

PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

OCTOBER 15, 2019

A meeting of the Planning and Economic Development Committee was held on Tuesday, October 15, 2019 at 7:05 p.m. in the Aldermanic Chamber.

Alderswoman Mary Ann Melizzi-Golja, Chair, presided.

Members of Committee present: Alderman-at-Large David C. Tencza
Alderman-at-Large Brandon Michael Laws
Alderman Ernest A. Jette, Vice Chair

Members not in Attendance: Alderman Jan Schmidt

Also in Attendance: Alderman-at-Large Lori Wilshire

PUBLIC COMMENT - None

PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION

Update on Collaborative Arts Marketing Committee

Overview and Update on Americans for the Arts Study – Judy Carlson, Nashua Arts Commission

Experience Nashua Arts Website and Arts Calendar – Paul Shea, Great American Downtown

Judy Carlson Thank you. My name is Judy Carlson and I am on the Nashua Art's Commission. I've been on the Nashua Art's Commission; I've been on the Commission for about 2 years but I've been involved in the Arts in Nashua for quite some time. Before I joined the Art's Commission, I was on the Board of City Arts Nashua for 5 years. I was very involved in many of the things that they do. I was the Project Manager for the mural over on Temple Street, Vivian's Dream, and did all the fundraising for that and was also the Project Manager for the restoration of the mural at the Court Street Theater and also the restoration of the Yankee Fire Diner Mural. So I did all 3 of those and raised the funds for that. I also initiated the Meri Goyette Art's Award Luncheon which is done between City Arts Nashua and the Arts Commission every year, I think it is now going into its 5th or 6th year.

When I joined the Arts Commission I decided that would be too much so I resigned from that Board and have been active on the Arts Commission heading up the marketing committee and the Workshop Committee. I'm also on the Steering Committee of the Performing Arts Center and on the new Nashua Community Arts which is the non-profit for the Performing Arts Center; I'm on that Board as well.

But about a year and a half ago, the Arts Commission has only allocated \$40,000.00 a year of which most of it goes to grants. But about 3 years ago we set aside \$5,000.00 of that money to do other things like marketing. We got a Committee together and we did a few things for marketing the Arts Commission itself and then formed what we called the Arts Marketing Steering Committee which includes myself on that Steering Committee with Lisa Bissonnette from City Arts Nashua. If any of you don't know, City Arts Nashua is very different from the other arts non-profits, it is an arts service non-profit; they don't do anything for themselves. They do things mostly for the City, in fact, if you look at all those murals I did and art works across all the organizations, they have been acting as the fiscal agent for the Performing Arts Center. They were the fiscal agent for the International Sculpture Symposium for many years.

Lisa Bissonnette is on this Steering Committee along with Paul Shea from Great American Downtown and the former marketing director from Symphony NH, which is the largest arts non-profit in Nashua, she has since taken another job but her replacement will be joining the Committee. We just added Sara Ceasar who is with United Way, she is also on the Arts Commission that is going to be joining the Committee.

Well anyway, we got together and we were trying to come up with some ideas of what can we do without spending a lot of money to make Nashua more of a destination for the arts? And that has been part of the Arts & Culture Plan that the Arts Commission put together. I think it is about 5 years ago because we are going into a new phase of updating that plan. But again we had very limited funds. The Arts Commission could put in about \$2,000.00 a year and City Arts could and Great American Downtown does but we talked about different things we could do like maybe putting some presentations together. We came up with the idea that what we really should do is a web site that would be like, you know, we call it Experience Nashua Arts, that would bring people to see all the things that Nashua has to offer in the arts.

Since the Americans for the Arts, every 5 years does a study of the economic impact of the arts; they had just released the findings. We use them to great advantage when we were putting together information to support the Performing Arts Center because what they do is they go across, every 5 years they go across the United States and towns or regions can join in with them and they measure organizations spending, they measure audience spending. Since they have been doing it for like 20 years they have these really good statistical methods that they use that do projections from that. We have never participated in it, the only cities in New Hampshire that have, have been Rochester, the Monadnock Region, Portsmouth and Concord. So we met, Mary Ann actually is also on our Steering Committee and we met with both the Economic Development Director and the Community Development Director and the Head of the Nashua Regional Planning Commission to discuss what these different options were. We all agreed that we should go ahead, see if we could get the funding together to do an off cycle study with Americans for the Arts.

Now none of the civic organizations were able to donate any money to the cause, but we actually got a matching grant from the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation and then I think 7 different members of our arts non-profit community also donated to it along with the Downtown Improvement Committee. I think that was about it, yeah there was 7 non-profits, the Downtown Improvement Committee and the grants from the Charitable Foundation. So we came up with the \$9,500.00 necessary to do it. We are expecting the results, I thought it was going in 4 to 6 weeks because we just finished up and I was going to give this report on, you know, we just finished up and who all participated and all because they told us initially it was going to be 6 to 8 weeks before the findings would come in. Well they just let me know that by the end of next week they are going to have the findings down so that is encouraging. But we decided to do it in the region rather than just Nashua because there aren't that many other non-profits but yet they are all, whenever you look at region as many of these, like the whole Monadnock Region was a regional study, we decided to add them in.

