

ArtsAlliance

Arts & Culture and Candidates for Washtenaw County Local Elections

On November 3, 2009, local elections will take place for candidates in the following races:

- Ann Arbor City Council Wards 1-5
- Chelsea City Council
- Milan City Council
- Saline City Council
- Chelsea Mayor
- Milan Mayor

As a public service, the Arts Alliance asked the candidates to respond to the following two questions about their positions on arts and culture in our community.

1. What is your position on public funding for arts and culture?
2. If elected, what **measurable** actions will you take to ensure that arts and cultural offerings survive and thrive in Washtenaw County? Please be specific.

The responses we received are below. **Please feel free to share this information with others who may be interested.**

Thanks for your support of the arts and don't forget to vote on November 3! (A list of polling sites is available at

http://www.ewashtenaw.org/government/clerk_register/elections/el_precincts.html).

The Arts Alliance is a non-partisan organization that endorses no candidate running for office.

How to read this document:

This document is organized by how information can be found on the Washtenaw County website -

http://www.ewashtenaw.org/government/clerk_register/elections/el_nov09candidates.html

- Candidates are arranged in alphabetical order by last name.
- Information is organized in the following order: City, Village and Township.
- (D) is the short code for Democrat; (R) for Republican.

Candidates for Ann Arbor City Council

WARD I

Sabra C. Briere (D)

1. What is your position on public funding for arts and culture?

I work for a non-profit, The Corner Health Center, that benefits directly from MCACA grants. These grants support our Theatre Troupe, and have provided support for this innovative and successful health education/theatre training program for years. By using a mix of public funds and funding from private foundation and corporate sources, the Theatre Troupe has been able to bring its health education message – teaching about HIV/AIDS, smoking and drug use prevention, domestic abuse, and depression – to middle and high schools in Washtenaw and western Wayne counties. Without public funding, the ability of Troupe staff to teach technique and health education to the troupe members, transport Troupe to the schools, and evaluate the success of the program is placed in jeopardy. Because I have this direct experience, and have been involved in the grant writing process, I really understand the value of public funding for the arts. A small program can fail without a little grant – and a major program, like Wild Swan, can fail utterly if its funding dries up at a critical time.

2. If elected, what measurable actions will you take to ensure that arts and cultural offerings survive and thrive in Washtenaw County? Please be specific.

I will continue to work with members of Council and the County Board of Commissioners as well as The University of Michigan to ensure that Ann Arbor and Washtenaw County remain able to provide the highest possible levels of funding for arts venues. I recognize that, in these difficult economic times, the State of Michigan has grossly reduced funding for the arts. However, a vibrant cultural experience provides tourist opportunities, not only here in Ann Arbor but throughout the state. To limit funding for the arts is to limit income-generating activities that reach far beyond the arts themselves. Performance arts and arts events bring dollars to communities through meals eaten, gas purchased, hotel rooms rented, souvenirs and other purchases made . . . indeed, through many channels. I will lobby on behalf of the arts to strengthen our ties to Lansing, and will work to keep arts programs funded. I am aware that there are many different types of public and private funding partnerships needed in Ann Arbor to keep our vibrant cultural life exciting and varied. I expect to continue my support of the arts in many active ways.

Mitchell Ozog (No Party Affiliation)

1. What is your position on public funding for arts and culture?

As you know from my website I have college degree in Graphic Design so I am also artist and yes I am in favor of public arts support.

2. If elected, what measurable actions will you take to ensure that arts and cultural offerings survive and thrive in Washtenaw County? Please be specific.

Arts and culture activities add measurable value to our region and quality of life in Washtenaw County and City of Ann Arbor. If I will elect to Ann Arbor City Council I will support economic

development programs that promote good paying jobs in creative arts industries. Also I will help to increase community awareness of and private support for arts and culture programs.

WARD 2

Stephen Rapundalo (D)

1. What is your position on public funding for arts and culture?

A strong, vibrant and diverse arts and cultural sector supported through public funding is simply a wise investment in our community. Our arts and cultural assets enrich our lives and enhance the community's appeal to others. The health and quality of an arts and cultural sector should be a distinct competitive advantage for any community, especially one like Ann Arbor. It is a defining element of our regional, national and worldwide image, a key facet of our economy and an important resource for educating our children. In short, it is a non-negotiable, must-have quality that every successful and vibrant community must have.

The current economic conditions have made it clearer than ever that the arts and culture community needs public funding that is stable and dependable. This would allow us to continue offering exceptional experiences for our communities and an ability to compete for knowledge workers and industries. Obviously, identifying a stable funding source is not an easy task given budgetary challenges at all levels of government. However, we must bring together a broad-based coalition of arts organizations, local government units, business leaders, economic development organizations, and others, and lobby strenuously and in a deliberate manner for funding with our elected officials. While some of this is ongoing, it seems that we can and should be doing more. Specifically, a community dialog between stakeholders is needed to help identify possible local approaches for public funding.

