



*Donovan Richards
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*Anatole Ashraf
Chairperson*

March 10, 2026

Arts & Cultural Affairs Committee Meeting Minutes

This meeting was teleconferenced using Zoom

Committee Members Present:

Karesia Batan, Chair

Eric Narburgh, Vice Chair

Kenny Greenberg

Committee Members Absent:

Anatole Ashraf

Lisa Charles

Stephen Cooper

Pia Rahman

Ryan Smith

Akello Thomas

Arts & Cultural Affairs Public Members Present:

Edjo Wheeler

Community Board 2 Staff:

Rafael Nava, Community Assistant

Guests:

Lisa Wade, Queens CB 12 Member

Crystal Isaac, Queens CB 12 Member

Andre Irving, Cucala Dance Company

Farhan Ahsan, CB2 Resident and Artist

YouTube Video Recording: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sxrrcoEKeGU>

Note: Reference to the YouTube video and the associated time-in-meeting stamps are offered here as a service to community members who wish to review the meeting. (Approximate elapsed time stamps provided in these minutes refer to this video)

Time (Approximate, from YouTube Video)

0:36 Karesia Batan, Chair of the Arts and Cultural Affairs Committee, welcomed everyone to the committee meeting.

1:06 Discussion with members of Queens Community Board 12's newly formed Arts and Culture Committee.

- Karesia Batan shared how CB2's Arts and Cultural Affairs Committee has advocated for artists in the district. Advocacy has included inviting guest speakers to present on funding opportunities and calls for artists, as well as working alongside other committees, such as the Land Use Committee. Working alongside the Land Use Committee helps the Arts Committee build relationships with developers so they understand the value the arts bring to the community. Additionally, this partnership helps make developers aware of the need for rehearsal, gallery, or green space that incorporates arts and cultural programming.
- Lisa Wade and Crystal Isaac from Queens Community Board 12 described the formation of their new committee and current priorities; they invited CB2's committee members to attend one of *their* next meetings, and all agreed to continue to keep in touch as these committees seek to advocate for borough-wide support for arts and culture—including, but not limited to, the restoration of a Queens-based arts council.

40:00 Farhan Ahsan, a Baruch College student in the Macaulay Honors Program, shared that he is partnering with City Arts on a proposal to install a mural in CB2's district with community input and artist involvement. The Chair expressed appreciation for his outreach and recommended he extend an invitation to a representative from City Arts to attend a subsequent committee meeting to discuss the parameters of their support, which may align with the committee's initiative to promote more public murals throughout the district, especially in Sunnyside.

46:08 Andre Irving of Cucala Dance Company shared that Cucala's next social will take place on March 28, 2026, and will feature a free class at 8:00 PM. Additional information is available at: <https://www.cucaladance.com/events/cucala-march-social-march-28-2026>

47:49 Edjo Wheeler of Culture Lab provided the following updates.

- Culture Lab shared that it has created a community newsletter featuring public-facing arts and cultural events in Long Island City.

- Culture Lab has upcoming and recurring events, such as Sunset Jazz every Friday at 8:00 PM.
- Link to follow Culture Lab online: <https://www.culturelablic.org/>

52:12 Eric Narburgh, Vice Chair, provided an update on events, the survey he worked on with the Historic District Council, and potential initiatives the committee could pursue in the fall.

- Performances for the Rough Draft Festival at the LaGuardia Performing Arts Center begin on March 10, 2026, and continue through March 19, 2026. For more information: <https://www.laguardia.edu/news/laguardia-performing-arts-center-presents-rough-draft-festival-2026/>.
- Discussions with the Historic District Council (HDC) remain ongoing for sites identified in their community survey that could be candidates for preservation. Mr. Narburgh requested feedback from HDC on sites that may be more likely to receive a response from the Landmarks Preservation Commission, and they recommended a focus on early-20th century housing development buildings.
- Pratt Institute has a Creative Placemaking Program and is seeking neighborhoods interested in partnering with its students in an advanced seminar course. The faculty expressed interest in working with the committee to connect arts and culture in Sunnyside and Woodside. Mr. Narburgh suggested that students could create a map that makes arts and culture in the neighborhood more legible to visitors and helps foster connections within the community. This initiative could potentially be something the committee pursues in the fall. He submitted a prospectus to the Pratt faculty, who will select the neighborhood for their project in the next few weeks.

57:55 Karesia Batan, Chair, provided updates on funding opportunities and expressed interest in identifying ways to assist the stewards at Little Manila Park install artwork.

- CDF applications at the Department of Cultural Affairs are open until April 2, 2026. More information is available at <https://www.nyc.gov/site/dcla/cultural-funding/applying.page>. Webinars and additional resources about the application process are also available.
- Grants from the Association for a Better New York (ABNY) are available for nonprofits interested in hosting public-facing World Cup–themed programming. Applications are open until March 13, 2026. Additional information is available at: <https://abny.org/abny-foundation/world-cup-for-all-community-grant-program/>.
- Ms. Batan shared that she would like to speak with someone about placemaking underneath the 7 Train viaduct. She also solicited recommendations for who to contact at NYS DOT to help the stewards at Little Manila Park; its stewards are interested in installing artwork at the location but are facing challenges navigating approvals at the state level.

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by,

Rafael Nava