So we had 34 non-profits participated and 23 of them were in Nashua. So we have 23 arts non-profits here. Now that doesn't include any of the dance schools or the for profit organizations, photographers, people who are in the arts and culture segment, that is just the non-profits is what Americans for the Arts measure. Of all those participants, 27 organizations actually filled out the organizational study; 12 did audience surveys. It was very hard to get anybody outside of Nashua to do any of the audience studies because they are not here and I can only contact them 3 or 4 times and then that's about it, you know. But 12 did audience surveys; they were all in Nashua. Then 11 organizations did both the audience study and the organizational study.

Some of the people in the region actually did fill out the organizational study as well. So we collected 821 audience intercepts over a year. That was a whole lot of work as it was all done by volunteers. The way it works is that is a one page form that they fill out at events themselves, they have people in the audience with clipboards and at breaks or intermission they pass them out with pens and people fill them out. It doesn't take long but even still that's a lot of work in collecting them all. Luckily we didn't have to do any data entry, we just sent the forms in as is to Americans for the Arts and they did all the data entry; that was part of the price of what we paid.

Then City Arts Nashua acted as the fiscal agent and did all the collecting of the money and paying of the bills. As I said, we are supposed to get the results by the end of next week and we were planning on getting together the Steering Committee to come up with a publicity primer, who we are going to present the findings and publicize it in November, but it looks like we are going to have to move that meeting up if we are getting the results at the end of next week. So if any of you have any questions on this study, you can definitely go to Americans for the Arts and see all the data behind how they do the methodology; it is a very well established study that has been going on for 20 years. I included their logo on this little handout because I love what they say on the bottom of it, it says "Creating jobs, generating commerce, driving tourism". Really that is what the arts do and we are all anticipating seeing what Nashua's results are. I don't think we are going to come anywhere near the other organizations because our arts organizations are very few who have paid staff, they are all based on volunteers. Many of the events that we do aren't bringing people in from outside of Nashua and that is where you get a lot of spending from when there is actually tourism involved, you get a lot more spending. So that's some of the things we are looking at when we get the results in and we will be able to go out and talk to people of where the opportunities are in the future. We also wanted to do this study because we wanted a benchmark for the Performing Arts Center. We will have data now that is collected on what the economic impact is and then that will be the benchmark for when the Performing Arts Center is up and running.

The other thing we are going to get as part of the study is they have what they call a calculator which allows people who participated in the study to actually go in and see what their particular organization's economic impact is or if we want to break out just Nashua; we will see just Nashua. If they wanted to break out theirs they could do it that way, there is all sorts of ways you could work the data. They do have the calculator up on their web site that you can use if you know certain data and we actually used the calculator. We have a grant that we are in the process of applying for the Performing Arts Center. We took the data from the I guess you'd call it the budget that the operator gave us for the 3 years and when looked at when they would be up and running. And then I just took the, you have to put in the population of your community, I just took the population of the Nashua Region, that's part of the Region Planning Commission. So it's probably, I would say extremely conservative, so I took that number and I took the total expenses that were in that budget and then the attendance. It cranked out to be almost \$4 million dollars, just the center's economic impact for 1 year and I would say just a very conservative year. So if anybody has any questions before I turn it over to Paul, because he's going to talk about the other thing we were working on over the past year and that's the web site and the new arts calendar. But if anybody has any questions I'd be more than happy to answer them.

Chairwoman Melizzi-Golja

Does anyone have questions for Judy? So people have a sense of where the audiences were from, for the events where surveys that were handed out, are you able to identify even a handful of those events?

Ms. Carlson Oh sure, the majority of them came from Symphony New Hampshire who does many concerts; Peacock Players who does even more shows. We did quite a few at what was the stroll, we did the stroll, yeah.

Paul Shea So we did the Holiday Stroll, the Nu Muse Festival, I believe New England Roots, Merrimack Valley Battle of the Bands, the Farmer's Market. I think that's the extent of the Great American Downtown Events.

Ms. Carlson Right and then I would say most all of the performing non-profits here in Nashua participated. Some have smaller audiences so they didn't have the numbers, oh and Art Walk of course, the most you could put in was 50 of any one event. So Art Walk put in 50, they easily got 50 over 2 days. There was only one organization that didn't do it or 2 but everybody else came forward and put some, even the library at their concerts were collecting audience intercepts. So they really participated. How many did I say here, 12 organizations did it and they were all in Nashua.

Chairwoman Melizzi-Golja

I just think it is important for all of us and for people who are listening to know that there were some of what we may think of as the more traditional events, the Symphony and the Stroll. Then some of the other music events and Farmer's Market so you are catching kind of a cross section; people who may go to the Farmer's Market may not be somewhere else and vice versa. So I think it is important to know that we got input from people across a variety of venues here in the City.

Ms. Carlson That's very true because even when you look at the you know Bach Lunches and the things the Library does versus when we get 35,000 people swarming on us for the Stroll, that's a very different audience. So yes, we tried to get across as many as possible; both large organizations and some of the smaller ones as well.

Alderwoman Melizzi-Golja

So thank you.

Ms. Carlson You're welcome.

Alderwoman Melizzi-Golja

And for the record and for our transcriptionist, the voice you heard earlier was Paul Shea from Great American Downtown. Paul, thanks for joining us. Paul is going to do the second part of the presentation for us, so thank you.

Mr. Shea Absolutely, so I'm here to talk about the web site tonight. I don't know if it is possible to bring the screen down for that but that visual aid would help.

Ms. Carlson While Paul is getting set up I'd just like to say that this again was a joint effort. The Arts Commission paid to have cover light which they did mostly pro bono, they gave us a really good price on it. And City Arts Nashua and Great American Downtown paid for the calendar because we got a much better calendar and Great American Downtown paid getting the URL's set up. So again, this was a joint effort between the fund raising that we did within the organizations that could supply some money towards it, it all came out of the community.

