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2014 Washtenaw County Candidates Survey Response

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Office Candidate Seeks: Ann Arbor City Council

District/Ward: Ward 1

Candidate's Full Name: Sumi Kailasapathy

Party Affiliation (if applicable): Democrat

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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?

I financially support the heritage organization, SAADA (South Asian American Digital Archives). My family and I also attend cultural musical and dance performances hosted by University Musical Society.

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 school, I participated in dance programs. I learned and started performing Bharathanatyam – South Indian classical dancing. I love dance and my dance experience allowed me to communicate with others in a different way and has been an influence in my life ever since. My son is currently taking violin lessons and it makes me happy to see him enjoy this experience.

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?

The arts definitely should have an important place in the schools. They add historic, aesthetic and humane dimensions to education. They develop skills that no other activities touch. In addition, they give students an outlet for their passions, build confidence and award pleasure in health ways, things students need as they mature.

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

The cultural arts and creative sectors have always played an important role in Washtenaw County's economic growth and vitality. Many individuals in our community are "self-employed" in these sectors and our local economy benefits from them. In addition, the area's strong artistic

and musical life is a draw to newcomers and gives our city the cultural life of a big city, but with a small town atmosphere.

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 support the national and state level funding of arts, culture, and heritage organizations, along with a limited amount at the municipal level. In November 2012, Ann Arbor voters rejected the Percentage for Arts program and I respect their decision. Ann Arbor City Council is working to transition the Arts program into a collaborative process using public and private money. In addition, some projects should have art included in the design and budget when proposed (i.e. "baked in" art funding).

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?

Along with other members on City Council, I will work toward establishing an Arts program that provides for a collaborative arrangement using public and private money. On a broader scope, the City can partner with the University of Michigan, Eastern Michigan University and other institutions to provide support to organizations, businesses, and individuals.

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 believe that public funding for arts and culture should be combined with private funding.

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

Coordinating private donations to a public fund

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?
