



City of Naperville

400 S. Eagle Street
Naperville, IL 60540
<http://www.naperville.il.us/>

Meeting Agenda SECA Commission

Wednesday, January 28, 2026

6:00 PM

Meeting Room C

PUBLIC COMMENT:

TO PROVIDE PUBLIC COMMENT DURING THE MEETING: To address the Commission in person during the meeting, members of the public should sign up in person at the meeting location on the day of the meeting. Signup is available for 30 minutes prior to the start of the meeting.

TO SUBMIT WRITTEN COMMENTS OR A POSITION OF SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION:

You may submit written comments and position statements to the commission at www.naperville.il.us/bc-comment in advance of the meeting. Comments will be received from the time the agenda is published until 24 hours before the meeting start time.

Comments and position statements received during this timeframe will be shared with the commission and posted in the Meeting Details section on the City's meeting management system in the day of the meeting. Comments received outside this time frame will not be transmitted or posted. Written comments will not be read aloud during the meeting.

PARTICIPATION GUIDELINES: The citizen participation guidelines are outlined in: 2-1-16 - CITIZEN PARTICIPATION of the Naperville Municipal Code.

ALL VIEWPOINTS AND OPINIONS WELCOME: All viewpoints are welcome, positive comments and constructive criticism are encouraged. Speakers must refrain from harassing or directing threats or personal attacks at Commission members, staff, other speakers or members of the public. Comments made to intentionally disrupt the meeting may be managed as necessary to maintain appropriate decorum and allow for city business to be accomplished.

IF YOU SIGN UP TO SPEAK: The Chairman will call your name at the appropriate time during the Commission meeting. Once your name is called you may identify yourself for the public record. Speak clearly and try to limit remarks directly to the matter under discussion. Speakers are limited to three minutes and are called in the order they sign up.

A. CALL TO ORDER:

B. ROLL CALL:

C. PUBLIC FORUM:

D. OLD BUSINESS:

1. [26-0074](#) Approve the SECA Commission meeting minutes of December 11, 2025

E. NEW BUSINESS:

1. [26-0075](#) Discuss and confirm the 2026 allocations
2. [26-0076](#) Review and approve the 2027 SECA Grant Fund Application Timeline and Process
3. [26-0077](#) Discuss SECA policy items and/or designate items for the February SECA meeting

F. ADJOURNMENT:

Any individual with a disability requesting a reasonable accommodation in order to participate in a public meeting should contact the Community Services Department at least 48 hours in advance of the scheduled meeting. The Community Services Department can be reached in person at 400 S. Eagle Street, Naperville, IL., via telephone at 630-305-5300 or via e-mail at napervilleclerks@naperville.il.us. Every effort will be made to allow for meeting participation.



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400 S. Eagle Street
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File #: 26-0074, **Version:** 2

Meeting Date: 1/28/2026

SECA COMMISSION SIMPLE AGENDA ITEM

ACTION REQUESTED:

Approve the SECA Commission meeting minutes of December 11, 2025

DEPARTMENT: Community Services

SUBMITTED BY: Jake Fiedler, Special Events Coordinator

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Naperville

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, December 11, 2025

6:00 PM

Council Chambers

SECA Commission

PUBLIC COMMENT:**A. CALL TO ORDER:**

Chairman Brodhead called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

B. ROLL CALL:

Present 9 - Judith Brodhead, Rich Gannon, Tom Miers, Rachna Prasad, Kader Sakkaria, Lai So, Ashfaq Syed, Arthur Zards, and Linda Kuhn

Also present: Miranda Barfuss, Community Grants Manager; Jake Fiedler, Special Events Coordinator; Melanie Marcordes, Director of Community Services; Alex Amato, Student Representative; Tien Nghiem, Student Representative.

Commissioner Miers made a motion to allow Commissioner Sakkaria to participate by phone, seconded by Rachna Prasad. The motion was approved by unanimous voice vote.

C. PUBLIC FORUM:

None

D. OLD BUSINESS:

- Approve the SECA Commission meeting minutes of November 15, 2025

Attachments: [SECA Commission Meeting Minutes 111525 - DRAFT](#)

Commissioner Miers made a motion to approve the SECA Commission meeting minutes of November 15, seconded by Prasad. The motion was approved by unanimous voice vote.