Alderwoman Melizzi-Golja

As Paul is getting set up for Alderman Tencza, Jette and Laws, the Americans for the Arts Study that was done most recently that included locations in New Hampshire was what about 3 years ago, 4 years ago?

Ms. Carlson Yes it was done in 2015 through 2016 and the results were out in 2017.

Alderwoman Melizzi-Golja

So you may remember reading about it or hearing about it but you can look for it if you want to just have a sense of the background.

Ms. Carlson Right and if you look at the other handout I gave you on the second page, what I gave you is The Arts in NH it was produced by the NH State Council of Arts and they actually did a very good job of collecting all sorts of data about the state overall and what the impact of the arts, both the non-profit sectors and the for-profit sectors. If you look on the second page, there's information on the fiscal 2015 Arts &

Economic Prosperity Study with each of the regions. And it actually has I think the URL's on there where you can go to. That was publicized a lot, it was in NH Business Review and other places.

While Paul is still setting up, I'd also to thank Kath Palmer who now works for Great American Downtown. Many of you remember Kath from her years on the Telegraph. She did a miraculous job in getting all of this information together for the web site in record time. We are looking forward to showing it to all the arts organizations. We have presented this to The Arts Commission but we are waiting until the results come in from Americans for the Arts to present it to the actual community that helped do it.

Alderman Jette

So are you live yet on the web site?

Ms. Carlson Yeah if you want to go to it, it is www.experiencenashuaarts.org

Alderman Jette

Maybe for the TV audience, you may want to repeat that.

Ms. Carlson It's www.experiencenashuaarts.org or you can do .com we got both of the URL's. You will notice that the other thing that Great American Downtown is doing is that they are actually hosting this web site on their web site, which made it a lot more economical for us to put one together until we get to the point where we can afford funding to do a separate web site. So that's why when you look at the logo it looks very similar to the Downtown Nashua Logo, we did it so it would compatible when somebody jumps from ExperienceNashuaArts back or they can go from the DowntownNashua to the ExperienceNashuaArts, there's a link going both ways.

Alderman Jette

While we are waiting, does your organization provide coordination to avoid different groups scheduling their performances on the same nights, that sort of thing?

Ms. Carlson Well that's a good question. One of the things we started at the Arts Commission under the Workshop Program, 3 years ago for the first time ever we got all of the Nashua arts organizations together and had a collaborative workshop. That is an ongoing tradition. We are still not at the point where we have eliminated all conflicts because in some ways that's impossible and in some ways we may not want to. We may want to take weekends when there is more than one thing going on that are compatible and promoted as a special weekend. And we are now talking about having that workshop earlier in the year because by the time we have it, people already have their dates set and it is to collect for an overall calendar which we keep on the Arts Commission Web Site and we hand out to the media.

But that's a very valid question, something we are still working on. Of course there's a lot of concern about with the different organizations that use the Keefe, there's been difficult booking with them, because the High School always comes first, I mean the school always comes first. But it is something we are looking at even moving up earlier so we can avoid it as much as possible or plan together to have a special weekend where more than one thing is happening. We have learned that oftentimes when there is more than one thing on a weekend, that's a good thing, not a bad thing. For example Peacock Players is opening the production this weekend, their latest show. They have done that before on Art Walk Weekend, they opened Willy Wonka Art Walk Weekend and they are sorts of special events during Art Walk with the characters coming out. And then they also promote Art Walk as Art Walk after dark and promote going to the show. So it has worked out well in many instances and it gets all the different arts organizations together talking to each other and communicating with each other.

Alderwoman Melizzi-Golja

Thank you. I think Paul it up and we are ready. Of course the information we needed was right under Paul's left hand because it was on the keyboard where he was resting his hand. So if you are caught in a jam now you know where to look.

Mr. Shea So thank you so much for having us here to show off this web site and talk about the value of the arts here in Nashua. We have been working on this for a good bit of time, perhaps a year and a half. More recently with the addition of Kath Palmer to the Great American Downtown staff, it is really has come a long way in a shorter period of time. So we have been working collaboratively with the Nashua Arts Commission, City Arts Nashua, Symphony NH and a variety of other folks to take input and to work to build up the concept for this site. When you think about cities in NH and reasons to visit them, you look at Portsmouth and a big draw there is the history and the seacoast; they lean heavily into that. You think about Concord, NH and just the Capital of the State and all the activity that comes with that along with their performing arts venues are big attractants.

When we think about Nashua we think about the arts as one of the stronger aspects of Nashua as a place to visit. We believe that kind of building a site where we can highlight all of that because there are such a diverse group of organizations that are putting on great content that people might like to visit and come check out. Having all that information into one place and hopefully we will work in the near future to have a complimentary publicity effort around the web site, all of that combined will help to drive engagement and help to drive visits here in the City.

So the concept that we have come up with is the ExperienceNashuaArts web site. So you can go to ExperienceNashuaArts.org or .com. We have also acquired ExperienceNashua.org and .com in case someone forgets to leave that last word on there when they go to type in the URL and it will help them to land on the right site.

