



Eureka Cultural Arts District Leadership Council

Monday, August 18, 2025

12:00 p.m.

ECAD Site & Ink People's Brenda Tuxford Gallery

422 1st Street, Eureka CA 95501

Accessibility Notice: The meeting room is wheelchair accessible, kindly enter through the double doors facing the gazebo. This Agenda and other materials are available in alternative formats upon request.

Land Acknowledgement: The land that the Eureka Cultural Arts District rests on is known in the Wiyot language as Jaroujiji. Past actions by local, State and Federal governments removed the Wiyot and other indigenous peoples from the land and threatened to destroy their cultural practices. The Eureka Cultural Arts District acknowledges the Wiyot community, their elders both past and present, as well as future generations. This acknowledgement demonstrates the Eureka Cultural Arts District commitment to dismantle the ongoing legacies of settler colonialism.

Agenda

1. Roll Call:

Leadership Council Members:

Michelle Vassel, Ben Brown, Amanda Kruschke, H.A. Pearson, Sarah West, Bernadette Vielbig, Leslie Castellano, Cati Gallardo, Elizabeth Hassler, William Dirks, Dionna Ndlovu, Wil Gibson, Jemima Harr, Jenna Catsos, Erika Wright

Staff:

Vahan Petrossian, Sage Juarez

2. Consent Calendar:

- A. May 2025 Leadership Council Minutes

3. Business:

- A. Any Changes to the Agenda
- B. Review of Leadership Council Term Member Limits and Updates
- C. Applications for Leadership Council-Decide on New Leadership Council Members
- D. Upcoming Grants:
 - a. Arts Alive Grants
 - b. Mini-Grants
 - c. Q and A: Wednesday August 27, 2025



E. Strategic Visioning

- a. Melissa Meiris and Sarai Bordeaux with Stepping Stone
- b. Dates: October 17 and November 14
- c. Discussion

F. Site Update: 422 Wind Down

G. Staff Update

4. Presentations/Reports

- A. Place Making/Place Keeping- Streets/Sidewalks/Signage/Banners
- B. Stories of Wigi Report

5. Leadership Council Member Announcements

6. Adjourn:

Next meeting is the Strategic Visioning Sessions October 17 and November 14



MINUTES MAY 19, 2025, prepared by Sage Juarez

1. Roll Call:

Leadership Council Members:

Michelle Vassel, Ben Brown, Amanda Kruschke, H.A. Pearson, Sarah West, Bernadette Vielbig, Leslie Castellano, Cati Gallardo, Elizabeth Hassler, William Dirks, Dionna Ndlovu, Wil Gibson, Jemima Harr, Jenna Catsos, Erika Wright

Staff:

Vahan Petrossian, Sage Juarez

Present: Vahan Petrossian, Sage Juarez, ~~Michelle Vassel~~, Ben Brown (Arrived Late 12:22pm), Amanda Kruschke, H.A. Pearson, Sarah West, Bernadette Vielbig, Leslie Castellano, Cati Gallardo, Elizabeth Hassler (Arrived Late ~12:45pm), William Dirks, ~~Dionna Ndlovu, Wil Gibson, Jemima Harr, Jenna Catsos~~, Erika Wright

Cati: Acknowledgement to see if any members of the public are present. No members of the public are present.

2. Consent Calendar:

- A. Minutes: November 18th, 2024
- B. Minutes: February 18, 2025
- C. ECAD Small projects and Events grant ratification

Sarah makes a motion to approve the consent calendar

Bernadette seconds the motion

Unanimous Approval

3. Business:

A. Seating of Committees

a. Executive Committee:

- i. Vice Chair - position previously held by Octavio Acosta
- ii. Treasurer

Vahan: 2 positions are available, the vice chair, and treasurer. The treasurer is an annual role and will meet once a year with the executive committee to



discuss the budget. Job descriptions are included in governance that was sent out.

Leslie: Happy to serve as treasurer since there is already an overlap of tasks, such as reviewing the budget. However I would like to be mindful of the Ink People representation so I am open to someone else stepping in.

