

MINUTES
CULTURAL ARTS COMMISSION
January 21, 2026

The Bel Air Cultural Arts Commission (CAC) meeting was called to order at 4:00pm. in the second-floor conference room at the Bel Air Armory, 37 North Main Street, Bel Air, MD 21014.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jeanne Close, Chair
 Pat Fielder, Vice Chair
 Nicki Jergensen
 Peg Lucas
 Natalie Weeks
 Sandra Schlehr
 Carole Milan
 Marisa Canino

IN ATTENDANCE: Catherine Butrim, Economic Development Coordinator
 Angela Robertson, Director of Economic Development
 Kristien Foss, Town Commissioner Liaison
 Kelly Burgos, Recording Secretary

1. Administrative Matters

A. Approval of Meeting Minutes – November 19, 2025

Ms. Lucas moved, and Ms. Weeks seconded the motion to approve the minutes of the November 19, 2025, meeting. All in favor. The motion carried.

Ms. Butrim announced that Ms. Foss was appointed by the Town Board to fill the vacancy left in October 2025 by Jim Rutledge on the Town of Bel Air Board of Commissioners. Ms. Foss also was appointed as the Town Board liaison to the CAC. Ms. Butrim advised that applications are being accepted to fill the vacancy left by Ms. Foss on the CAC, and a new CAC member should be appointed before the February CAC meeting.

B. Election of Chair and Vice Chair

Ms. Schlehr moved, and Ms. Lucas seconded the motion for Ms. Close to serve as Chair of the CAC in 2026. All in favor. The motion carried.

Ms. Weeks moved, and Ms. Lucas seconded the motion for Ms. Fielder to serve as Vice Chair of the CAC in 2026. All in favor. The motion carried.

C. Budget Review

Ms. Butrim reported the following expenditures from the Marketing/Events and Public Art accounts.

- i. Marketing/Event Sponsorship

- \$540 sponsorship was allocated for Take a Chance on Art Armory rental.
- With total expenditures in the amount of \$3,539.04, there is a balance of \$1,810.96 in the Marketing account.

ii. Public Art

- With no expenditures, there is a balance of \$3000 in the Public Art account.

The balance for both Marketing and Public Art accounts is \$4,810.96.

Ms. Fielder moved, and Ms. Lucas seconded the motion to approve the budget. All in favor. The motion carried.

2. Unfinished Business

A. HSHC America 250 Art Project-Update

Ms. Butrim reported the following:

- Grants Coordinator Stephanie White researched possible grant opportunities to provide for the cost of a project manager for the Historical Society of Harford County (HSHC) America 250 fence art project. No grant opportunities within the projected timeline were found.
- Chris Potts, Executive Director of the HSHC, has identified a possible grant opportunity for the project, but she is no longer planning for the project to include a community painting element.
- Ms. Butrim will be attending an America 250 meeting on January 27 and will obtain more information about plans for the project.

B. Spring Student Art Exhibit at Bel Air Library-Update

Ms. Butrim reported the following:

- The exhibit room at the Bel Air Library has been reserved for the month of May for the student art exhibit, which will have a section dedicated to artwork with an America 250 theme.
- The same four schools as last year will participate: Bel Air Elementary, Bel Air Middle School, Bel Air High School, and Homestead-Wakefield Elementary School.
- The exhibit will be listed in the printed Harford County Public Library events calendar. The event will also be promoted via social media, with flyers, and on community calendars.
- Dawn Stone, Fine Arts Curriculum Specialist for Harford County Public Schools (HCPS), and Ms. Butrim will be available to hang artwork on April 30.
- As Bel Air High School's art exhibit ends on April 30, their student artwork will be hung at the library on May 1. Ms. Stone and Ms. Butrim are both available to hang artwork on May 1.

C. Ain't Misbehavin' Big Band-March Event

Ms. Butrim reported the following:

- Ain't Misbehavin' Big Band is available on all Thursdays in March, and the Armory also is available on all Thursdays in March.

- There will be no fee for CAC to rent the Armory as the show will be a Town of Bel Air event.
- The CAC previously has charged a \$10/person ticket fee for this event.

Ms. Weeks moved, and Ms. Milan seconded the motion to sponsor the Ain't Misbehavin' Big Band event in the amount of \$500 at the Bel Air Armory on March 26, 2026, with a backup date of March 19, 2026. Ticket costs will be \$10/person. All in favor. The motion carried.

Ms. Butrim advised that doors will open at 6:30 p.m., and the Ain't Misbehavin' Big Band will perform between 7:00 and 8:30 p.m. Ms. Close, Ms. Fielder, and Ms. Lucas will volunteer at the event.

