

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CULTURAL DISTRICT COMMITTEE

VISIT THE DISTRICT



#artshappenhere



The **Franklin Cultural District Committee (FCDC)**, an official Town Committee, who markets the District and helps to organize cross-partner efforts and events. The purpose of the District is to attract artists and cultural enterprises, encourage business development and job growth, expand tourism, preserve and reuse historic buildings and foster local cultural development.

Mission Statement

The FCDC's mission is to enrich and inspire our residents and visitors by fostering local cultural, artistic, culinary, and historical development aligned with local partners in a defined walkable area, the Franklin Cultural District (FCD), which is easily accessible and serves as the center of economic activity.

Franklin Cultural District: A Quick History

The journey began in 2014 when a small group of Franklin residents set out to turn the town's 2013 Master Plan goal—"Provide quality arts and cultural resources"—into reality. They mapped out a Cultural District using criteria from the Massachusetts Cultural Council (MCC) and started organizing local festivals and events to bring the district to life.

By 2018, a dedicated resident committee applied for state designation, and after an MCC site visit, Franklin officially became a state-recognized Cultural District. The community celebrated this milestone on May 10, 2019.

To read more about the Franklin Cultural District Committee History, please visit our First Edition of the Cultural District Guide: franklinculture.org/franklin-cultural-district-springsummer-2025

The FY25 Franklin Cultural District Committee Members:

KATHERINE A BOTELHO, CLERK
PANDORA P. CARLUCCI, MEMBER
SUE G CASS, MEMBER
PATRICK CONLAN, MEMBER
JOHN T LOPRESTI, CHAIR
PETER ROCHAT, MEMBER
ROBERTA TRAHAN, MEMBER

These seven volunteer members, all of whom are town residents, meet as a full group once a month.

Committee Updates

Earlier this year, Amy Adams stepped down from her role as Vice Chair of the Franklin Cultural District Committee. We are grateful for her leadership and contributions during her tenure.

We are pleased to welcome Peter Rochat, Franklin resident and owner of downtown business *Pete's Nerd Emporium*, to the committee. Later in the year, Peter agreed to serve as the committee's first Treasurer, a role that will officially begin in FY26. His expertise and dedication will help strengthen the committee's financial stewardship as we continue to grow Franklin's creative economy.

Cultural District Committee Goals FY25

The mission is realized through the CDC's goals. Each year the CDC's goals are reviewed, edited, and voted on by the entire Committee. CDC goals for FY25 are as follows:

- Goal:** Build on our connections with FCD partners and local artists in the Cultural District to expand arts and culture while increasing economic activity.
Measurement: Engage 2 – 4 FCD partners and connect with local artists
- Goal:** Continue to strengthen growth of partnerships and collaborations with other cultural organizations in the district.
Measurement: Double the number of

collaborations with the Franklin Cultural Council.

3. **Goal:** Support the ethnic and diverse advancement of arts and culture in Franklin.
Measurement: Focus on creating at least 2 unique diverse initiatives.
4. **Goal:** Enhance FCD social media presence creating better accessibility to Cultural District activities; therefore, engaging Franklin residents and surrounding MetroWest areas.
Measurement: Increase social media engagement on all FCD platforms by 30%.
5. **Goal:** Actively promote and encourage public art initiatives throughout the Cultural District.
Measurement: Grow public art initiatives to 2 annually.

Participation in Arts and Culture Initiatives

FY25 was a year of continued growth for the Cultural District as we continued to participate in and support artists and creatives, businesses, organizations, and institutions focused on arts and culture. One or more CDC members participated in the following events:

- *Cultural District Check-ins* with Carolyn Cole of MCC. The bi-monthly meetings, via Zoom, provide an opportunity to learn from leaders in arts and culture throughout the Commonwealth.
- *Franklin Downtown Partnership Harvest Festival*. The FCDC hosted a booth with the FCC, distributing information about all things Arts and Culture in Franklin. *Franklin Downtown Partnership Strawberry Stroll*. Collaborated with the Department of Arts, Culture and the Creative Economy and the Franklin Cultural Council in the first, “Cultural Hub Tent” with a free-drop in community art making activity.
- Joint reception with the Franklin Cultural Council celebrating all FY25 community culture grantees across Franklin. The event was hosted at Dean College, March 2025
- Franklin Sculpture Park School of Traveling Fish Ceremony led by artist and former Cultural District Vice Chair, Amy Adams.
- Collaborated and launched alongside the Franklin Cultural Council and the Department of Arts, Culture and the Creative Economy and the

Franklin Downtown Partnership, the first “A-Wreath-of-Franklin” program activating downtown Franklin with festive decor, community programming and boosting up our small businesses.