E. NEW BUSINESS:

- Reach consensus on a unified funding recommendation for the CY26 SECA Grant Fund allocations and direct staff to submit the recommendation to the City Council for review and approval

Attachments: [CY26 SECA Grant Fund Allocations](#)

Fiedler and Barfuss reviewed the combined commissioners spreadsheet and noted that seven applications will not receive funding due to the majority of Commissioners allocating \$0. Commissioners discussed allocations and completed a unified recommendation leaving \$15,000 for public art projects that arise throughout the year.

Meeting recessed at 7:50 PM. Meeting resumed at 7:57 PM.

The SECA Commission directed staff to determine how unspent funds are handled when an event is canceled and to obtain clarification on this process before submitting the final recommendation to City Council.

Commissioner Gannon made a motion to approve the unified recommendation for CY26 SECA Grant Fund allocations and directed staff to submit the recommendation to City Council for review and approval, seconded by So. The motion was approved by the unanimous vote.

2. Approve the SECA Commission 2026 Meeting Schedule

Attachments: [SECA Commission 2026 Meeting Schedule Final](#)

Commissioner Kuhn made a motion to approve the SECA Commission 2026 Meeting Schedule, seconded by Zards. The motion was approved by unanimous voice vote.

Commissioner Miers asked to move the January meeting to January 28. Commissioners agreed.

3. Review and approve the 2025 SECA Commission Annual Report draft

Attachments: [2025 SECA Annual Report](#)

Commissioner Prasad made a motion to approve the 2025 SECA Commission Annual Report draft with revisions, seconded by Gannon. The motion was approved by unanimous voice vote.

F. ADJOURNMENT:

Commissioner Miers made a motion to adjourn the SECA Commission meeting of December 11, 2025 at 8:36 PM, seconded by Prasad. The motion was approved by unanimous voice vote.

/S/ Jake Fiedler
Jake Fiedler
Special Events Coordinator



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Naperville

File #: 26-0075, Version: 1

Meeting Date: 1/28/2026

SECA COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM

ACTION REQUESTED:

Discuss and confirm the 2026 allocations

DEPARTMENT: Community Services

SUBMITTED BY: Jake Fiedler, Special Events Coordinator

BOARD/COMMISSION REVIEW:

N/A

BACKGROUND:

The Commission approved the 2026 unified recommendation at their December meeting. Further clarification is requested by staff before submitting it to City Council.

DISCUSSION:

Confirm Amount, Methodology, and Designation of Set-Aside Funds.

The Community Arts Set-Aside reflects funds remaining after completion of the standard SECA allocation process. As an alternative approach, this amount could have been considered as a standalone allocation and determined through individual scoring and averaging, consistent with other funding recommendations. The Commission is asked to confirm the amount and methodology used or provide direction on whether these funds should be reallocated.

Additionally, the Commission is asked to consider whether these funds should remain designated specifically for *Community Arts*, or whether they should be maintained more generally as a *SECA Set-Aside* to allow flexibility for potential new or emerging events proposed outside the standard application timeline.

Confirm allocation of Police Department funding

Although SECA policy does not permit funding taxing bodies, prior awards to the Police Department were limited to one-time, public art and special event-specific projects and did not support ongoing governmental operations. These expenditures were not budgeted within the General Fund and were used exclusively for public art and event-related purposes, making SECA an appropriate and targeted funding source.

Confirm Reallocation of Funds Following Event Cancellation

When a SECA-funded event is cancelled, allocated funds are reverted to the Food & Beverage Fund under current practice. The Commission is asked to confirm whether this approach should continue,

with the understanding that funds may be reallocated to support City services when City-requested changes in scope result in actual event costs exceeding original estimates.



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File #: 26-0076, **Version:** 1

Meeting Date: 1/28/2026

SECA COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM

ACTION REQUESTED:

Review and approve the 2027 SECA Grant Fund Application Timeline and Process

DEPARTMENT: Community Services

SUBMITTED BY: Jake Fiedler, Special Events Coordinator

BOARD/COMMISSION REVIEW:

N/A

BACKGROUND:

CY27 SECA Grant Fund draft timeline is attached based on last year's schedule.

DISCUSSION:

Approve CY27 SECA Grant Fund Application Timeline

As part of approving the CY27 SECA application timeline, the Commission is asked to determine whether to maintain the current meeting schedule or add an additional meeting between the November public comment meeting and the December allocation meeting to allow for more robust application review and discussion. (Tentatively November 18, 2026)

Provide Direction Regarding Mandatory SECA Applicant Meetings

Assuming the Commission intends to maintain mandatory annual meetings for SECA applicants, the Commission is asked to provide direction on the preferred meeting format, including whether the requirement should be fulfilled through in-person meetings, live virtual sessions, or a required recorded webinar with applicant certification.

