MARCH 21, 2024

**IN-PERSON MEETING
MUSEUM OF SCIENCE, 1 SCIENCE PARK, BOSTON, MA 02114**

Council Members Present were

Marc Carroll, Chair
Jo-Ann Davis, Vice Chair
Ché Anderson
Rhonda Anderson
Sherry Dong
Iván Espinoza-Madrigal
Donna Haghghat
Cecil Barron Jensen
Anika Lopes
Diane Asadorian Masters
Allyce Najjimy
Ellice Patterson
Julie Wake

Also Present were Mass Cultural Council Staff Members Michael J. Bobbitt, David Slatery, Jen Lawless, Bethann Steiner, Ann Petruccelli Moon, Christian Kelly, Charles Baldwin, Lisa Simmons, Sara Glidden, Erik Holmgren, Jay Paget, Dan Blask, Deborah Kenyon; Live Captioner Teri Gibson; National Assembly of State Arts Agencies Chief Program & Planning Officer Kelly Barsdate; and Museum of Science President Tim Ritchie.

Chair Marc Carroll called the meeting to order at 10:05am and asked Deputy Executive Director David Slatery to read the 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 an in-person open public meeting in an open public meeting place accessible to the public and is being conducted under the Open Meeting Law as currently in effect and there will be no on-line, remote or broadcast component.

Mass Cultural Council welcomes the public to attend its meetings in accordance with the Open Meeting Law, but any attempts to disrupt a meeting may result in the removal of the responsible party. 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.

The Chair welcomed Council Members, staff, and guests to the meeting. He let Council Members know that Ann Murphy had cycled off the Council and thanked Ann for her years of service. There was then a moment to remember Council Member Kathy Castro who passed away in February. Marc read a statement commending Kathy on her lifetime of service to the arts, especially in Fall River. Vice Chair Jo-Ann Davis read a citation from Governor Maura Healey and Lieutenant Governor Kim Driscoll posthumously recognizing Kathy for her service to the Massachusetts cultural sector. The Council then held a moment of silence to remember Kathy.

Marc then introduced Museum of Science President Tim Ritchie and thanked him for hosting the Council's meeting. Tim welcomed Council Members, staff, and guests to the Museum, thanked the Council for its support over the years, and shared a few comments on current Museum exhibitions and programming.

Marc asked all present to briefly introduce themselves as it was the first time the Council had met in person in some time. After introductions were made, Marc shared that there had been two new appointments to the Council in recent weeks: David S. Kong of Lexington and Secretary of Economic Development Yvonne Hao of Williamstown. Neither were available to join the meeting today given the short notice, but they will have orientation sessions in the coming months and will most likely join the Council's next meeting in August. He then asked Executive Director Michael Bobbitt to introduce himself.

Michael gave a brief welcome and introduction to the agenda for the day noting that National Assembly of State Arts Agencies Chief Program & Planning Officer Kelly Barsdate had traveled from Washington D.C. to join the Council for its meeting and retreat and would give a presentation *Why Public Funding for the Arts Matters* later in the morning.

The Council then commenced its business meeting during which two items were discussed and voted upon:

- d/Deaf/Disability Equity & Access Action Plan
- Native American & Indigenous Peoples Equity Action Plan

Michael explained that after launching Mass Cultural Council's first-ever Racial Equity Plan in 2021, staff realized an additional suite of plans was needed to address equity areas other than race. The d/Deaf/Disability Equity & Access Action Plan and the Native American & Indigenous Peoples Equity Plan are the first of that suite. The Council received a draft of each plan prior to the meeting, and Michael thanked those Council Members who had submitted thoughts and feedback. Today the staff is seeking the Council's endorsement of both plans. The meeting was then opened for discussion prior to the Chair calling for a vote on each plan.

Ellice Patterson shared concerns she has with the d/Deaf/Disability Equity & Access Action Plan specifically with regard the proposed changes to the UP Initiative's Innovation & Learning Network (ILN). She stated that cultural competency is low throughout the sector, and she believed that transitioning the ILN from its current state where a small cohort of cultural organizations work directly with Equity & Access Program Officer Charles Baldwin to a much larger online training module would be harmful to the d/Deaf/Disabled community. Such a transition she stated would lead to cultural organizations and members of the d/Deaf and disabled community having to take on the unpaid work of raising cultural competency. She shared that her work with Charles Baldwin and the ILN has been positive but that changing from a close, personal and direct program to a much larger online course offering have the potential to harm the community.