William: If it (over-representation of Ink People on the council) becomes an issue, I can comfortably take on this position. I have experience in treasurer tasks.

Vahan: Should be light responsibility since the budget is already decided on.

Leslie: Nominates William to be treasurer

Cati: Begin voting.

Unanimous Approval of William as treasurer

Cati: The vice chair position is open, the main responsibility is facilitating meetings if the chair is not present.

Sarah: Volunteers to be vice chair

Leslie: Motion for Sarah to be vice chair

Amanda seconds motions

Unanimous Approval of Amanda as Vice Chair

B. Strategic Visioning

a. Potential facilitator: Melissa Meiris with Stepping Stone

b. Identify dates

c. Objectives - open discussion

Vahan: The recent marketing subcommittee suggested developing a strategic visioning plan with a focus on how to talk about ECAD's identity moving forward. The marketing plan should be informed by strategic visioning. I have reached out to multiple facilitators. This morning Meslissa from Stepping Stone responded. Melissa bid for us to identify potential dates and any further objectives to add to strategic visioning. Vahan reads the scope of services proposed to Stepping Stone. Total estimated cost for work \$4800 - \$6000, reads racial equality facilitation policy of Stepping Stone. The cost would be coming out of the marketing budget. Tried to gather more bids but other facilitators were not available.

Bernadette: What is the timeline for accomplishing this? I would like to see other bids.

Vahan: I would also like to see other bids

Sarah: I would like to see multiple bids but it is difficult to find other facilitators and the bid seems average (in terms of services/price) in her experience. Did Melissa at Stepping Stone share the name of the BIPOC facilitator?

Vahan: Name of the BIPOC facilitator has not been shared.

Cati: I would love to have co-facilitators (rather than a single facilitator).

Considering marketing coordination and time constraints. Would like to see



other bids but with the constrained timeline would prefer to move forward rather than wait for more bids.

Leslie: I feel comfortable moving forward with Stepping Stone especially since other facilitators were not available. The city has had challenges scheduling similar things and Melissa of Stepping Stone is a trusted facilitator among many community members.

Vahan: ECAD staff is in favor of moving forward.

William: I am comfortable moving forward but would like to see more examples of Stepping Stone's work.

Vahan: Is there anything the council would like to see come out of the strategic visioning? Not rewriting the foundation/basics since that is done. But focusing on the sustainability of ECAD. ECAD began with 2 years of funding and we are nearly finished with the first year. Who we are can be talked about but ECAD staff would like to focus on sustainability and generating income.

Erika: When can we do this?

Vahan: Let's identify potential dates or months, review our calendars. Maybe we can get the first meeting scheduled on the calendar and get an idea of when the second one would be, instead of 2 weekends in a row. Voting via month.

Sarah: Will these be on the weekend?

Vahan: Staff would prefer a weekday

Bernadette: Agrees.

Vahan: Robust reply for Melissa and then will get back to the group.

Sarah: Should we identify the best day of the week?

Leslie: Would prefer not June or July.

Vahan: Half of the council's terms end/renew in August. Would like to suggest opening the strategic visioning meeting to those who are leaving and incoming council members, and even considering opening to the public

Leslie: We may need to have a special meeting to make them members prior to the strategic visioning. I like the proposal of including both. Would it be useful for staff to have an ad-hoc committee to help plan?

Vahan: Marketing committee can follow through with this.

Cati: Agrees

Amanda: Motion made to work with two Stepping Stone facilitators for strategic visioning.

Erika: Seconded motion

William: Will abstain, would have preferred one facilitator.

All other council members voted in favor of working with two Stepping Stone facilitators for strategic visioning.

C. Leadership Council Members Term Limits



a. Referrals for new council members can be sent to Vahan Petrossian D. Eureka Cultural Arts District – Open Discussion on Financial Sustainability and Revenue-Generating Strategies

Vahan: The application for council member positions will be on the website soon. Those whose terms are ending in august are eligible to reapply. This is the 4th leadership council meeting, and those with terms ending in August are invited back to the August meeting. If you have any referrals please send them.

