



Town Council Candidate Survey Results

Arts Night Plus sent the following 3 survey questions to all 26 Town Council candidates. By deadline time, 21 responded. Their views are reproduced below with At Large followed in order by District number.

AT LARGE

Alisa Brewer

1. What role do you think the arts can play as an economic driver for downtown business?

Where are the tour buses? Surely we have enough things for people to do a day trip here to experience one or more art performance or installation plus a meal. There would be time for them to shop a bit, as well. When I come downtown for Arts Night Plus, I usually join one or more friends for a beverage or a light meal at the beginning or the end of the Arts Night Plus hours. Cross promoting certain meals or relating offerings to exhibits could be fun. I would be happy to know that I could combine dinner and an arts event on a particular night of the week (below).

2. What opportunities do you see for arts and culture in Amherst that have yet to be realized?

More businesses could stay open one Thursday a month to cross promote on Arts Night Plus. Live vocal and instrumental music performances somewhere downtown every single week on a certain day of the week, so if you want to hear live music, you know Saturday (for example) is the day, but poetry readings are always on Tuesdays.

Not all art and culture opportunities have to be jury quality; small take away crafts, mandala coloring, chalk drawing, face painting, youth buskers, short youth-made video clips at the Amherst Cinema, and karaoke could be complimentary offerings. Arts Night Plus is not family friendly, so adding a single component each month that is family friendly would enable families to grow with the programming over time.

Additional temporary (could be up to a year, perhaps) public art installations, similar to XTCA: Cross Town Contemporary Art.

I am definitely supportive of a more defined downtown performance space, where people could plan to check out what musicians are playing, but loathe to assume it will be the Central Fire Station, as that may not be the best use of that building or lot. An agreement with the Masonic Hall for a few years would be fantastic.

3. How can we attract more arts and culture tourism in Amherst that will benefit the downtown?

We have done Museums 10 and other efforts, and made numerous partnerships with regional tourism bodies and chambers of commerce. Perhaps a renewed focus on types of art and culture tours: literary, walking trails, botany, instrumental vs. vocal music, poetry vs. dance, families with small children, date night for adults, etc. Not that those things are opposed, but rather that aficionados of a subtype of art or culture might have their attention grabbed by very focused marketing. The event listings in Hampshire Life and the Amherst Bulletin are better organized again now, but still suffer from overload.

Offer more self-guided electronic tours on phones and tablets, for example of the Judith

Inglese ceramic murals found throughout downtown. Such tours need not be super elaborate and should not require ear buds/head phones but also offer text descriptions. If you spend some time looking for a series of pieces, you're likely to spend some money in businesses along the way. Offer free guided tours of some combination of architectural features, local history, and public art on a regular basis, so residents know they can bring visitors on a certain day of the month, in addition to tourists actively looking for things to do.

Robert Greeney

1. What role do you think the arts can play as an economic driver for downtown business?

"The Arts" are an essential aspect of the character and culture of the entire town, but especially the downtown. A town center that is rich in the presence of "The Arts" is attractive to residents, students and visitors from near and far. I strongly support all efforts to enhance this presence.

2. What opportunities do you see for arts and culture in Amherst that have yet to be realized?

I see multiple opportunities, but in order to be brief I will mention only one. Amherst Annual Acoustic Music Festival. Musicians from across a wide range of genres and skill levels are invited to participate. Six to twelve separate performance locations are spread widely over the greater downtown area. Music groups play in one hour blocks to small audiences. Minimal infrastructure requirements and support makes this relatively easy to set up and fund. The unusual and somewhat unique structure will attract musicians and audiences as well. The intimacy of small spaces and low volume will be additionally attractive.

3. How can we attract more arts and culture tourism in Amherst that will benefit the downtown?

The important work of the Amherst Public Art Commission, the Amherst Cultural Council, and Amherst Arts Night Plus deserves full support of the new Town Council. Ongoing and new initiatives can start with these three existing committees. If elected I would welcome the role of a primary liaison to these committees in support of culture and art in Amherst.

Mandi Jo Hanneke

1. What role do you think the arts can play as an economic driver for downtown business?

The arts can be an important economic driver for downtown businesses. Studies have shown that investment in the arts returns more in economic benefits to the towns than the dollar amount invested. An active and vibrant arts scene brings visitors not only for the show or performance itself, but also for dining before or after, hotel stays, or spending time in other businesses while visiting. Amherst's arts and cultural institutions, if strong and invested in, can help support our dining, retail, and accommodations businesses, making them even stronger.