Michael shared that the ILN in its current form only accommodates 15 to 20 cultural organizations annually and only those staff from those organizations which participate. He feels the sector has a lot of staff turnover, and when individuals who have completed the ILN move on, they take the knowledge from the ILN with them and by scaling the program and making it accessible to a far larger group of organizations and individuals the impact of the learning can be greatly enhanced. Michael thanked Ellice for sharing her feedback and acknowledged that the new format unfortunately meant a decrease in personal connection.

Ellice stated that her feedback stood and her strong conviction that the shift in approach would yield additional labor and cause harm to the disability community. She added that she feels the work and learning of the current ILN does get embedded into organizations and is not lost if staff members move on.

Ché Anderson asked if there could be language about achieving benchmarks and evaluation added to the plan based on Ellice's comments to assess the impact of the shift on the sector so that future adjustments, if needed could be made.

Michael responded that the plan could explicitly include such language so that it would specifically state that would be an annual review and that feedback would be sought from individuals who participate in the ILN with the aim of addressing Ellice's concern and avoiding any harm befalling the d/Deaf/disability community.

Charles shared that continual assessment is part of the plan and that checking in annually will be key.

Ellice indicated that she appreciated the modifications discussed but that her concerns still remained.

Iván asked if, considering Ellice's comments, the Council would vote on the plan modified as discussed or if we needed to vote at a subsequent meeting. After discussion, it was determined that the plan would be voted on as modified by Michael's comments. As such, the Chair asked for a motion. Ché moved to approve the plan as amended; Iván seconded the motion. By roll call vote with 11 Council Members (Marc Carroll, Jo-Ann Davis, Ivan Espinoza-Madrigal, Cecil Barron Jensen, Che Anderson, Diane Asadoorian Masters, Donna Haghighat, Julie Wake, Allyce Najimy, Sherry Dong and Anika Lopes) in favor and one Council Member (Ellice Patterson) opposed it was

RESOLVED: To endorse Mass Cultural Council's d/Deaf & Disability Equity & Access Action Plan as modified by the Council at this Meeting.

At some point after this vote, Council Member Rhonda Anderson joined the meeting. There was then a discussion of the Native American & Indigenous Peoples Equity Action Plan. Michael shared that since the Council was sent a draft of the plan. The meeting was then opened for discussion.

Ché asked if the same language about an annual review and benchmarks that were just discussed for the d/Deaf Disability Plan could be added to this plan as well.

Ellice indicated that she supported the Agency's objectives and this plan, and she was pleased to be part of the team that was supporting it.

Donna Haghighat noted that no land acknowledgement was delivered at today's meeting or referenced in the plan and Michael reiterated that the Task Force had suggested the Agency pause delivering Land Acknowledgements until further work had been completed to craft appropriate language.

Rhonda Anderson asked that the staff correct data regarding the number of Native American & Indigenous residents of Massachusetts. The plan indicates 35,000; Rhonda believes the number is closer to 70,000.

The staff will amend the plan by adding an annual review as Ché suggested and will review and correct the data per Rhonda's recommendation.

There was no further discussion, so the Chair called for a motion to approve the plan as amended. Ché moved to approve the plan and Cecil Barron Jensen seconded the motion. By roll call vote it was unanimously

RESOLVED: To endorse Mass Cultural Council's Native American & Indigenous Peoples Equity Plan as modified by the Council at this Meeting.

After the vote, Rhonda added that she had been part of the Task Force that worked with staff as they developed the plan. She expressed gratitude for the deep listening that took place during the process.

That concluded the business meeting. Following a short break the Council reconvened for its retreat and listened to NASAA Chief Program & Planning Officer Kelly Barsdate's

presentation, *Why Public Funding for the Arts Matters*. Kelly offered to make materials available to the Council members and copies of such materials are available upon request.

Marc, as Chair, adjourned the meeting at 12:30pm.