Public Review or a Public Summary of each Application

Residents have requested public access to SECA applications. The Commission discussed publishing short summaries but took no formal action. Staff is exploring whether a one-page summary of each applicant and request could be provided to enhance transparency. The Commission is asked to identify which application elements or criteria are most important when reviewing applications, so that these items can be included in the one-page summary.

Disclosure of Conflict of Interest

The Commission is asked to confirm that all Commissioners, including Student Commissioners who do not vote, disclose any affiliation or personal interest when speaking on behalf of a SECA application to ensure transparency in the review process.

Late or Missing Commissioner Allocations

The Commission is asked to establish a policy for Commissioners who submit allocation recommendations late or fail to submit. Should their allocations be excluded from the average, or counted as zero, which could reduce the overall average?

Final Allocations with Remaining Balance (Commissioner Recusals)

When a Commissioner does not fully allocate their available funds, any remaining balance is currently absorbed into the overall funding process to ensure full distribution. The Commission is asked to review the following options and confirm its preferred approach. Under either option, the Commission retains full discretion to adjust and adopt a unified funding recommendation as it deems appropriate.

Option 1: Maintain Current Practice

Under the current process, unallocated funds are not reassigned. Because final funding recommendations are based on an average, the presence of unallocated funds does not prevent the Commission from amending allocations as it sees fit. This option maintains flexibility and reflects existing practice.

Option 2: Reallocate Unallocated Funds

Under this approach, if a Commissioner leaves funds unallocated, the average would be calculated based only on the number of allocations actually made. Any remaining funds would then be reallocated as part of the final funding recommendation to ensure all available funds are distributed.

Confirm Use of Set-Asides

The Commission is asked to consider whether to continue the use of a set-aside, or instead incorporate all available SECA funds into the standard application and allocation process to promote consistency, transparency, and equitable consideration of all requests.

Zero Funding by Majority

If a majority of Commissioners allocate \$0 to an organization, the organization receives no funding. The Commission is asked to confirm whether this process is acceptable.

Small Funding Requests Threshold

The Commission is asked to determine whether funding requests under \$5,000 should be fully funded, subject to eligibility and available SECA funds.

Staff Review of Applications

Staff currently performs a cursory review and provides all SECA applications to the Commission to ensure full transparency. As a potential enhancement, staff could add a notation if an application appears not to meet all eligibility criteria, while still providing the full application to the Commission for review. The Commission is asked to confirm whether this approach would be acceptable or if additional staff evaluation should be incorporated.



Application Timeline CY27 SECA	
Thu, August 20, 2026	SECA Applicant Mandatory Workshop (10 AM) *
Mon, August 24, 2026	SECA Applicant Mandatory Workshop (6 PM) *
Fri, September 4, 2026	SECA Applications available at 12 PM
Fri, October 2, 2026	SECA Applications due at 12 PM
Mon, October 12, 2026	SECA Applications submitted to SECA Commission
Fri, October 30, 2026	SECA Commission questions due to staff
Sat, November 14, 2026	SECA Commission meeting with applicants (9 AM in Council Chambers)
Mon, November 30, 2026	SECA Commission recommendations due to staff
Thu, December 10, 2026	SECA Commission meeting - Unified Recommendation Meeting (6 PM in Council Chambers)
Tue, January 19, 2027 (tentative)	City Council approval of CY27 SECA Grant Fund allocations

* Workshop held in-person



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File #: 26-0077, **Version:** 1

Meeting Date: 1/28/2026

SECA COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM

ACTION REQUESTED:

Discuss SECA policy items and/or designate items for the February SECA meeting

DEPARTMENT: Community Services

SUBMITTED BY: Jake Fiedler, Special Events Coordinator

BOARD/COMMISSION REVIEW:

N/A

BACKGROUND:

Several SECA policy items were discussed by the Commission throughout the application process. Staff is requesting direction on the items discussed.