So this web site, as Judy said, it is a micro-site that lives within the DowntownNashua.org web site; it helps us to leverage the infrastructure of the web site including the build, the theme, the navigation and hosting, etc. to kind of give us an economic opportunity to build this site for not a great cost. If we were to build this site out from scratch we might be looking at somewhere in the ballpark of \$4,000.00 to \$6,000.00 but with support from the Nashua Arts Commission, we have basically produced this site, not including the regular subscription to the calendar item, but we built it for under \$1,000.00 which is a great use of funds.

So this site is developed in a way that it provides a window into various facets of our arts community. When you land on it, the first thing that pops up is a featured events slider. So this uses the calendar functionality of the web site to parse out a handful of hand selected, high profile arts events that we want to make sure that people get in front of their eyes when they land here on the web site. So things like Symphony Concert, some of the larger festivals that are coming up and some of the new and exciting things that are happening here in the City.

As you scroll down, it provides you the opportunity to jump to the full arts calendar. So we have created, and by we, I truly mean Kath Palmer, has created a navigation within the calendar that parses out all arts oriented events. So not only do we have a full central community calendar where people can contribute content, but as the event is submitted and reviewed and approved on our end, Kath identifies the arts oriented events to tag them specifically and we can parse out an arts calendar. So when you click on this it will go to that and I'll show that in a moment. We also have music, theater, galleries and public art, the display on the monitor here is a little funny so the theater with the white and the yellow is not showing up quite as well as it does on a mobile device or a laptop if you will.

When we go to the music page it brings you to various vignettes of organizations that produce music type events and programming. It gives you a nice little splashy welcome along with if you would like to find something immediate and find live music tonight, this will bring you to a listings. The listings is actually

broken out to just display and this is part of a bigger listings application within the web site, but it breaks out the venues that you might be likely to find live music at as well as the organizations in the city that produce live music. So if someone is looking for live music tonight that is their set of likely options, and as you scroll down further we've got the Nu Muse Festival, Street Pianos and New England Roots Festival. We've got the First Music Concert Series which is a really great series in a beautiful church up at the of Main Street; the Granite Statesmen. We've got the Merrimack Valley Flute Choir, Nashua Chamber Orchestra, and so each of these organizations are featured, there is a brief description of what they are all about. Then someone can navigate through to either their web site or if they have a social media presence, we have also linked that too. We've got the Public Library, Summer Fun, we've got a nice big break out feature for Symphony NH, they have got a lot great content and great programming so we brought that front and center there. So that's the music site.

The Theater Site, as you may know, Nashua has an abundance of community theater programming put on by a variety of organizations. The shows are really extraordinary, even the Peacock Players whose Youth Theater, they have a professional mentality and do two week run, they try to put the kids through the full professional experience and the quality of the productions really show that. The Actorsingers, fills Keefe Auditorium and brings in big audiences for really great shows. So we've got the Actorsingers featured here.

Ms. Carlson I'd just like to add that both the Actorsingers and especially Peacock Players constantly win at the New Hampshire Theater Awards every year; they are very professional organizations and do very quality productions.

Mr. Shea I think I went once a couple of years ago to the NHTA's and they won 8 awards that night so they really are a feather in our cap so to speak. So we've got the Nashua Theater Guild featured, we've also got the Peacock Players and should additional organizations come and go from time to time, we've had a number of different good groups, Genesis Theater, Stage Coach Productions. If they come back into production, we can go ahead and add a feature for them as well. So that is our community theater page.

Ms. Carlson Then each of them also have links to where you can purchase tickets and find out more about each of the productions.

Mr. Shea Yes so if we click through, someone is on the web site, they see Peacock Players and they'd like to check out what they've got coming up it will go right through. Clever Light build their web site quite recently and it really came out nicely so it's a great thing. We also work with these community theater groups and various arts groups and each year the Arts Commission will host an Arts Publicity Work Shop. We will be doing that again soon; we will get together and share with folks how they can take advantage of the web site, walk them through how to submit calendar items so that not only are we kind of cultivating this content and bringing it into the web site, but organizations will also contributed. And they do; we've got a lot of great content submitted by Symphony NH, Nashua Chamber Orchestra, Actorsingers, Peacock Players, the list goes on. They are already actively engaged with the calendar functionality, which is great.

We also have a Galleries tab. The Galleries tab is a break out within the listings and so this is a set of arts galleries, both public outdoor galleries as well as private shops and non-profit galleries. So if somebody is looking to check out the galleries in the city. It also gives you this little map so if you are walking about downtown and you are on your mobile browser there, you can kind of see where you are on the map and you can also see where you might be able to check out galleries in relation to your location.

We also have the Public Art page which is semi-under-construction so we are working with the City GIS Department. Judy and a lot of folks, Positive Street Art have put in a lot of great content and submitted it, Nashua International Sculpture Symposium, to help populate this map that is a GIS tool. So we have the ability to and it is being refreshed right now so that's why this static image that demonstrates what the map will look. But we will have the ability to imbed an interactive map within this page that GIS has built. It gives you two main ways to organize the data.

If you click on murals and street art it will bring you to a map that looks like this and it will identify the location of all of these different pieces of public art work. You can click on the image on the map or on this item right here, and it will break out to give you more information. Once that, we've been working with Pam in GIS and so once that is updated on the back end within the map application, we will update this content to have that loaded up on the web site too.