Cati: No comments made by council members on topic, moving forward.

Vahan: we have not implemented any income generating strategies. Are there any ideas anyone would like to share to support ECAD's presence and legacy?

Leslie: Giving a presentation to the Eureka Lodging Alliance to start creating a relationship with them and demonstrate how Arts & Culture benefits visitors to the city. Idea for business owner engagement. When people renew their business license, there could be an optional buy-in that supports ECAD. Not suggesting a requirement because of the current economic climate but if someone wants to contribute having that structure in place and available.

William: We receive visits from cruise ships, and the passengers walk around the district. Maybe we can research where they are visiting from and plan to represent the art of their cultures. This could generate income 2 - 3 times a year when cruise ships arrive.

Cati: Status on the grant front?

Vahan: 1 grant has been applied for, the Arts in CA Parks. How much of that budget will go towards our sustainability- might not be the focus. Any ideas? Hire a part time grant writer?

Leslie: Grant landscape is not great for the next four years.

Funding cuts in the NEA, they are not moving forward with previous funding support for performing arts- for example. Not the best time for as much success as could be possible in a few years.

Developing relationships with foundations could be an alternative option.

HA: Ensure there is a motivating factor, in regards to the business license buy-in idea. Perhaps there could be window decals for businesses that opt in to donation.

Vahan: There is already a decal in process that will be distributed



with ECAD informational pamphlet, but maybe they could be connected

Sarah: We might be doing ourselves a disservice by associating the donation with the business license renewal process, since that process can already be a challenge for people. A sponsor decal would be more feel-good. Similar or better level of participation possible.

Elizabeth: People like to feel that they are investing

Bernadette & HA: It could say "proud supporter of ECAD"

Leslie: Presenting to service clubs, rotary could get people excited.

Amanda: What about an ECAD open house, or asset tour?

HA: Highlight the positive impact of the grant programs. Let the businesses know about the grant benefits happening around them.

Elizabeth: Inviting food trucks to come to an event, if there are businesses participating you would get more participation from their social reach, it is mutually beneficial.

Cati: I like the idea of a sponsorship package and reaching out to the rotary group to share who we are and upcoming events.

Bernadette: Do we have a strategy for existing assets- such as the theater and encouraging them to talk about ECAD?

Vahan: There is cross-marketing through project grants. We have completed two grants so far and we are opening another grant soon. We are asking the recipients to celebrate ECAD with the logo on their flyers, mentioning ECAD. Would be great to gather post-grant event statistics which we can present to the lodging alliance and rotary. Thank you everyone for all the feedback.

Leslie: I have a question for Sarah who is representing the city, about cell-phone data. Finding out the numbers about visitors.

Cinco de Mayo, Chinatown festival & Arts Alive happened concurrently, it would be interesting to see the data on that.

Sarah: Yes, we have anonymous foot traffic data from cell phones, the city has a permit for that. No hardline yet if they are taking requests from outside parties, but at some point they will make this data available more widely for event planners.

Cati: It would be great to have the data to talk with the lodging alliance.

Sarah: Adding this to my list, check back in and will have that data likely available.

Leslie: It is in the purview, opportunity for partnership around this.

Vahan: ECAD is a boundary that the city has established and we have had conversations and been given permission to access the



data.

Elizabeth: Friday Night Market and festivals are drivers of interest for people from out of town.

Vahan: How we can generate revenue from Friday Night Market is a question for further discussion. Looking to have an ambassador in the ECAD site during Friday Night Market- or have our own market?

Elizabeth: Vendors at our own event?

Vahan: At the moment we are not having our own event

Elizabeth: Projects that received ECAD support could have vendors.

Vahan: The grant awardees have the opportunity to collaborate, some already have those components such as vendors.

Elizabeth: Would require some consideration of insurance

William: What about expanding from business owners to business employees. Not just asking businesses to support ECAD but asking the employees to pitch in and have an event geared toward the workers.