2. What opportunities do you see for arts and culture in Amherst that have yet to be realized?

Amherst's arts scene has grown in the past and continues to grow. We have the FAC, Amherst Cinema, the Arts Walk, many museums and cultural institutions, and performances in a variety of spaces. I believe Amherst has an opportunity to host a dedicated performance venue that could program a wide variety of genres. It could also host more locally owned galleries to allow for the expansion of the arts walk and potentially more art buyers purchasing locally produced art (I think of Boulder, CO's Arts & Crafts Gallery as an example). The recent adoption of the Percent for Art bylaw will help enliven our public buildings with public art that will continue to attract visitors, similar to the temporary XTCA exhibit. I believe there is room for more temporary exhibits like that one, too.

3. How can we attract more arts and culture tourism in Amherst that will benefit the downtown?

I believe the key to attracting more arts and culture tourism in Amherst that will benefit downtown is partnerships and publicity. Nearly every arts non-profit struggles with how to get the word out on what is happening. By combining resources and working together, I believe our arts and cultural institutions can expand their publicity circle to reach a wider audience. Further, advertisement of many different arts and culture options in a single brochure or on a single

webpage will let potential visitors know that a trip to Amherst isn't for just a single item—potential visitors will know that they can spend the day or the weekend experiencing a wide range of institutions, galleries, and performances. And, if visitors know that, they may be more likely to make the trip and lengthen their stay, benefiting businesses and well as the arts and cultural institutions. Making it easy for potential visitors to find the information is essential.

Robert Kusner

1. What role do you think the arts can play as an economic driver for downtown business?

As you probably know, the Latin *ars arte* means "art for the sake of art" - with that premise, it's hard to answer your first question. But even I often come downtown for the cinema, and for good food – the culinary arts, if you will – and I always treat my friends and professional guests to places I like, so assuming other people feel the same way, just keeping up what we already do rather well seems like a "good economic driver" for downtown – which I still like to call "Amherst Center" by the way – even if ideally the "art itself" is in the driver's seat, and the "economics" takes a back seat (or even gets put in the fuel tank or the battery pack – or the pannier bags – of this metaphorical vehicle we're driving [with a broken leg at the moment, I can't drive my real bike]).

2. What opportunities do you see for arts and culture in Amherst that have yet to be realized?

If there were live theatre or even live lectures (of the kind I've experienced in downtown Cambridge, England) in Amherst Center, you might attract a different crowd to those events too, who would then "retire" to a good pub for hours more discussion (but never to the point of being Kavanaugh).

3. How can we attract more arts and culture tourism in Amherst that will benefit the downtown?

Invite me to do stand-up [once the election is over and I'm off my crutches] comedy, starting with every Tuesday night that I'm in town – when people start showing up by the thousands, like they do for my math classes, then Amherst Center will be so hopping [like I'm doing now with my good leg] we'll need to make Pleasant Street always pedestrian-and-bike-only, and convert our parking garage to a valet bike facility [like Hauptbahnhof in Bonn, or anywhere in the Netherlands]. Seriously.

Jim Pistrang

1. What role do you think the arts can play as an economic driver for downtown business?

Arts can play a critical role as an economic driver. Arts and culture bring more people into town, which in turn brings more business to restaurants and shops. Both Arts Night Plus and The Amherst Cinema clearly serve this function. Amherst Cinema, which has members and patrons from a 25-mile radius, is in its 18th year and just received the A+ Economic Vitality award from the Amherst Area Chamber of Commerce.

2. What opportunities do you see for arts and culture in Amherst that have yet to be realized?

We are lacking venues, both large and small, for live performances. I would love to see a new Performance Center in downtown Amherst, and I am aware that there is currently a group considering the possibilities. The Town should pursue agreements with UMass and the colleges to use their facilities at cost (without extra fees) when schools are not in session.

3. How can we attract more arts and culture tourism in Amherst that will benefit the downtown?

We need to solve parking issues – People need to park conveniently and at a reasonable cost if they are going to go downtown to dine and for arts and culture. We can also encourage owners of buildings downtown to develop space or use upper floors for performance space, such as 13th Floor Music Lounge above JJ's Tavern in Florence, and Bishop's Lounge above Mulino's in Northampton.