We have just recently been awarded a grant to support a public art tour that uses the mobile app districts and so what we are working to do is organize a set of two interactive public art tours. One along Main Street primarily; and one that will be through the Riverwalk area, it'll be a little bit more of a physical challenge to do that tour. But what we are hoping to accomplish is having two sets of tours that are digestible in 60 to 90 minutes and use the district's functionality to create this tour in a way that as you are using the mobile application and you approach the object in the real world, it will trigger your app with a special blue tooth beacon that's located near the piece of public art work. Then it will play an audio track for you so similar to a museum, self-guided audio tour, but with a little bit of an automated function in that as you approach the item the description starts to play automatically. So we will be doing that in Spanish and English and that will be linkable through this page as well.

Alderwoman Melizzi-Golja

And Paul if I may, we think of public art be it the murals, other street art and the sculptures that we have from the Sculpture Symposium, I think many of us who live in Nashua just kind of take them for granted like "OH yeah that's great, we had the Sculpture Symposium and we have 3 more sculptures" or "OH that's great we have another mural". But it is art that so accessible, you don't have to pay \$50 for a ticket, you can come and enjoy it so it draws people here just if nothing else for the fact that they can enjoy that but there's no price of admission. And earlier this summer we actually saw a couple taking pictures in front of murals and they were here checking out the murals and getting photos of themselves in front of all of the murals. They were from Lowell or Lawrence I can't remember which. But they had come up here because they had heard about the murals. So I think that they, even though it's free to access it and experience it, it still supports economic vitality downtown if they are coming, you know, they have a cup of coffee afterwards or they say "OH I'm going to come back here and we will have dinner or we will stay for lunch" or whatever. It is generating familiarity in a way that you don't have to commit; it's not like paying \$30 to go into a museum. I can come, I can experience it and then maybe I'll come back and do something else if I have a good experience. So I think what you are talking about doing with the district is great. Yes, Judy?

Ms. Carlson I think, you know, I just want to reinforce what you are saying that there's a lot of anecdotal evidence and even some statistical evidence that cities that have public art are places where people want to visit and want to live. Because it actually shows that people who live in those cities care about them and they care about the quality of life and that public art makes art experiences available to everybody. Nashua just two years ago was awarded by the NH State Council of the Arts, they are awarded at the Governor's Awards every year of being New Hampshire's most creative community. It was for a variety of reasons, I mean we are home to Symphony New Hampshire, Peacock Players and the fact that we do have a very active library and Summer Fun and on top of all that, you know, Great American Town Hall they do and City Arts with Art Walk which is the largest arts festival in Southern NH.

But the public art was a big part of it and many people do not know that we have more public art in Nashua than anywhere in New Hampshire, probably cumulatively in New Hampshire. It is a draw when people learn about it so that's one of the things that we are going to make sure that we get out there, is knowing these kind of things. We are going to be working with the New Hampshire Bureau of Tourism as well when we get together after the results come out and we could our publicity and presentation plan together.

Alderman Wilshire

I just wanted to say this is great, you know, you have people that come into town and say “Hey what can we do this weekend”. Just go to the site, I mean it’s all there, I think this is wonderful and kudos to you who put it together.

Mr. Shea Yeah it’s really been a group effort and to kind of jump on with what Mary Ann was saying about a couple being down here taking pictures; we had a couple who was up from New Jersey. They were exploring historic ballparks and they popped into the office and they said “Hey you know we’ve got 45 minutes what can we do”. And we were like “Well we are actually working on this little art tour”, we have these sheets of paper that are kind of the handouts that we show to our board for the samples. So we photocopied them, gave them these little snippets of public art that they could check out in the short time that they were here and they were out there. And absolutely it is a big driver in engagement on a number of fronts.

Ms. Carlson And I think 3 or 4 years ago Kathy Hersh and I when we were both on the Board of City Arts Nashua, we put together a little tour for the Chamber’s Leadership Group that they’ve been using every year. It was just paper and then Kathy would go along on the tour or somebody would and give all the background on each of the sculptures and each of the murals. But you know, people are very interested in public art. You drive around a city and you know it stops your eye. My sister lives in Philadelphia and they have more public art in Philadelphia than anywhere because they actually had a huge, long-standing program where they have hundreds of murals on the wall. They had apprentices from the University of Arts working with known artists from around the country doing these murals and it is something that defines Philadelphia as well. So the more art you have, you know, you could go to Cambridge and yes they have more public art than we do in Cambridge but they also have a required percentage for the arts in Cambridge which nobody in NH has. So it is really quite an amazing feat that through this whole public and civic and private collaboration that we do in Nashua where non-profits and the public get together and help do the fundraising and help place these things around the City. We have been so successful in that collaboration and that’s why we were recognized by the State Council of the Arts.

Alderman Jette

When you talk about the economic impact of the arts in Nashua, I can’t help but feel that the people that benefit the most from the economic impact are the restaurants and the bars and that type of commercial establishment. I see that you’ve got a listing for them on this web site. Have you tried to or do you charge them for listing or charge them for advertising on the web site?

Mr. Shea What you are talking about is the break out to listing. So because this is a micro-site within the Great American Downtown Web Site, when you go to click to some of the other items on the navigation you will come out of the ExperienceNashuaArts page to the DowntownNashua.org page. So in the listings we work with the downtown restaurants and shops each year to produce the Taste of Downtown and that event generates about \$32,000.00 in income about a net of \$27,000.00 to support our programming and operations. We do partner with the restaurants and shops on a number of different things throughout the year.

So for us to have a nice robust set of listings where they are included there, I think it is a nice give back for what they do to support us. We do, we have the ability to feature listings within that, so when someone goes to restaurants, you will see that there are a couple that appear as featured. What we do is leverage the ability to feature the listings as a value ad for sponsorships for various programs. So you will see Riverside BBQ is up there and they have supported the outdoor music festivals and have helped to fund some of the audio production for performances. So though we have that ability and it is something we have considered, we do want to include all of the downtown businesses and then use the feature to give back for either sponsorship or some other kind of in-kind value that they give.