- Welcomed with Arts, Culture and the Creative Economy, our first-in print cultural district guide to offer more of a narrative to our cultural partners.
- Successfully coordinated a Second “Franklin Porchfest” with over 50 bands with the coordination of the Franklin Cultural District Porchfest Subcommittee.

Mass Cultural Council Cultural District Investment Grants shared by the Franklin Cultural District Committee for FY25

The FCDC is dedicated to supporting local cultural community events and projects with the district. Whether community members are planning a public art installation, organizing a cultural festival, or developing educational programs, these investment grants provide the financial resources needed to make their project a success.

- Franklin Public Schools (JFK and Parmenter) Support music programs at the two schools.
- Franklin Public Library hosted a concert by the Boston Typewriter Orchestra in April 2025.
- Franklin Farmers’ Market Provide entertainment at the weekly Farmers Market.
- Franklin Art Association - Creating an exhibit "Fakes and Forgeries" in June 2025.
- Diane Plouffe - Franklin HS Music Student Access to quality string Instruments
- Franklin Public Library Funding for the Blackstone Valley quartet performing music of Taylor Swift
- Children's Museum of Franklin, Supporting Mural Project in their new space.
- Franklin Historical Museum - Historic Museum Ben Franklin Month celebration.
- Franklin School for the Performing Arts - Support funds for programs.
- LGBTQ Alliance Outdoor Festival, Celebrating Pride month.

All investment grantees received a portion of funding made possible by the generous Cultural District Investment Grant from the Massachusetts Cultural Council.

Highlighted Project Coordinated by the

Franklin Cultural District Committee | Artsy Box Project

The Artsy Box Project has come full circle, continuing its mission to promote public art within the Franklin Cultural District. First launched in 2023, with the call to artists shared through social media and the Franklin Culture Weekly eBlast, the project supported individual mural artists in creating temporary installations on utility boxes throughout the district. Over the next few years, these boxes will be refreshed ensuring that the opportunity for temporary public art remains a vibrant and ongoing part of Franklin's District streetscape.

In 2025 the Cultural District welcomed Franklin's own award winning artist, Kayla Jean Nisbet to the ranks of selected artsy box artists!

Kayla Jean Nisbet is a multidisciplinary artist, graphic designer, and lifestyle photographer based in Franklin, Massachusetts. As the 2025 Artsy Box Artist, she brings her signature blend of creativity and community spirit to the heart of downtown.

Artwork and assignments were evaluated by the FCDC and Office of Arts, Culture and the Creative Economy for the Town of Franklin." The call for artists was first produced by the Franklin Cultural District Committee.

Highlighted Project Coordinated by the Franklin Cultural District Committee Franklin Porchfest

"Thank You for Making Franklin PorchFest 2025 a Success! Even though the last few hours brought some rain, we still had the chance to come together as a community—traveling around town, listening to amazing music performed by some of the most talented musicians around.

A special thank you to our Porch Hosts, who generously opened their homes to performers and invited friends and neighbors to share in a day of music and joy. Enormous gratitude goes to our dedicated performers, some of whom braved the wet weather and kept the music going regardless of the rain.

We're also deeply thankful for our volunteers, whose help on the day of the event made everything run smoothly. And a very special thanks to the PorchFest Committee for organizing another fantastic event." John LoPresti, Franklin Cultural District Committee Chair.

Special thank you to the Franklin Cultural District Porchfest Subcommittee for coordinating all aspects

of this event. Karilyn Hammer, Ryan Jette, John LoPresti, Susan Rohrback, and Roberta Trahan.



Cultural District Marketing | Newsletter & Social Media

Published every Wednesday at 7:00 AM in collaboration with the Dept. of Arts, Culture and the Creative Economy, the eBlast continues to reach over 500 subscribers by email, while also being shared with *Franklin Matters*. The new format shifted the focus from events roundup to a narrative platform that highlights the work of our partners, showcases public art, and shares initiatives shaping Franklin's creative future—all while keeping readers up to date on weekly happenings and upcoming opportunities.

We also want to extend our heartfelt gratitude to Pandora Carlucci, who lovingly curated the newsletter for years. Her dedication and countless hours of effort laid the foundation for what the eBlast has become today.

Looking forward to FY26...

In a town full of artistic talent and rich cultural heritage, the Cultural District Committee serves as a central hub, uniting the efforts of the cultural council, community partners, and local stakeholders to create a vibrant, cohesive district.

Respectfully submitted,

Katherine Botelho, Clerk, Sue Cass, Member, Pandora Carlucci, Member, Patrick Conlan, Member John LoPresti, Chair, Peter Rochat, Member, Roberta Trahan, Member