Andy Steinberg

1. What role do you think the arts can play as an economic driver for downtown business?

The arts, including performance, are an important part of the community and an economic driver for business downtown and throughout Amherst. People will often combine a restaurant visit with an evening or afternoon visit to museums, galleries, theatre performances and Amherst Cinema, or concerts, whether they are downtown or on one of the campuses. Arts Night Plus creates places for the display and enjoyment of art, most of which are in or near to downtown. The monthly event brings many people to downtown Amherst, but it also draws attention to the exhibits and creates venues for many of our local artists to display their work. Seasonal arts and craft fairs on the Common similarly draw people to downtown.

2. What opportunities do you see for arts and culture in Amherst that have yet to be realized?

I first want to recognize the tremendous work of the Cultural Council and Arts Night Plus that have made certain that the historic mural facing the cemetery will be replaced, that there will be art in new public buildings, the painting of the electric boxes to make them public art, continuing and expanding the first Thursday arts night, creating an Arts District, and so much more. We cannot expect the Town Council to supplant the Cultural Council and shouldn't want to do so. Opportunities the Arts Council might consider are the creation of art in all major new buildings, the appropriate use of public spaces for temporary or permanent displays, and the placement of public art throughout the town.

3. How can we attract more arts and culture tourism in Amherst that will benefit the downtown?

We can start with increased promotion of the Arts District. Other options might include an enhanced guide and calendar with wide distribution with assistance from the Chamber of Commerce and other logical partners, a larger presence in social media and the web, and partnerships with neighboring communities for a more comprehensive regional arts publicity effort.

DISTRICT 1

Sharon Povinelli

1. What role do you think the arts can play as an economic driver for downtown business?

I believe the arts play a vital role enhancing the energy and vitality downtown which translates into direct measurables for businesses. The ability to enjoy a film creates an opportunity to have an expanded evening in town often dining before and shopping after a show. Live music at both public and private venues also promotes longer visits to the downtown and therefore more opportunities for retail and food related sales. Consequently, outdoor visual arts both add dimension and interest to open spaces but also have the added benefit of engaging and entertaining foot traffic through otherwise less developed sections of town. Increasing enjoyment of a stroll through unexpected and perhaps playful surprises also works to extend visits to the downtown and engage with commerce.

2. What opportunities do you see for arts and culture in Amherst that have yet to be realized?

Amherst is poised for a culinary arts expansion. We currently have food representation from many parts of the world and more on the way. Considering the influx of international students attending one of our three higher education institutes, the much larger population which will be living downtown and the cultural diversity of our full time residents it makes sense for the downtown to capitalize on this market and use it as a driver of economic expansion. Additionally, we have untapped potential on both the north and south commons to promote the performing arts --both music and theater--in Amherst. On the north side, plans are developing which re-vision this area as an attractive and inviting space for residents and visitors. By incorporating seating areas, a small plaza and a possible art related structure or fountain, the north common has huge potential to become the focal point of our social gathering in the downtown. On the south side, the Amherst BID is currently hosting a bandshell design competition for placement on the south

common-- roughly between the Boltwood Tavern and the Porter House--facing West. This permanent structure serves to both fulfill Olmstead's design and encourage greater use of this space for outdoor music and performance.

3. How can we attract more arts and culture tourism in Amherst that will benefit the downtown?

Our first job is to support the arts and developing cultural gems we currently have downtown-- which include the Amherst Cinema Center, The Jones Library and the Emily Dickinson Homestead-- by providing adequate parking which allows for both high attendance events and day to day use of the downtown. Destination parking increases the capacity to have both well attended events at the above venues, on the commons and in our parks as well as keep regular weekend and weekday shoppers willing to visit, shop and keep local dollars in Amherst. If supported, our strong but small art and cultural scene will be a magnet drawing more consumers and artists to the area.

Cathy Schoen

1. What role do you think the arts can play as an economic driver for downtown business?

The arts pull people to our downtown for fun, to relax, to expand their experience. And while they are downtown enjoying the arts, they also have dinner or a drink or purchase books, other items or presents for friends and family. The arts are a magnet for people who value culture, community, ideas and creativity. There is well-established research on the 'creative economy' that measures the impact of the arts on economic activity. The impact of Amherst Cinema is just one example. With enhanced art and cultural community activities, Amherst has the potential to stimulate our economy year-round, including summer months when colleges are not in session and the weather is welcoming.