In addition to various listings on this Homepage here, we have also added within the listings the location of the city's parking lots so that people can jump right to that. We have also added and we've got some work to do to populate it but we've also added a section where people can find hotels. So though within the Great American Downtown Web Site, a lot of the listings and focus are downtown centric in the context of the ExperienceNashuaArts web site, we have gone broader in our focus to include the whole Nashua community. In a similar fashion, because of course there are no hotels downtown yet, right?

Alderwoman Melizzi-Golja

Not that we know of.

Mr. Shea Not that we know of, we will be going broader with including opportunities for lodging. One of the things that we have talked about is a possible way to fund the long-term hosting cost and various other costs and perhaps even some proportion of the collaborative marketing effort that will continue. We have talked about perhaps monetizing the hotel listings to have features. So right now, we have the ability to really build these out with a lot of great photos and in a way that kind of brings prominence to that particular listing. So as we continue to build the site and look for creative ways to leverage it, to allow us to do more, that along with other ways of using the featured tool will be something that we will look to.

Ms. Carlson We are also looking into not only hotels but Nashua has a number of bed & breakfasts as well. Some of them are close to downtown and we will probably be including those as well.

Alderwoman Melizzi-Golja

If I may, I know Alderman Tencza and Alderman Laws want to speak but just to add to the economic impact piece, I think naturally we jump to restaurants in terms of where the impact is. Paul mentioned parking so there will be some parking revenue. But the other thing is if for every event people are printing programs and hopefully they are doing it locally, using our local printers, there is a need for technical people be it for sound and light and so they are hopefully contracting with local people. There may be people in search of businesses that are working overtime, so there's that piece of the economic impact also that goes a little deeper into the community that isn't always a natural association and beyond restaurants and lodging. So when you look at the Arts Alive and the American for the Arts studies that were done and they look at the impact of the arts, from an economic perspective, they break out some of these other things.

You know, you are out and I am going to buy a new tie, or I'm going to buy a new handbag or I'm going to buy a new pair of shoes. Or I happen to be somewhere shopping and I see something I really like that I don't see in my community. So there is kind of that ripple effect and as Judy mentioned, we are finding that if we do multiple things at one time we keep people here. We maybe have a greater diversity of people and the longer they are here the more they may end up spending too. So we are in the process, I think, of looking at that a little deeper, but also from what we have heard from other communities; there is that bigger impact and that is what we are also thinking about. Judy?

Ms. Carlson You even think about all the plays that are put on and set building and going down to Home Depot and buying you know supplies to build their sets. I mean it just goes on endlessly when you think of what the organizational spending is to produce these kind of things that they do; there is all that economic impact because they are buying all of these things locally.

Alderwoman Melizzi-Golja

Right. Alderman Jette wanted a follow up and then Alderman Tencza.

Alderman Jette

I was just trying to make the point that this web site is an opportunity for people to make people aware of what they are selling and I think it is advertising in a way and I would think it would be an opportunity for them to pay something for the benefit that they are receiving by being listed on the web site and people being pointed to their businesses.

Ms. Carlson I think that's a good point and once it is up and running and we have some data on how many people are looking at it we may well look at that as an opportunity.

Mr. Shea And just to circle back to the contribution because that is a very valid point that restaurants especially but a broad set of small businesses benefit from these programs. If you were to estimate the value of product donated for the Taste of Downtown per restaurant it is probably somewhere in the ballpark of \$600.00 to \$800.00 that they put forward, not including the man hours that go into it. Then if you look at an event like the Dinner on Main Street, you've got chefs that are probably giving somewhere in the ballpark of 60 hours each to the process, donating some product. So we do get a great amount of support; it's certainly a 2-way street.

Alderman Tencza

Thank you. The web site looks fantastic, it really looks like it's going to be a great resource for the arts community and downtown. You talked a little bit about a broader marketing plan. I travel up to Concord a lot for work and I stop at the rest area on 93. They have the rack cards there and I see rack cards for places in Concord and Manchester, they even have one there for the prison industry's shop. You can get more information about that than you can about what is going on in downtown Nashua. So I am just kind of curious, I think the web site is great and will be a resource for people on-line who are in town looking for things to do. I don't think this is necessarily, I think it's a much broader discussion about what the City can be doing to market itself and not just from the arts community perspective. But have you had discussions, are there things going that I just don't know about?

Alderwoman Melizzi-Golja

I would say this discussion has been going on back as far as our previous Economic Development Director back then. I have the same concerns you have to the point where I have pulled things from the racks and brought them back here and said, "What is this". I think Judy can tell you a little bit about the ins and outs of getting things up there. But it certainly is something we are very well aware of and recognize that we need to have a bigger presence up there. Judy?

