

Healdsburg Community Conversation on the Arts

8/3/2017

Public Commentary

These are recorded comments from the community about the future of public art that were taken at the City of Healdsburg's Community conversation about the arts event on August 3rd, 2017. Many of the attendees at the community meeting were arts supporters, artists, or representatives of local arts non-profits.

Publicly stated comments:

- Community benefit grants typically serve social needs first, smaller part used for the arts. Maybe a higher percentage of the community benefit/development grants could be dedicated to funding the arts?
- City has been expanding in all ways, except for the arts. We need to make sure enough of the city's growth is being directed towards the arts
- Arts education should be an important part of this conversation
- Let's create a community creative space for artists to use as needed and that's open to the public. This space should open, filled with light, and friendly to experimental ideas.
- City charges nonprofit arts organizations for events, maybe that shouldn't be the case. We can eliminate red tape and some financial roadblocks connected to the city
- City needs to build a plan for how to consistently generate enough income to fund whatever arts planning project it pursues.
- Don't forget our kids. Whatever happens we need to grow more artists and art historians through our schools.
- Healdsburg Education Foundation has people very interested in donating a lot of money to the arts but don't know how to best do so
- Carmel has a fantastic arts community that we could use as a model for developing our own arts community here in Healdsburg
- We need to focus on communicating why the arts are important and relevant, not just on supporting the arts
- We should help Healdsburg Center for the Arts grow because it's already been such a valuable asset to the community
- People happy about the success of Art After Dark, so let's create more events like that
- Create an arts information services for visitors in our hotels, and a separate arts info service tailored for locals

- We need Healdsburg community members outside the City government to formally support the arts
- Non-profit arts organizations and for profit galleries need to work together to advocate for more art funding because it works in both their interests
- Policy guiding arts commission needs to be strong and diverse in supporting different genres of art and arts funding mechanisms. We need to be sure to not favor one type or source of art over others. This has been a problem with public art programs in the past as well.
- Have city operated grant program to help fund local arts non-profits, artists, arts education, and community based art
- We need a detailed master plan for visual art such as one that specifies where sculpture will be placed and what the guidelines for approving public visual art are.
- Raven Performing Arts Theater was born out of the original Healdsburg Arts Council because performing arts weren't being well served. We need to make sure that all arts groups are served equally well.
- Healdsburg Arts Council did a great job incubating and supporting the early versions of the Raven Performing Arts Theater, Healdsburg Center for the Arts, and Healdsburg Literary Guild.
- Arts should be representative of the community it comes from. We need to create and sponsor art that reflects the cultures and history of our region and its residents
- Healdsburg has a distinct identity from other places in Sonoma County and Northern California. This distinct identity is something we need to hold on to.
- Who will control arts administration? Which specific people/non-profit groups/city agencies are going to be in direct control of the public arts administration?
- We need an arts oversight group who would make sure there is equal funding for sub-genres of art. It would be easy for one medium or type of art to get more funding than other types of art that isn't usually associated with being public art.
- There needs to be a specific financial structure set up for the dispersal of funds for public art to make sure it's being spread evenly and getting to the appropriate arts non-profit organizations.
- Arts funding needs to be distributed equally among art genres or groups will fight over it. These conflicts will hinder progress on developing the arts in our community.
- City has so far been mainly working with Voigt Sculpture Fund and Healdsburg Center for the Arts, but are there other local arts nonprofits the city could partner with?
- We need affordable studio space to rent for artists. Is there any way the city can help to create and fund this?

- Art can't support itself, the city and community must help provide for them. We need to be able to recognize this and help create widespread community support for the arts in addition to fully funding the arts
- Art enhances quality of life for tourists and locals alike, so it boosts our economy while still making a nicer and more livable town for locals
- Art is always at the bottom of the list of funding priorities, and that should change since we have become a wealthier town. We have more flexibility in what we are now able to fund, and we should take advantage of this.
- Artists need a lot of help with promoting themselves and their art. Maybe the city could fund or support this promotion, as several cities have similar programs already. Art Trails is a good example of how civic arts promotion can be successful
- We should make sure people know art exists in Healdsburg (both residents and tourists). What do tourists want to do after wine tasting, and what do locals do after work? Concerts/theater/etc.
- Create an arts bulletin board in the heart of town that promotes and announces artistic events that are occurring in Healdsburg, similar to the city bulletin board that's currently located in the Plaza
- City should help promote the arts community/industry that already exists here
- Get tourists and residents visiting art studio, similarly to how Art Trails operates.
- Create a link between art and tourism. Can we recruit wealthy people here as art buyers/dealers?
- Make art a secondary tourism industry
- Create an affordable community studio space
- Arts commission needs to know how to approach philanthropist and arts benefactors
- Criteria for how to appraise public art proposals is missing
- We need to start with a statement of purpose, then create a mission, and then write a strategy before we pursue more funding
- Are there other examples of regional arts funding structures similar to Creative Sonoma?
- The city needs a process for evaluating proposed a public art projects, and the community needs a way to provide input on these proposals
- Should we prioritize temporary or permanent art?
- 1% or 2% to public art from value of new developments is a good idea
- We are unsure about a multi county consortium
- Arts are important for a healthy tourism economy, improves quality of life and is a tourism source that is accessible for all ages
- Good art can't pay for itself, we need to make the conscious decision to support it and pay for it as a city and as a community

Suggestions from comment cards:

- Let's promote philanthropic giving to art through the city website
- It might be helpful to define separate working groups to sign up for with different topics under the arts umbrella, rather than just one
- Can Healdsburg do something similar to Sebastopol's Art Trails/Art Center to support and promote local artists?
- Can part of the Transient Occupancy Tax go to help support the arts?
- We should seek nationally available money to support the arts by hiring a professional grant writer to gather grant money for the town's non-profits
- We should make sure we are supporting youth arts, creating a community arts space, and subsidizing art classes for at risk youth
- The city needs to promote arts equally with wine and hotels as a tourism industry and revenue source
- Start a citizens group to develop purpose, goals for the arts community and then seek funding, not the other way around
- There should be a central bulletin board promoting arts events in Healdsburg
- We should model more arts events like the successful Tuesday concert series, which has been popular partly because it happens so regularly. We should also promote more local bands at the concert series.
- Important to have a structure/business plan that allows equality in supporting all arts groups and genres. Remember that Healdsburg Art, Food, and Wine Festival is happening in June 2018.
- The Healdsburg Trust for Art in combination with an arts council is a good idea to help support for profit and nonprofit art interests. We can also have a fundraiser to help support Healdsburg Trust for art.
- Yes to the idea of an arts maker space
- Could be interesting to have an annual arts fundraiser/festival similar to one that occurs in St. Helena
- We should support more classical music performance
- Would be great if the City hired someone to be the point person for developing art in Healdsburg