Ms. Milan moved, and Ms. Weeks seconded the motion to allocate \$50.00 to promote the Ain't Misbehavin' Big Band event on social media. All in favor. The motion carried.

D. FY26 Public Art Project Discussion

Ms. Butrim reported the following:

i. Atwood Road/Marketplace Drive Sculpture RFP

Ms. Butrim reported the following:

- The RFP was posted on the Town of Bel Air's website on January 13, 2026
- The RFP was sent to Maryland State Arts Council and is posted on their Resource Bulletin.
- The RFP was sent to Harford County Cultural Arts Board and will be shared among their networks.
- The RFP was sent to Harford Artists Association and was shared with their membership.
- At the request of the CAC, the RFP was sent to the following artists: Thomas Sterner, Matthew Harris, Susan Luery, and Mary Ann Mears.
- Timeline included in the RFP:
 - o January 22, 2026, at 1PM – Pre-Bid Conference
 - o February 19, 2026 – Closing Date for Clarifications/Questions
 - o March 5, 2026, at 2PM – Close of Submissions
 - o March 18, 2026 – Evaluations Completed at March CAC Meeting
 - o March 23 – April 8, 2026 – Contract Award
 - o April 18 – September 30, 2026 – Fabrication and Installation
- Cost proposals must not exceed \$30,000.
- Ms. Weeks suggested that Ms. Butrim send the RFP to Sculpture Inc., Large Art Company.

ii. Hearts of Harford Maintenance

Ms. Butrim reported the following:

- These Hearts of Harford sculptures have been identified as priorities for maintenance in FY26: *Hometown Heritage*, *Heroes*, and *Bulldog Pride*.
- Ms. Butrim has been in contact with artists Keri MacKinnon Freberger (*Heroes* and *Bulldog Pride*) and Lissa Tilley (*Hometown Heritage*), and both are willing to repaint their designs.
- The Bel Air Downtown Alliance (BADA) will reimburse the artists for material costs to repaint the designs.
- The BADA would like the art pieces to be sealed with marine grade sealer.
- The CAC members agreed to cover the artists' cost for labor with a stipend in the amount of \$250 if original sponsors cannot be reached or do not wish to pay the stipend.

Ms. Lucas moved, and Ms. Schlehr seconded the motion to approve a \$250 stipend for the artists to repaint the Hearts of Harford sculptures if the original sponsors are unable or do not wish to pay the \$250 stipend. All in favor. The motion carried.

3. New Business

A. CAC Procedures, Rules, & Regulations

Ms. Butrim distributed the CAC's Procedures, Rules and Regulations to the CAC members. Revised copies with new members listed will be distributed at the February meeting. Ms. Butrim will check the Town Code to confirm that the CAC quorum is three (3) members.

B. America 250 Living History Event

Ms. Butrim inquired if the CAC would like Colleen Webster to portray a persona related to the America 250 in the fall. She advised that Ms. Webster normally needs one (1) year to prepare a new persona. She advised that Rachel Carson, one of Ms. Webster's current personas, is featured on the Maryland 250 website as one of Maryland's Historic Women.

Ms. Schlehr recommended holding the event with three (3) personas that might include figures such as Harriet Tubman. Ms. Jergenson suggested a portrayal of Langston Hughes, and Ms. Fielder suggested reaching out to the Hosanna School Museum for portrayal recommendations. Ms. Butrim advised that she will reach out to both the Hosanna School Museum and the HSHC for portrayal recommendations and to Ms. Webster to determine how long she will need to prepare a new America 250 persona.

4. Town Updates

A. Town of Bel Air

Ms. Foss reported the following:

- There will be an upcoming Town of Bel Air Municipal Citizens Academy.
- Hank Allen retired from his position as Commander of the Sgt. Alfred B. Hilton American Legion Post #55.
- The Board of Town Commissioners passed Ordinance 851-25 Version No. 2. on January 20, 2026.

B. A&E District

Ms. Butrim reported the following:

-The Authors & Artists Holiday Gift Sale committee sent a letter of appreciation to the CAC for their Armory rental sponsorship, for the sponsorship of the shopping bags, and for the members who volunteered at the event on November 1, 2025.

-Maryland Art Day will be held at St. John's College in Annapolis on February 12, 2026, from 8:00 a.m. to 2 p.m. Ms. Butrim will be in attendance. There is funding available in the CAC budget for any members who also would like to attend.

Ms. Lucas moved, and Ms. Weeks second the motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:20pm. All in favor. The motion carried.