

Presentation by Kate Anderson, Town Arts Committee

This committee serves the Town by way of Selectboard appointment and is a liaison between the community and art. In that capacity it acts as a sounding board for the Executive. It's not as much about serving art and artists as it is about serving the community using art as the vehicle.

For this reason we are very appreciative of recent in depth discussions with the Planning Commission. The prospect was raised that, when Town projects or needs are in discussion, the Arts Committee should be "at the table". This is how the design for the proposed Bus Shelter at Union Station was awarded. The Town Arts Committee was engaged in the discussion and initiated the idea of arts participation, designs were submitted and vetted according to the TAC Public Art Policy, they were juried and one was selected -- all within the already established budget. A local artisan will enhance the Town.

At some point in the not too distant future, let us consider together including the arts, the deeply creative capacities of this community, in the Town Budget, perhaps through 1% of new municipal construction costs as is done in many other communities. Art is a public good, not unlike parks and recreation, the library, or the educational infrastructure. However, with the recent discussion of the robust challenges and limits in current Town budgeting, it seems arts endeavors can presently serve the community by embedding creativity in further collaborations.

The relationship of TAC with the Dept of Public Works possibly increasing Horizontal Art into a developed Walkable Trail throughout the downtown and Town Neighborhoods answers repeated requests for both a more art-enhanced Streetscape along with a desired focus on Livability. This is but one example of the many ways the Town and the Arts Committee can act as partners. The Transportation Center's waiting room has been enhanced, Art photography of Brattleboro citizens has been displayed, graffiti has been exchanged for a gentler beauty, and more.

While this committee can be thought of in an advisory capacity, it is comprised of industrious, imaginative members, many of who energetically engage in various arts disciplines and advocacies, thereby networking into the community in innumerable ways.

The most important thing I'd like to say is ---- the arts are a resource and Brattleboro benefits on many levels, in diverse ways and with long term positive effect. That resource is more quantifiable than we have as yet understood. The Burlington Press recently ran

headlines stating a \$443 million impact from the nonprofit arts in Vermont.

This makes the arts and creative industries the 5th largest industry in Vermont.

So, a valuable discussion considers: what are the creative industries, how do we better tap their potential, what elements of design do the arts share with entrepreneurship.

The arts carry significant value when seen through the lens of economic development. To this end TAC is now endeavoring to create a directory of all local creative industries. But this is not their only or most important value.

They tell our story in song, in simplicity, in color, in complexity. They celebrate our victories and they articulate our sadness. They connect us; they promote conversation among those who perhaps wouldn't normally converse.

The arts sector is vibrant and prolific leading to the assumption that infrastructure needs are largely met. This misreading attests to the deep creativity of the arts community all the while recognizing that there is much to be done to support a continued thriving environment. To that end TAC lead an arts charrette last January. We identified the following goals:

- 1) to state and disseminate, on an annual basis, the economic impact of the arts
- 2) to address any and all reasons that may limit access to the arts, be it economic physical, social, cultural, etc.
- 3) to design and maintain a comprehensive information sharing network
- 4) to continue to build an administrative structure that supports community arts endeavors
- 5) to continue to create prominent art activities, events, symbols, and artworks that reflects the importance of the Arts in our community

Thank you for the opportunity to apprise you of our work; our intentions, and that we assume our responsibilities with dedication.

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