Ms. Carlson Yes when we did our first collaborative arts meeting with all the arts organizations, it was facilitated by Ginnie Lupi, who is the Director of the State Council on the Arts. We came up with a little laundry list and high on the laundry list were rack cards up in Concord and the other places and local hotels. It is on our list, we just prioritized our list because we have such limited funds and all of this is done by volunteers who have other full time jobs plus and now that we have the American for the Arts Study done and this web site well along its way, it's high on the list of priorities. I remember I had some discussion with the City and it looks like we may be able to print them through the City's printing. It is just a matter of sitting down and working out how we are going to do it, are we going to it by music are we going to do it by these categories? We now have a web site because we had to have a web site they could go to before we even did these kinds or any of these kinds of handouts. But it is high on the list and there are some complications about getting them around and stocked. But it all doable and it is high on our list and part of what we would be doing is meeting with the Department of Tourism and they have other ideas, they have their own web site that we can, they have bus tours that we can piggyback with. I mean there are all sorts of exciting things we can do and that's going to be on the agenda of not only how are we going to publicize what we've done with the study and the web site, but what comes next? What are the plans for what comes next?

Alderwoman Melizzi-Golja

And if I remember correctly, part of getting information at those sites is getting it approved, it has to go through the State to be approved to be up there before we can put it there. And I know a number of years ago the emphasis seemed to be on sports and outdoor recreation and that seems to be shifting. So you see more things about the arts and events up there. But for a number of years, what I was told was the interest was really on having information up there about recreation and sports and those sorts of opportunities.

Ms. Carlson Yeah that has changed a lot with the new economic development director at the State Level and also the requirements are a lot easier than they have been in the past. So we have been looking into all those things.

Alderman Tencza

Just a follow up again I mean I don't think it should fall on the Nashua Arts Commission to be doing this necessarily. I think it should be part of a larger, strategic plan for the City because it is a lot of different businesses and organizations benefit from that work. So I would think it's something that the City could work on, on behalf of the business community and try to promote that and just as a service that we would provide. So I am hoping that we make some progress on that and it benefits everybody and it would seem to me that at some point the City should think about hiring some type of marketing firm to do some marketing for us. They would be responsible for getting the rack cards out there and doing all of that so it is something to think about in the next budget cycle or so.

Alderwoman Melizzi-Golja

Right, right and I think your last few words, "in the next budget cycle" in any budget cycle I think that is critical and I think that what this project that we are hearing about tonight does is what I think we do well in Nashua, we collaborate well. So I think this is giving us a nice base and now for the City to maybe collaborate in that marketing piece using this to provide some baseline information and help organize it is a natural next step, if the funds allow it. I think when you look at the strategic planning goals that the board has adopted, this very nicely fits in to several of those goals. Alderman Laws has been waiting patiently and I did not forget.

Alderman Laws

First off thank both of you, I think too few people appreciate or at least are aware that there are citizens like you who are dedicating so much of their lives to making the City better and it really means a lot to me and I'm sure means a lot to everybody else in here. So anecdotally the last 20 years of bartending, at least 50% of the time the phone rings at the bar, it is someone asking me if we have live music that night, right? Then every time I've been on a web site similar to this in another city it is because I'm traveling there and I'm Googling you know what is there to do? Where is the live music? So I am wondering if there is a plan in the future to kind of coordinate all of the live music of the local area restaurants and bars. It also would be a great way to generate traffic to the web site because people, you know, that's one of the main things that people would be searching for, right? That would bring them to you?

Mr. Shea Yes so one of the things that we do to complement our marketing effort in addition to managing the web site is we cultivate a newsletter that goes out each week that features somewhere, I'd say between 5 and 8 live music performances, you know, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday night. What we do have the ability to do within this web site is accept submissions and it is one of those things where we can put the word out there and make people aware of the opportunity. But the extent to which they leverage it, you know, is another conversation. I believe that we will renew our efforts to make businesses aware of the opportunity that exists within the community calendar.

We will continue to put out the newsletter which really is and that is something that Kath each week goes through, Facebook events, she will go to various businesses that have live music, go to their web sites, check their calendar and kind of cultivate a nice bit of content for people and yeah it is a really great thing. It is especially important to support that aspect of Nashua's nightlife because you know it's a tough business. The more that we can do to kind of highlight that stuff and the more that it thrives, the better off we will be overall.

Ms. Carlson Right and that's that live music button is right on the top of the music section where you can actually go and see what is playing where at the different venues. That's why we have this bar on the bottom where you can subscribe to Great American Downtown's Newsletter, City Arts Nashua does a very similar newsletter as well where they collect and once a week put out a newsletter on what is what, excuse me they put it out once a month, Great American Downtown does it once a week right? So there are 2 opportunities to subscribe where you are going to see a lot of this stuff. We all know that you know the night life in Nashua calls a lot of people in and that's why we made sure that that button was right at the top.

Mr. Shea If I may I just want to speak to Alderman Tencza's question in regard to a broader marketing effort. If you haven't had the opportunity the City Service Advisory Committee, which preceded the Downtown Improvement Committee, it was set up with I believe the intention to be the organization that is engaged with the central business service district which was determined after kind of studying the issue that because of the height of buildings in downtown Nashua there is not the density of property value like Manchester has that lends well to the central business service district. The additional miniscule tax on these properties that builds up and then helps to fund services more locally, anyway, I'll dial it back. The Service Advisory Committee generated this great report in 2010 called "Cultivating Vitality" and we have made great strides since that report was published through various efforts, including the Downtown Improvement Committee, including the Nashua Arts Commission, including the development of City Arts & Culture Plan which is in the process of being refreshed I understand.