Investment in public art and cultural events directly stimulates the economy by supporting artists and businesses that supply materials and labor. Beyond economic benefits public art also adds value to the beauty, visual variety and vitality of a community. By fostering community pride, identity and a sense of place art adds to our quality of life.

2. What opportunities do you see for arts and culture in Amherst that have yet to be realized?

There are significant untapped performance art opportunities in Amherst that would help build the multi-cultural fabric of our community, bridge differences, and foster community by bringing people together in shared activities. Including support of volunteers, music, theater and arts events could help Amherst animate its rich and complex populace in positive ways. Kendrick Park has great potential as a fair-weather performance art space for dance, theater, music and puppetry.

When the firestation moves to a new location, if the town keeps the building, there is a potential for a creative public/non-profit partnership and community members joining together to transform the downtown fire station into a vibrant community arts space which Amherst badly needs. A weekly open-mike event for our young people could bring families downtown to watch their young people perform. We could have poetry-bees; music nights featuring local talent, including high school and college students. The building could provide space for visual arts, with changing displays that draw on Amherst's extensive working artist community.

I support assessing new developments a Percent for Art -- including visual and performing arts -- to help support expanded community events and public spaces. Oregon's program, for example, has funded artwork in public buildings and placed permanent art in public places.

3. How can we attract more arts and culture tourism in Amherst that will benefit the downtown?

To succeed, we will need to be more strategic and see investment in arts and cultural activities as a core element of revitalizing Amherst. We have been dependent on the individual entrepreneur to develop our downtown or village centers. We have not considered meaningful community benefits other than the hope of net yield on property tax revenues will augment municipal budgets.

We need to be more creative about how we think about development. This includes private/not-for-profit partnerships that also draw on volunteers similar to that which made the Amherst Cinema possible. Such projects bring the community together and enable a mix of charitable dollars with incentives for developers to partner with public-supported initiatives. And the results support new small businesses that benefit from their location near the community arts venue.

We might also learn from other MA towns or cities such as Montreal that have frequent community festivals and arts events, including visual art. These draw on local talent and involve high-school, college and community residents depending on the time of year and nature of the events. One Amherst resident told me he regularly drives to Canada and loves the sense of community. He wished he could participate in community sponsored activities here in Amherst. All such initiatives will bring people to Amherst. The more we can plan year-round activities the greater the draw to visit and participate.

This question focuses on downtown. But we should include our village centers. Why not develop a performance and art venue in areas such as the emerging Mill District. When the development it opens the ample commercial space could feature local artists – display their art, including painting, pottery, and other materials – and performing artists. The ample parking over-flow capacity in the Cowls parking lot or possibly the Survival Center could potentially accommodate periodic events and activities, some targeted for children and other for adults. As a college town, we have a wealth of talent to draw on in addition to year-round long term residents. Such efforts would be an investment in building community as well as stimulus to our local economy. And we should explore ways to foster the arts in our public schools – beyond just current students and families. Displays of local artists, sculptures near play areas, featured events and more.

I personally would aim for the town to support the arts and not overly rely on private OR public/private partnerships. We will all gain if we can use the arts to stimulate and enable civic engagement. As we live ever-more fragmented and at times isolated lives, building community increases our social capital.

Sarah Swartz

1. What role do you think the arts can play as an economic driver for downtown business?

The arts are a crucial component to building a thriving downtown by creating community, feeding the human spirit, and generating events that bring people into the downtown. To build a successful downtown you need to supply the elements of: housing (the neighbors you need to support a healthy downtown), businesses that supply the everyday needs of these neighbors (a pharmacy, a place to buy groceries, a bank, available professionals, etc), roads that are well maintained and that encourage bikes as well as cars, inviting and safe sidewalks and crosswalks. Once you have established your basics you then need to supply the things that make your downtown a destination for personal and cultural experiences. A vibrant art district brings people from inside and outside of your community into downtown.

2. What opportunities do you see for arts and culture in Amherst that have yet to be realized?

By using public parks and green spaces, as well as working in a public/private collaboration with Amherst College and UMASS (i.e. the ability to use their theaters and gallery space), Amherst could build a dedicated arts district without spending a great deal of money. Farms in the area may also be a resource for larger public art projects. My family farm has hosted two amazing public art projects by local artists: Shedding Light by Erika Zekos (<http://artsake.massculturalcouncil.org/erika-zekos-on-shedding-light/>) and Pleiades by Nancy Winship Milliken (<https://www.nancymilliken.com/pleiades-1/>).