2. If elected, what measurable actions will you take to ensure that arts and cultural offerings survive and thrive in Washtenaw County? Please be specific.

Several options are worth exploring that might assist the sustainability of the arts and cultural community in small but meaningful ways. For instance, we could consider developing a revolving loan program for artists' materials and transportation on signed contracts for goods and services. This is similar to what is already available to high-tech entrepreneurs in the area. Structured opportunities for networking and partnership between the arts and business communities need to be enhanced - again this has worked well between the entrepreneurial and investment communities. Lastly, there needs to be some tangible movement towards creating low-cost work/live and work space for artists.

WARD 3

Stephen Kunselman (D)

1. What is your position on public funding for arts and culture?

I approve of the creation of the City's 1% for public arts program and as a former council member, I voted to create and fund the program.

2. If elected, what *measurable* actions will you take to ensure that arts and cultural offerings survive and thrive in Washtenaw County? Please be specific.

If elected, I will support public funding of the City's 1% for public arts program. I will also continue to support cultural events like the Ann Arbor Art Fairs, the Top of the Park Summer Festival, and other community cultural events that Ann Arborites have grown so fond of over the years. However, I do expect that there will be greater expectations from residents for funding partnerships as public financial resources diminish.

WARD 4

Hatim A. Elhady (No Party Affiliation)

No response

Marcia Higgins (D)

No response

WARD 5

Mike Anglin (D)

1. What is your position on public funding for arts and culture?

The Arts Alliance's highly informative and thought-provoking "Top 10 Facts about Arts and Culture in Washtenaw County" deserves to be widely distributed and provides the context for my answer. Public funding for arts and culture, even in today's economic climate, or especially because of today's economic climate, should not be seen as an extravagance or unnecessary "frill." Public funding for the arts and culture is a sound investment in the social and economic life of Ann Arbor and Washtenaw County. Of course, public funding cannot be the sole or main support of arts and culture. Fiscally responsible government that avoids wasteful and unnecessary spending, and that institutes cost-saving efficiencies in the delivery of city services, helps to relieve the tax burden on individuals and organizations, enabling them to earmark funds for the arts and culture.

2. If elected, what *measurable* actions will you take to ensure that arts and cultural offerings survive and thrive in Washtenaw County? Please be specific.

Creative artists are typically low earners, especially at the beginning of their careers. I know many such people in the Fifth Ward. We must keep Ann Arbor and Washtenaw County affordable so that creative artists can continue to live here. We know that affordable studio spaces, for both visual and performance artists, is already very limited, and is shrinking more with each day. I support the Ann Arbor Art Center's exciting proposal for a Cultural Center at 415 Washington and will continue to do so. I believe that a "Percent for Art" law should be passed by the Ann Arbor City Council, as it has been in many cities. This would guarantee that one percent of the budget for eligible City-funded construction projects be spent on artwork, either as part of the design or as purchases. Further, I think that local artists should be given preference when it comes to commissions and acquisitions. Locally-known artists – the nationally-known artists of the future – deserve to have their works displayed and their talents nurtured. Developers seeking approval of construction projects should also be required to

include public art, preferably by local artists. These goals are important to me, and I intend to propose effective measures to the Ann Arbor City Council to achieve them.

Candidates for Chelsea City Mayor

Jason F. Lindauer (Non-Partisan)

No response

Candidates for Chelsea City Council

Cheri Albertson (Non-Partisan, At-Large)

No response

Ann E. Feeney (Non-Partisan, At-Large)

1. What is your position on public funding for arts and culture?

With all the demands on municipal funds, financial assistance to the Senior Center and the WWAVE, there is no funds to directly support local arts. However, the City does act as the sponsor of many grants obtained through the Chelsea Center for the Arts, assists with installation of public art and other indirect costs which the Center would incur.

2. If elected, what measurable actions will you take to ensure that arts and cultural offerings survive and thrive in Washtenaw County? Please be specific.

As a Councilwoman, I will not exert any pressure on local government to support the arts. We as a family put our support behind local art organizations such as CCA, Purple Rose Theatre, Youth Dance Theatre of Michigan, Chelsea Chamber Players and purchase a considerable amount of art from the two main galleries in Chelsea. The arts are a personal priority of our family, but I will not ask the City to provide any direct financial support.

Frank Hammer (Non-Partisan, At-Large)

No response

Kent Martinez-Kratz (Non-Partisan, At-Large)

No response

Richard L. Steele (Non-Partisan, At-Large)

No response

Candidates for Milan City Mayor

Kym Muckler (Non-Partisan)

No response

Candidates for Milan City Council

Michael Armitage (Non-Partisan, At-Large)

I. What is your position on public funding for arts and culture?

The arts define who we are as a nation, region, and culture. Expanding on our local talents will have a wonderful impact on our local economy. Using public funds for the arts is appropriate in education and economic development.