The Cultivating Vitality document recommended an increase in support for community events which I believe the amount was \$70,000.00 in all sources combined. Over the past 4 years or so the City has pretty much gotten up to the point where across various bits of funding and support for different organizations and efforts, we've gotten to the recommended mark in that section of the report. The other recommendation was for a \$50,000.00 to \$60,000.00 amount of funding to be set aside for marketing effort. So though the Arts Commission has kind of led this initiative to bring more marketing about with the shoe string budget, we do have a lot of room to grow there and that planning document really gives some good support and food for thought in that area as well as a lot of other areas, it has a lot of great insight. So if you haven't read that, that would be a good thing to request and check it out.

Ms. Carlson Right and if you go to the existing Arts & Culture Plan there's a whole section on marketing it with recommendations. We all have felt and the Arts Community have felt that none of our arts communities by themselves can afford to market very much. In fact many of the grants we give out, and the Arts Commission has a limit of \$5,000.00 per organization as a max grant they can get, we only have \$35,000.00 that we give out every year. And I would say over the years now, I would say close to 75% of that money goes to marketing in the individual organizations because they know the importance of it. It has been said over and over again in all the meetings we have is "What do we need most" – get the word out that Nashua is a destination for the arts. We need marketing support, so anything that the City could do to look at that because you can't come up with a real comprehensive plan unless you do hire an agency that has the experience in marketing cities and marketing events. There are plenty of them around and to do it right we would need to go to that level. But until we can, until the funding is there, we are going to do the best we can with what we have to move it forward as much as we can.

Alderwoman Melizzi-Golja

Thank you. Any other questions or comments?

Mr. Shea One more piece, I'd just like to show the arts calendar page. So this is a great tool, Judy found the plug in for this through the Monadnock Arts Alive web site and we've adopted the tool and made it our own. For this it is the arts calendar break out. And so we have a featured slider at the top and then as you get in to it, a lot of different community submitted content. And so we've got Chamber Orchestra, the Adams Family, All That Sass is a dance class at the Arlington Street Community Center. And then all sorts of other great contents, that class happens a lot.

As we bring this tool to more people to contribute to it and I especially like the idea of getting the places that host live music to engage with this; the content will become more diverse. But as it is, we've already got some great stuff on there. Then there's the broader calendar, and so if someone goes to the Community Calendar, again there's the featured slider there and then there's even more content. So we actually pull from the Arlington Street Community Center on the City Web Site, we pull from the Make IT Labs calendar automatically. We pull from various city committees that might be tied in, Downtown Nashua Arts Commission meetings appear here, Downtown Improvement Committee meetings appear here and so and so forth.

So it is a really great tool not just for people, the calendar, not just for people in the arts community but in a broader sense it is really a community resource.

Alderman Laws

If someone is watching this and they are interested in having their information added to the calendar, can they just contact you from the link on the web site?

Mr. Shea Absolutely. And they can even, they don't even need to reach to a person, which is great for us because we only have so much time. But they can go ahead and go to either the Arts Calendar or they can go to DowntownNashua.org/calendar and either way, if they click on this and submit an event, it will give them the ability to set up their own account within Timely, which is the calendar resource that we use. Then they can submit their content, edit their content. If you have like some sort of ticket link, it has the ability to include the ticket link within your posting, you can put engaging graphics and then all of that goes through Kath Palmer. She will get an e-mail; it will say so and so has submitted this event, she goes to it, gives it a glance, makes sure that it is appropriate for the calendar. We will get some very peculiar stuff from way outside of town so they've just got to submit it and usually within 2 to 3 business days we will have the opportunity to review it and it will go right up on to the calendar here.

Alderman Wilshire

I'm very excited about this. I think it is wonderful. I think it's good for the organization that have things to promote, that it is all there in one place. I think it is great. Thank you for doing this, all of you.

Alderwoman Melizzi-Golja

And I would just say listening to those discussions, it really has been a collaborative effort and Paul alluded to this balancing of we are doing things for the area but yet it is Great America Downtown is kind of the focus really of the parent organization. But I think there's been a nice balance of downtown and the area and working it together. I know that's been a result of your effort working with folks to bring that about. So thank you. This is Judy. Judy I realize you have not been introducing yourself, so for the transcriptionist, this is Judy Carlson's voice. Yes?

Ms. Carlson I really want to thank all the people who have participated in that and we have to thank the Great American Downtown Board too because Paul had to go to his Board because they are very focused on just downtown Nashua.

And before we even decided that we would use them to host this web site, he had to go and get permission that it was okay with his Board because what we are doing is a bit broader than what the focus of the Board is. So it was very generous of their Board to do that.

I also want to thank Mary Ann for being a member of this Committee; it has made a big difference because it is acknowledgement by the City that arts and culture are important to any city to its economic growth to have somebody involved on the Board of Aldermen and Economic & Planning and Development on the Steering Committee. So I want to thank you as well.

Alderwoman Melizzi-Golja

It is my pleasure. Thank you. Thank you for all of your efforts and I know, I said to Judy, “Are we still meeting” and she’s like, “Yeah we are just doing all this behind the scenes work”. So I know there has been a lot of work going on and thank you to everyone who was out there collecting the information and working with audiences to make sure we got some nice samples of input to put the report together. So I thank both of you for your leadership in this. Do we have anything else for our speakers.

COMMUNICATIONS - None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS - None

NEW BUSINESS – None

PUBLIC COMMENT - None

REMARKS BY THE ALDERMEN - None

POSSIBLE NON-PUBLIC SESSION - None

ADJOURNMENT

**MOTION BY ALDERMAN LAWS TO ADJOURN
MOTION CARRIED**

The meeting was declared adjourned at 8:22 p.m.

Alderwoman Melizzi-Golja pro tem
Committee Clerk