3. How can we attract more arts and culture tourism in Amherst that will benefit the downtown?

Again, in order to build an art district in Amherst we need to first implement the basic elements of a thriving downtown that I mentioned in Question 1. Once Amherst has done that then it can

implement a strong art district. Having the established base for a thriving downtown is how we can attract more arts and culture tourism to Amherst.

Nicola Usher

1. What role do you think the arts can play as an economic driver for downtown business?

Art can make public spaces more interesting and engaging, encouraging residents and visitors to stroll more, linger longer, and in turn potentially visit more businesses. Opportunities to see plays, bands, and other live performances would invite more people to wine and dine in our restaurants.

2. What opportunities do you see for arts and culture in Amherst that have yet to be realized?

I think the town could partner with the art educators at our K-12 schools to work on public art projects for kids by kids that would encourage many families to visit downtown to see the final projects. I think we need a proper music venue/performing arts space this side of the river. The fire station in town comes to mind as an ideal site if/when a south fire station is built. I love Eric Broudy's idea in his recent letter to the editor of a performing arts venue combined with a parking facility - I would like to see exploration of whether Amherst College could help fund this.

3. How can we attract more arts and culture tourism in Amherst that will benefit the downtown?

One approach could be to partner with area colleges and universities to coordinate programming and exhibitions with big visitor weekends like homecoming, parents weekend, or alumni weekend. I would love to see us launch our own arts festival on this side of the river.

DISTRICT 2

Victor Andres Nunez-Ortiz—No response

Patricia DeAngelis

1. What role do you think the arts can play as an economic driver for downtown business?

The arts play a critical role in our downtown economy and the life of our community. Performances and other cultural events draw both community members and tourists to the streets of Amherst. While they are here people use our restaurants, shop in our stores and markets, and stay at local hotels, bringing revenue that supports local businesses. The arts also provide jobs and income to artists and other workers, jobs that help stabilize individual incomes and expenditures. The community also benefits from artists who work/volunteer in our schools, readers who share stories with children in our libraries, and musicians who play on our streets.

2. What opportunities do you see for arts and culture in Amherst that have yet to be realized?

Opportunities abound if we step out of the box and begin to see cultural events as more than museum trips, the theatre, or a symphony. It would be wonderful if there were architectural competitions around the design of new net-zero municipal buildings, dance performances in outside spaces, and juried mural projects like the one happening in Worcester. Having permanent venues for musicians, poets, and comedians would enliven and enrich our community. Supporting our local artists by including affordable housing/studio and gallery space in mixed-use projects would help turn areas in Amherst into Cultural Districts.

3. How can we attract more arts and culture tourism in Amherst that will benefit the downtown?

One way would be to create some permanent performance spaces and continuing to have the Common and other parks available for presentations. Actively partnering with our colleges and the university to produce and promote cultural events is another way to increase cultural tourism. Businesses could also make financial contributions that, combined with arts grants, would support music and spoken word festivals, ethnic celebrations, theatre performances, design competitions, and open studio events which would create a vibrant downtown that draws residents and visitors

and benefits businesses.

Lynn Griesemer

1. What role do you think the arts can play as an economic driver for downtown business?

There are communities across the country where the arts are a major contributor to the economy. This is true in the upper part of Pioneer Valley in towns such as Shelburne Falls with some present in downtown Amherst. Expansion of the arts in Amherst can become an economic driver for downtown.

2. What opportunities do you see for arts and culture in Amherst that have yet to be realized?

We can build upon our existing support for the arts with additional galleries, local craft businesses, a performance center, art education opportunities, etc. The arts attract additional visitors to the community and especially if they are located downtown, with those same visitors going to restaurants, our cinema, historical locations, and other commercial entities.

3. How can we attract more arts and culture tourism in Amherst that will benefit the downtown?

Attracting more arts and cultural tourism in Amherst needs to build upon what we already do with coordinated marketing. The presents of an arts and culture environment attracts others to create a presence as well. Part of our approach would include working with our higher education institutions on projects such as the Cross Town Contemporary Art with UMass Amherst, incorporate the various galleries we have across our three higher education institutions and expand Amherst Arts Night Plus. As an emeritus member of the Advisory Board for the UMass Amherst Fine Arts Center, I am delighted to see the increased integration of the visual arts both into the curriculum at the University and across the community. In that capacity, I am serving on the search committee for the new director of the Fine Arts Center. One major requirement of the next director is additional academic and community outreach.

