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2014 Washtenaw County Candidates Survey Response

Published verbatim and unedited

Office Candidate Seeks: Ann Arbor Mayor

District/Ward: Ann Arbor

Candidate's Full Name: Sabra Briere

Party Affiliation (if applicable): Democrat

Candidate's E-mail Address: sabrabriereformayor@gmail.com

Campaign Website: sabrabriereformayor.org

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1. In regards to arts, culture and heritage, do you consider yourself any of the following:

I believe that availability and access to arts, cultural and heritage offerings in our community make our community a great place to create, live, work, play, learn and visit.

I am a consumer of arts, culture and/or heritage products and programs.

I am personally a donor to arts, cultural and/or heritage organizations.

2. What arts, cultural or heritage activities have you and/or your family members attended, participated in or supported in the past year?

Festifools, various concerts, historic building tours, historic displays, museum tours, gallery events

3. Thinking back to your own K-12 education, what arts or cultural classes, programs or activities did you participate in? In what way, if any, do you believe your participation influenced or still influences you?

I was a visual artist in high school, working with ceramics, jewelry making and print making (woodblocks, silkscreens). I designed and painted sets for school plays. I was on the debate team, traveling to different parts of the state. I learned that we can all see the world from different viewpoints and using different filters. I learned that we can all hear the same thing, but we listen to different parts.

4. What role do you think arts, culture, and the creative sector can play in supporting key education priorities such as closing the achievement gap, reducing the dropout rate, and preparing more students for college enrollment and the 21st century workforce?

We all learn in different ways. And we all excel in different things. Eliminating exposure to instrumental music (creation and appreciation); vocal music (creation and appreciation); and all the various ways visual arts impact our lives doesn't cause dropouts, or prevent a student from preparing for college and work. But it severely limits the opportunity each student has - to explore new ideas, to excel at a specific skill, to learn more about others, and to engage in the hard task of practicing. And practicing - whichever skill one explores - teaches patience and perseverance, and growth.

5. What role can arts, culture, and the creative sector play in Washtenaw's economic growth and vitality?

Ann Arbor has a significant arts and cultural community. We can build on that and create more opportunities for its expression. By doing that, we promote: -Individual skills and interests.

Many innovative scientists and entrepreneurs use their creativity in more than one way - they paint, they perform music, they participate in theatre, they write, they sing . . . and their engagement with the community creates an atmosphere in which more innovative thinkers feel welcome. -Community engagement. A community with many activities and opportunities for all to create is one that opens its doors to ideas and people. Whether that's a tour of mid-century modern buildings, a lecture series at Kempf House or an art show at the Dancing Dog Gallery or a presentation of Elektra at West Park - each activity brings us together and encourages other activities. -Exciting events. Whether the event is expected to draw tourists or townies, each opportunity the community has to gather creates other opportunities for commerce (selling 'stuff', selling ideas and services, selling food and drink). And each of these things presents an opportunity for reinvestment in the community. So, individual fulfillment, community engagement, and welcoming the larger community - all of these offer ways to invest in our community. And each helps provide the yeast to make our community vital and interesting.

6. Do you support public investment in the creative economy? This includes arts, culture, heritage organizations and creative individuals.

Yes

Please explain your answer: I believe governmental funding should be available for specific types of uses (whether that's direct funding to artists and artist organizations, or indirect funding for staff support). For instance, I would like to see: 1. more (creation of) art in the park, with residents invited to make something (drawing, photo, painting, print, sculpture) during a 4-hour period at one of the parks. This would take staff time to organize, monitor, display, etc. 2. temporary art displays - whether student work or by seasoned professionals. 3. more music in the park - perhaps a 'bring your (non-amplified) music to xxx park and jam' type of event. 4. theatre on Main Street - close off main for one block, and perform for those at cafe tables. These (and other) types of events need not be financially expensive, but create an opportunity to foster and showcase the community and its creative spirit.

7. If elected, what measureable action(s) will you take during your term to support public investment in our community's creative economy and support arts, culture, heritage organizations and businesses and creative individuals?

I will seek out opportunities to have the City engage in more temporary art displays. I will work with others to encourage more creative opportunities in our parks. I will make certain that each new and significant capital improvement project is considered for enhanced design and for opportunities to include art in the design. I will be open to others' ideas. And that last is most significant. Because no matter what I can do as an individual, it takes all of us to properly invest in and support arts.

8. What is your position on public funding for arts and culture and, if elected, how will your position be reflected during the budget/planning process?

I support providing small grants to arts and cultural organization to help defray the cost of concerts and events, and will continue - and potentially expand - this process. I will encourage broadening the City's impact by establishing temporary displays of visual art in City Hall and - if possible - in City parks. The current ordinance states that the City should include art and/or enhanced architectural features in new capital improvements, where possible and practical. I will encourage the staff to plan for art, and support well developed plans that result.

9. If you support public funding for arts and culture, what do you think are the best means of allocating funds?

Line item appropriations

Appropriations distributed via grant programs

Tax based (millages, accommodations, sales etc.)



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baked into new projects.

10. If elected, would you accept an invitation to become a member in an arts, culture and heritage caucus?

Yes

If yes, from which caucus would you accept an invitation? Washtenaw County Caucus