Leslie: Having a wine bar or something similar. Could the space itself become a revenue generating site?

Elizabeth: I would like to see examples from other galleries of this idea?

Leslie: For example, Siren's Song is closing, there are less venues in Old Town which is a challenge for the arts & culture community. Would it make sense for the ECAD to have a space that sells drinks and generates revenue that way?

Vahan: There are not enough performing arts venues in the district. This was found to be true by Terry during the mapping project. Idea to sell drinks proposed for strategic visioning.

Elizabeth: I would like to do more research. It's a model that could work and would like to learn more.

Vahan: Staff idea, a ferris wheel from wind turbine support. Big & bold ideas, challenge you and urge you to think big- like a ferris wheel on the bay.

Bernadette: It is windy, I like the bid.

Vahan: We have this really exciting opportunity, ECAD is recognized at a state level. There are low hanging fruit such as vendors and events but we can think big similar to the other cultural arts districts

Erika: I have always wanted to see a Kinetics theme mini golf



course.

Cati: Wrapping up the topic.

Break

4. Presentations/Reports

A. ECAD Manager Update - Vahan Petrossian

- a. Arts in California Parks
- b. Small projects and events grant update
- c. Future ECAD grant opportunities
- d. ECAD site - multi use space
 - i. Workshop or meeting space rental
 - ii. Maker pop up
- e. Cultural festival
- f. Staffing needs: Friday Night Market

Cati: calling meeting back to order

Vahan: Applied to Arts in CA Parks grant, 2 opportunities the planning grant and implementation grant. The planning grant is for funding between \$1,500 and \$50,000. If we receive the first grant we will apply for the second, the implementation grant distributed between \$15,000 \$150,000. We were in discussion about a cultural festival with the community services team, but have pivoted away and came up with the idea of a stage and native plants garden. Key individuals met donna wood Community Services, Ink People, Kirk Cohune, Color Maiz, Great Redwood Trail, Black Humboldt (+ 2 other groups) There are lots of barriers of entry for throwing an event at Halvorsen park- renting infrastructure. Will be hearing back about the planning grant in May. Planning timeline begins in October, and we would apply for the implementation grant the year after.

Just closed small projects and events grants. We had a budget of \$30,000. It was quite competitive. 47 applicants, 7 projects awarded. The big outcome from this grant process was that yes there are the small initiatives & large initiatives but we are going to make subgrants for individual artists ranging from \$500 - \$1,500 based on the feedback we have received directly from the public during these grant processes. The bigger events were asking for 5k, but we can curate some different experiences by addressing a need that we are seeing in the community. Leslie: Folks in the community contact the Ink People because we write the checks & and these grants have been really great at supporting community projects but a lot of individual artists aren't able to find success in them. We are hearing about folks laboring within the district, and whose work has largely supported the designation of the district but haven't been able to benefit from the grants. Artists more capable of success through the grants that have passed... aren't able to compete with a large cultural group in the same grant category.



Elizabeth: Outdoor sculpture project. So many murals but there could be different calls for public art.

Vahan: there have been conversations about creating a median grant with sculptures, a subgrant of large grant opportunities. Technically someone could propose mural/3d art through the visionary placemaking large grant initiative. There are more hoops to jump through with the city and building owners but... the city owns a lot of 3d art but they have often been vandalized, so might not be as interested

Cati: Sounds like individual artist grants could address needs.

Vahan: And the individual artists grants would still need to benefit the greater community, and would need to be free to the public - meet all the agreed upon objectives of the grant programs.

Bernadette: Would be interested in the large scale 3d art, being part of this conversation. Different liabilities than murals, we had sculpture parks along the waterfront but they are no longer there because of being vandalized.

Sarah: The city wants to take care of art they take on but it is expensive to maintain.

Elizabeth: Maybe there are different material options.

Vahan: For now, let's refer 3D artists to the visionary placemaking grant opportunity.

William: Makes sense that the large organizations have gotten funding due to their larger impact. Maybe Independent artists, could be funded through sponsorships from galleries and businesses. They can showcase the arts, and funds would come from the gallery, with ECAD participating.

