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## 2014 Washtenaw County Candidates Survey Response

*Published verbatim and unedited*

**Office Candidate Seeks:** Chelsea Township Supervisor  
**District/Ward:** Dexter Township

**Candidate's Full Name:** Michael Vladik Kundak-Cowall  
**Party Affiliation (if applicable):** Democrat

**Candidate's E-mail Address:** mkundakco08@charter.net

**Campaign Website:**

**Campaign Contact:**

- 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 have been a visitor to the DIA on multiple occasions within the past year, as well as cultural festivals such as the Russian Festival at St. Vladimir's.
- 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 an avid member of the music program in Chelsea District schools, a member of the marching band in both middle school and high school, and a member of the Chelsea House Orchestra itself in high school. These programs introduced me to public performance and the thrills of simply being in the public eye, experiences which have helped foster my own public speaking skills and encourage me to get more involved in public affairs and local politics.
- 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 21<sup>st</sup> century workforce?**  
Art expands minds and introduces us to other cultures, new ideas, and ways of expressing ourselves that hadn't even occurred to us before. To broaden ourselves to new horizons and see new angles to the world around us brings us healthier, more fluid minds that can much more easily tackle the challenges of the modern economy, to say nothing of facing all the social challenges and political hurdles of this new century.
- 5. What role can arts, culture, and the creative sector play in Washtenaw's economic growth and vitality?**  
The creative mind is a mind bursting with new ideas, new solutions, new things to try out; encouraging arts and culture encourages inventive new approaches to technology and to our economy as a whole. Startups and other enterprises born of innovative minds help diversify Washtenaw's economy, give it fresh blood and more alternatives if one sector should falter.

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

Yes

**Please explain your answer:**

Art can express the feelings of a community after a tragedy, or unite a community when all seems fractured. Art can help communicate political ideas in ways that a mass-produced mimeograph never can. Art shapes and reinforces our sense of identity. Art brings beauty to our homes and villages, and breaks up monotonous uniformity which can sometimes seep into our towns. Public investment in creative works is a no-brainer; we profit as a society and community when we invest in creativity.

**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?**

There is nothing appropriated for arts and culture in the 2014/2015 fiscal year budget for Dexter Township. However, total appropriations are 11% less than total revenues for the township; this offers us some flexibility in terms of future planning.

**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 personally in favor of publicly-funded art projects, but if elected I'll have a township board to work and compromise with through the budgeting and planning process. I will be a steadfast advocate, but will be unable to make grand executive actions on my own.

**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

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