2. If elected, what measurable actions will you take to ensure that arts and cultural offerings survive and thrive in Washtenaw County? Please be specific.

I mentioned to areas of funding in the first question which I will expand on. As a city councilman, my responsibility will be for the promotion of the City of Milan, which in turn will boost our region in Southern Washtenaw and Northern Monroe Counties. I support educational programs that get people of all ages involved in many mediums of art. These include, but are not limited to, music, dance, painting, and photography. Once people can realize their talent, art can flourish and continue to be an area of economic development for the community. I also support making the venues available for the arts to thrive, such as a multi-use outdoor amphitheater that can be used not only for musical performances, but also create a space for art displays. I would also work with the schools to take full advantage of the wonderful facilities that we have at the Milan Performing Arts Center.

Douglas A. Gilson (Non-Partisan, At-Large)

No response

Dominic N. Hamden (Non-Partisan, At-Large)

No response

David Ludwig (Non-Partisan, At-Large)

No response

Candidates for Saline City Council

Pat Ivey (Non-Partisan, At-Large)

I. What is your position on public funding for arts and culture?

Regrettably, we tend to underestimate the value of public funding of arts and cultural pursuits. Support of same with government dollars returns enhancements which have a high degree of sustained value. People crave opportunities to experience good art, good music, and all with a blend of diversity and good taste. Without such support, cities will wither and die on the vine – failing to attract the right mix of people.

The single most important thing elected officials in Michigan can do as caretakers of community values is to cherish and promote the arts to the furthest extent possible.

2. If elected, what measurable actions will you take to ensure that arts and cultural offerings survive and thrive in Washtenaw County? Please be specific.

I am on record as a staunch supporter of the annual Saline Celtic Festival. Furthermore, I endorse plans presented by The Saline Culture and Arts Committee to provide access to new and existing cultural facilities in the community, and also to bring more public art to downtown Saline. As I campaign, I find the citizens of Saline are by and large on board with this.

Glenn Law (Non-Partisan, At-Large)

1. What is your position on public funding for arts and culture?

I believe there is a place for arts and culture in our community. As long as there is input from various sectors of the community then I believe it can work. It is a tricky line when the debate switches to what is tasteful and what is not. Also with the economy the way it is on municipalities I would be more inclined to maintain basic services with public dollars and not have them fall behind and look at culture and arts programs if there is money available. Otherwise private funding maybe the only other way.

2. If elected, what measurable actions will you take to ensure that arts and cultural offerings survive and thrive in Washtenaw County? Please be specific.

I supported the recent establishment of a culture/arts committee in the city of Saline. I will continue to support this group so long as it continues to solicit public opinion and comments about public art and culture displays that would involve public funding. I am also a strong advocate of the various public events in the city that display a cultural and arts flavor for the city. This includes the Saline Celtic Festival held each July, the summer arts festival downtown Saline and the Harvest of the Arts festival also downtown. I am currently pushing for some sort of winter festival downtown as well.

Alicia Ping (Non-Partisan, At-Large)

No response

Sal Randazzo (Non-Partisan, At-Large)

1. What is your position on public funding for arts and culture?

#1 Funding. The government has no role in the funding of the arts. Taking money from one group by force or the threat of force and giving it to another group is immoral. The arts should be totally free of government influence so as to have freedom of creativity and not be subject to becoming propagandized. The government through its elected officials should only serve to encourage the private sector to invest and maintain a vibrant arts culture and opportunity to learn.

2. If elected, what measurable actions will you take to ensure that arts and cultural offerings survive and thrive in Washtenaw County? Please be specific.

#2 Actions. I recognize that art is what makes us human and allows the creative expression of ideas and emotions that can move people in positive ways. I would never stand for any rule or legislation that would limit the freedoms to create and express. Lowering taxes and getting government out of the way would allow markets to develop for all the various types of art and expression. Art generally emerges from people that have time and freedom to contemplate the

universe we live in. I favor limiting government to its proper role of providing for the safety and security of its citizens and protecting their rights. Government should eliminate the unnecessary burdens that rob a community of its time and cause it unneeded stress. Shrinking government and its demands on the people will go a long way to encourage the expression and appreciation for the arts.

Measurable actions: If it limits freedom of expression, I will vote against it. If it makes art harder to create or access, I will vote against it. If it places more burdens on small business and entrepreneurs, I will vote against it. If it unfairly taxes art, I will vote against it. If it give tax credits to business and individule that invest in art, I will vote for it. If it allows the people to keep more of their money (that they can use to support the arts), I will vote for it.

Each individual group has a wealth of information and experience on the specific issues it faces. I can not pretend to know them all or have thought them all out. Please feel free to meet or call me to discuss any information that you believe I need in order to make reasoned decisions regarding the pertinent issues.