



1100 North Main Street · Suite 106B
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2014 Washtenaw County Candidates Survey Response

Published verbatim and unedited

Office Candidate Seeks: Washtenaw County Commissioner
District/Ward: District 5

Candidate's Full Name: Ruth Ann Jamnick
Party Affiliation (if applicable): Democrat

Candidate's E-mail Address: rajamnick@sbcglobal.net

Campaign Website: RAJamnick.com

Campaign Contact: Ruth Ann Jamnick, 734.485.5182, rajamnick@sbcglobal.net, 7776 Lake Crest Drive, Ypsilanti, MI 48197

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?** Nature's Classroom: I have made financial contributions; serve on their Board 2013 NAAPID at Night: I was a judge twice for the art contest and served on the Planning Committee for 9 years. Ypsilanti Heritage Festival: I was a Festival volunteer for 5 or 6 years; attended many of the Festivals, purchasing some items. Ypsilanti Festival of Lights during Christmas Holidays: I was among the first volunteers who actually put the lights in the strings and helped putting them in the trees. Served as Chair for 2 or 3 years.

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?

In my personal K-12 Education, there weren't any arts or cultural classes, programs or activities to participate in. I have always wanted to play the piano and unfortunately, that wasn't possible. While attending a silent auction at a fundraiser for Ypsilanti High School's Orchestra a few years ago, I actually purchased 3 piano lessons for \$25 and truly enjoyed the experience. I was encouraged to continue with lessons and think many times that I should 'just do it'. When raising my children, as they expressed an interest in music, I encouraged them to take the opportunity, presented by their elementary school. One learned to play the flute and another the trumpet. I also purchased a lot of supplies for school posters, etc. I have always enjoyed music and attended concerts at Pease Auditorium, plays at the Fox Theatre, concerts at Washtenaw Community College. I have enjoyed visits to the DIA, Detroit Historical Museum; our Ypsilanti Historical Society collection and U/M Museum of Art and Natural History. I am looking forward to attending some performances with my 86 year old Aunt who has returned to Michigan from Florida. She is a very special lady to my family and it will be great enjoying them with her.

- 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? When**

-serving in the Michigan Legislature, I had an opportunity to talk with a friend who is a partner in a successful engineering company about a letter I received from Michigan Tech. The letter shared with me the number of students from the 54th District who were enrolled there. One comment he made comes to mind ... his firm did not hire engineers who did not have a Liberal Arts Degree. Their experience was that those who had that degree along with their engineering degree performed better because their thinking process was not just the surveying, lines, etc. One of my children is a teacher and she shared with me their Math Dance before the end of the school year. Students that might have been challenging during their school day, were enthusiastic and enjoyed the hard work, creating a successful performance. These are two small instances where I learned that art made a difference in how people felt and think differently with an art related experience.

- 5. What role can arts, culture, and the creative sector play in Washtenaw's economic growth and vitality?** Huge! They bring people to our County to willingly spend their dollars here. Just to mention two: As I type this, the Ann Arbor Art Fair has been in full swing. It brings many people who stay in our hotels throughout the County and enjoy spending their money in many places, not just in their purchasing items from the many vendors. There are many events throughout the County that are not on the scale of the Ann Arbor Art Fair, but do bring people to Washtenaw County and they spend their money here too. Trade unions hold their training sessions at our higher learning institutions. Those 'students' enjoy, spending their dollars in our local businesses throughout the County. I remember being asked a store that carried a special brand of men's boots. I had not heard of it, but in asking some questions, found the location. It became a very popular place to go at that time. The timing of the first union training session, Plumbers and Pipefitters, was always scheduled to be in conjunction with the Ypsilanti Heritage Festival. Many times they bring their families with them to enjoy what our communities have to offer.

- 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 public investment can be made to support the arts, culture and heritage and creative individuals. There are funds available from the Michigan Historical Society to assist in restoring our historic buildings and sometimes through a Downtown Development Authority, dollars can be made available as well. In today's challenging financial times, pretty much for all levels of government, citizens are more concerned about those dollars being spent for public safety, repairing roads, water/sewer line replacement, street lighting, security cameras, etc. In difficult financial times, elected officials have difficult decisions on where those dollars are to be spent. I think everyone agrees, when funds are needed for public safety and infrastructure, we may need to come together to find other sources of funding to maintain for our arts, culture and heritage organizations and creative individuals. We have generous people and businesses in our County who, in the past have been willing to help. It is important, during difficult financial times in our local governments, that we be resourceful to fill the gap for our non-governmental needs.

- 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 am willing to learn more about how the County has supported such public investments in the past. The Board of Commissioners has approved a 4 year budget for expenditures. It is my understanding, for each of the 3 remaining years, the budget will be reviewed and approved for each year individually, which allows changes as agreed. I willing to be a part of a discussions with the Arts Alliance to learn more about your expectations and desire for specific funding, for what purposes. It has been my understanding both Convention & Visitors Bureau have been supportive of the arts, culture, heritage organizations and business and creative individuals, when there were opportunities.



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- 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 am willing to learn more about how the County has supported such public investments in the past. The Board of Commissioners has approved a 4 year budget for expenditures. It is my understanding, for each of the 3 remaining years, the budget will be reviewed and approved for each year individually, which allows changes, as agreed. I know there are sometimes limitations on how public funds can be spent and will need to learn what those limitations might be, if any for the County funds. I willing to be a part of a discussions with the Arts Alliance to learn more about your expectations and desire for specific funding for what purposes.
- 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
- 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