Leslie: I dont know of any gallery making ends meet from selling & showing art, they are an unlikely source of funding.

Elizabeth: Could be an opportunity to partner a sponsor with a specific artist.

Logo design as trade and the artist is getting paid or something like that.

William: The gallery would make money from selling art in partnership with artists and ECAD

Cati: Calling council back to focus on the agenda items

Leslie: Do we need to ratify the small grants?

Vahan: The individual grants would be creating opportunity for smaller artists but the objectives are still the same, needs to take place in ECAD and meet the other parameters.

Cati: We may have to add that topic to next month's meeting.

Elizabeth: Could be merchandising agreement, with individual artist grants, tote bags designed for example.

Vahan: We are not changing the parameters, we can at a future meeting vote to change opportunities, would like to add to future agenda?

Multiple members say yes

Vahan: multi-use space. Staff suggests ECAD site (shared with Tuxford Gallery and Humboldt County Visitors Bureau) different art & culture groups could rent the space for a nominal fee. To cover overhead. Could be available as a weekly space or for larger meetings, trying to create dynamic space to host that.



Leslie: I appreciate a fee in that it can contribute to the continuity of ECAD, but I feel that ECAD is here to support arts & culture groups. Suggests establishing a policy to agree upon fee waiver.

Vahan: There could be a grant opportunity to support those looking to utilize the space. How can we cover the labor associated with supporting the arts & culture community?

Elizabeth: Maybe set the fee as higher than base labor cost, and sliding below if needed.

Vahan: Looking to meet bottom line

Leslie: let's look over staffing costs, we may be under budget and available

Sarah: more info

Bernadette: I live nearby and would be happy to be present to watch the space or have a workshop

Elizabeth: split-fee model seems good, targeting commercial? Maybe for profit businesses would be interested?

Leslie: Envisioning volunteers as stewards of the ECAD site

Vahan: Reminding council each has agreed to and signed on for 3 volunteer days per year.

Erika: Would use this space for my own strategic planning meeting associated with work.

Sarah: What about insurance? Wouldn't each group need to have their own insurance to host at the ECAD site?

Vahan: Will look into that.

Sarah: Suggests umbrella liability, as it is difficult for smaller groups to access insurance.

Leslie: Insurance can be set up through the Ink People, not too far of a stretch to cover the needs for renting the space to groups.

Vahan: A cultural festival supported by TOT funding was in discussion, we have since resigned from that project. It is happening in McKinleyville outside of the district and schedules conflict. Staffing needs for Friday Night Market, event goes on for 3 months during 5pm-8pm, staff would like an ambassador to be present at ECAD site during those hours, especially if there are pop-ups that would need to be managed.

Cati: Is this position for volunteering or hiring?

Vahan: Volunteers would be great.

Erika & Bernadette express availability to volunteer

Vahan: Staff thinks it is important to be open during Friday Night Market.

HA: Sometimes there are afterparties, maybe there could be something there.

Amanda: Being open might not be as beneficial during Friday Night Market, since the focus is most on the street.

Vahan: We do have the gazebo entrance, good location for engagement with public.

HA: ECAD would need something to bring people in

ELizabeth: Maybe hosting a workshop during the Friday Night Market

Vahan: Would feel most comfortable scheduling workshops if there was a hired



position arranged for the ECAD site.

HA: The food lines will be very close by, people could visit while waiting for their food.

Leslie: Wine at Friday Night Market? Could try selling wine?

Amanda: If alcohol were served we would have to keep a close eye on folks not leaving the space because of how the permits are.

William: Maybe we could set up as an introvert space, bring a book, hang out at the site.

Erika: ECAD could sell merch

Elizabeth: Agrees

William: Functional and nonfunctional 3D art.

5. Upcoming Events & Announcements

June 6: Friday Night Market

June 7-8: Redwood Pride

June 7th: Art's Alive

June 7th: The Gesture and Its Aftermath at Ink People's Brenda

Tuxford Gallery

Cati: meeting adjourned