DISCUSSION:

Clarify “promoting religion or religious organizations”

Suggested language:

While SECA guidelines prohibit the promotion of religion or religious organizations, many cultural traditions-particularly in music, dance, and art-have historical or symbolic connections to religious practices. Funding eligibility should be evaluated based on the intent, content, and presentation of the event, rather than its historical origins alone. Events that are presented as cultural, educational, or artistic experiences, and that do not include religious instruction, worship, or advocacy, do not constitute the promotion of religion and may be considered eligible under SECA guidelines.

Eligibility Criteria:

An event may be eligible if:

- It is presented primarily as a cultural, educational, or artistic performance
- It is open to the general public
- It does not include:
 - Religious services or rituals intended for worship
 - Instruction in religious doctrine
 - Calls to adopt, practice, or support a specific faith or religious organization
- Marketing materials emphasize culture, history, or art, not religious observance

An event would be ineligible if:

- The primary purpose is religious worship, prayer, or faith formation
- The event functions as an extension of a religious service
- Funding would directly support a religious organization’s ministry or evangelization efforts

Confirm Support for a Sunset Provision

SECA funding is intended to support event and program operations on a limited or transitional basis and should not serve as a long-term or sole funding source. Applicants receiving recurring SECA support may be subject to a sunset provision or graduated funding reduction to encourage financial sustainability. As part of any discussion regarding sunset provisions consideration should be given to how such an approach may differ between special events and community arts organizations that receive ongoing SECA support.

Graduated Reduction: SECA support would decrease over time to encourage financial sustainability and reduce long-term reliance on SECA funds, recognizing that while this approach provides a predictable transition for applicants, it also requires ongoing tracking and Council support for events seeking longer-term funding.

- SECA funding decreases over time (example):
 - Years 1-2: up to 100% of eligible amount
 - Year 3: up to 75%
 - Year 4: up to 50%
 - Year 5: up to 25%
- Applicants must demonstrate progress toward alternative funding.

Change of Scope Request Process

The Commission is asked to establish a consistent process for reviewing change of scope requests. Past practice has included written requests reviewed via email vote. During recent discussion, the Commission considered requiring written requests to be placed on a SECA agenda and presented in person for approval at a regular meeting. Direction is requested on the preferred approach.

SECA Mission Statement

The following mission statement was established in 2016 and remains sufficient, though optional refinements could be considered to reflect evolving program practices:

The mission of the Special Events & Community Arts Grant Fund Program is to assist the City in furthering special events and artistic cultural experiences that support an inclusive community that values diversity for Naperville and its visitors.

Definition of a Fundraising Event

The Commission is asked to confirm whether the current definition of a fundraising event, adopted in 2016, remains appropriate or should be revised for clarity. Currently, a fundraising event is defined as:

An event with the primary purpose of generating revenue to support the organization's own mission. An event will not be characterized as a fundraiser if the primary purpose is to present cultural or entertainment experience.

Clarifying Fundraising Events: While most nonprofit events generate revenue in some form, SECA distinguishes between events that primarily present a cultural or entertainment experience and events whose primary purpose is fundraising. An event will be considered a fundraising event-and therefore ineligible-if it is structured, marketed, or branded primarily as a fundraiser rather than as a cultural or entertainment offering.

Indicators of a fundraising event may include, but are not limited to:

- The event is branded or titled as a “fundraiser,” “gala,” “benefit,” or “donation event”

- The primary focus is soliciting donations or selling sponsorships to support the organization's general operations
- Ticket pricing significantly exceeds the value of the cultural or entertainment experience provided
- The event includes formal fundraising components such as auctions, pledge drives, or donation appeals as the central activity

An event is not considered a fundraising event if the primary purpose is to present a cultural or entertainment experience, even if revenue is generated through ticket sales or concessions, provided fundraising is not the dominant feature of the event

Examples

Eligible Events (Not Fundraisers)

- A ticketed concert, performance, or festival where admission supports event costs
- A cultural dance or music performance open to the public, even if hosted by a nonprofit
- An art exhibition or public art installation with optional donations

Ineligible Events (Fundraisers)

- A nonprofit *gala, benefit dinner, or fundraising concert*
- An event titled or marketed as a *fundraiser or benefit*
- Events centered on auctions, raffles, or donation appeals

Promotion of Political Organizations

A question has been raised regarding whether SECA funding should exclude events that promote political organizations. Federal 501(c)(3) law already prohibits political campaign activity. The Commission is asked to confirm that SECA policy should continue to align with federal 501(c)(3) requirements, and that applicants remain prohibited from participating in or supporting political campaigns on behalf of any candidate or political party.