Peter Vickery—No response

DISTRICT 3

Stephen Braun

1. What role do you think the arts can play as an economic driver for downtown business?

The arts, broadly speaking, already play a vital, if un-quantified, role in the economic life of Amherst. An obvious example is Amherst Cinema, which attracts people from across the valley and, by so doing, contributes to our local economy. Any arts-related events can have an economic impact, depending on how much the people who attend spend during their visit (indirectly in restaurants, etc.), or how much their direct expenditures (ticket sales, etc.) support local arts organizations.

2. What opportunities do you see for arts and culture in Amherst that have yet to be realized?

I think Amherst has enormous untapped potential in terms of arts- and cultural-related activity. My particular passion, which I hope to exercise as a member of the Town Council, is poetry. I think Amherst has a legitimate claim to being the Poetry Capital of the country. We do, currently, have poetry-related events. But we could amplify this by orders of magnitude and, in doing so, not only create a fantastic “brand” for the town, but, also, attract many more visitors to our town, which will help economically. Specifically, I see opportunities to bring poetry into our daily lives through such things as having individuals create “poem” signs on their front lawns, similar to how some people now have “micro-lending libraries.” I’ve seen this in action in Portland, OR. We could also support annual poetry festivals, poetry “slams,” monthly poetry readings in libraries or town hall, and we could bring poetry to senior centers, local nursing homes or rehab facilities, and to our schools (I happen to think that poetry should be a required subject in Amherst schools). The town could play a key role here, not just with some (limited) seed money,

but by the “power of the pulpit”...helping to advertise events and activities and encouraging participation.

3. How can we attract more arts and culture tourism in Amherst that will benefit the downtown?

As mentioned above, I think we need to leverage our legitimate role as the home of Emily Dickenson and Robert Frost into a much larger marketing effort to both teach people about poetry and engage with people who already appreciate poetry. Of course, there are many other “arts” that can be employed to attract people to our downtown...but simply having art in public spaces isn’t enough...most towns have some degree of public art. That’s not what brings people to those towns. It’s important...don’t get me wrong...art enlivens and enriches daily life...but if we’re talking about economic impact, we need to think larger and more strategically. And that, I believe, means focusing on poetry.

John Page—No Response

Dorothy Pam

1. What role do you think the arts can play as an economic driver for downtown business?

Increase patronage by holding Art & Wine events at local restaurants and bars to themed audiences. This would increase sales to local artists, business to eating places, and serve as mixers and get-togethers for a wide spectrum of Amherst residents. A percentage of art sales could go to support community causes.

2. What opportunities do you see for arts and culture in Amherst that have yet to be realized?

Create much better publicity to the general public of music, theatre, and art events at the local colleges and the University with a long-term calendar to allow individuals and organizations to plan ahead. Open a permanent art gallery showcasing original art by students at local colleges and the University.

3. How can we attract more arts and culture tourism in Amherst that will benefit the downtown?

We need more original theatre works and art events held outdoors and in the center of town. Once the Fire Department has been moved to its new modern building, turn the existing building into an Art Center. There is a committee that has been working on this.

George Ryan

1. What role do you think the arts can play as an economic driver for downtown business?

I think they already play an important role. The Emily Dickinson Homestead, the Mead Art Museum, the UMass Fine Arts Center, the Eric Carle Museum, the Strong House -- these all bring people to Amherst where they also may shop, go out to dinner, or spend the night. The arts have long had an important role to play in Amherst, both improving the quality of life and generating economic activity.

2. What opportunities do you see for arts and culture in Amherst that have yet to be realized?

Amherst is home to a world-class independent cinema. I for one would love to see the creation of a downtown performance space for theater, dance and music. If the Town finally decides to build a fire station in the south of Amherst this would make the current fire station in the town center surplus property – why couldn’t that be transformed into a venue for the arts? I am excited by one project that is already in the works – the creation of a permanent bandstand on the Town Common.

3. How can we attract more arts and culture tourism in Amherst that will benefit the downtown?

The Council should work in close partnership with Amherst BID and the Chamber of Commerce to help promote Amherst as an arts and culture destination. There is already so much here – we need to spread the word with a special focus on Amherst’s many offerings in the area of history, culture and the arts. I remember an event a number of years ago where we turned the downtown

into an outdoor art gallery where artists and craftspeople were able to display their work. We also have two lovely parks in the downtown along with the Common that can also serve as venues for both artistic performance and display of art. The current sculpture installation in Kendrick Park is an excellent example. We should encourage and support more of this.

DISTRICT 4

Jacqueline Maidana—No response

David Reffsin

1. What role do you think the arts can play as an economic driver for downtown business?

The arts are an important part of what makes the valley a great place for artists of all kinds. Creating an arts center that encompasses painting, sculpture, writing, crafts and more can be an economic driver for Amherst.

2. What opportunities do you see for arts and culture in Amherst that have yet to be realized?

Have a center that is an education, arts studio, gallery and display center has not been realized yet. This would be a great opportunity for all creative people to have an outlet for their work.

3. How can we attract more arts and culture tourism in Amherst that will benefit the downtown?

Close off the downtown and have an arts festival with juried prizes every year.

Evan Ross

1. What role do you think the arts can play as an economic driver for downtown business?

The arts can and are a significant economic driver for Amherst. From Amherst Cinema to the Ko Festival to performances of music and theater, people from throughout the Pioneer Valley travel to Amherst to experience arts and culture. The visitors also visit local businesses and restaurants, bringing an influx of revenue. A Town that nurtures and promotes its arts scene reaps the economic benefits of arts and culture tourism (in addition to many other benefits).

2. What opportunities do you see for arts and culture in Amherst that have yet to be realized?

The greatest opportunity that has not yet been realized is a music performance venue. Amherst has a large population, both student and non-student, engaged with music. Yet there are few places suitable for music performances, and so this population goes to Holyoke or Northampton to see their favorite bands or discover new ones. A performance venue could attract bands and performers to Amherst, which in turn would allow us to compete with nearby towns for the attendees. I'd love to see Amherst folks come into town to see music instead of going over the bridge.

3. How can we attract more arts and culture tourism in Amherst that will benefit the downtown?

Beyond providing physical infrastructure to support various arts and culture scenes, the Town can collaborate with the colleges to market Amherst as a town invested in its art scene. I am encouraged by recent collaborations, such as the XTCA, which show that Amherst values public art. These types of initiatives send a signal that Amherst embraces the arts as an economic development strategy and can help bring greater arts and culture tourism into our Town.

Stephen Schreiber

1. What role do you think the arts can play as an economic driver for downtown business?

I am an architect and artist, and know that the arts are an essential part of the economy. The creative industries are one of the most important economic drivers of Western Massachusetts, yet they are largely invisible in downtown Amherst. We have very few galleries, no music venues, no performing arts spaces. We can visit the homes of dead poets, but where do we go to hear living poets? Each of the 3 colleges supports the arts, but those institutions do not directly support the

downtown.

2. What opportunities do you see for arts and culture in Amherst that have yet to be realized?

We need downtown arts spaces that will encourage the creative classes to work, exhibit, and perform in downtown. I would to see new live-work spaces built for artists, as is being done in other communities. The current XTCA exhibit, generated by my colleagues in the UMass Department of Architecture, is a great example of bridging the arts downtown with the arts at UMass.

3. How can we attract more arts and culture tourism in Amherst that will benefit the downtown?

That tourism already exists in Amherst, but it is focused on the 3 colleges, not downtown. Our crown jewel is the Emily Dickinson house. I would support efforts to build a poetry center to expand its reach. (Like the Walt Whitman center in Huntington, NY). I would also support efforts to create a Five College gallery in town (similar to the Five College Language program in the heart of town).

DISTRICT 5

Shalini Bahi-Milne

1. What role do you think the arts can play as an economic driver for downtown business?

Art can revitalize our downtown by fostering community, new industries, tourism, and employment. Art – literary, visual, performing, and applied – brings people together to have shared experiences that are essential to building community. The Business Improvement District’s annual Block Party is a successful example of this idea. The Block Party brings together our local businesses, artists, and restaurants, which attracts so many families and I personally as a small business owner in downtown have greatly benefited from that.

Creative activities such as making art together, storytelling, and performance in combination with local restaurants and breweries downtown attract families that can revitalize our downtown. Besides being good for business, such activities can be directed towards building an inclusive community by inviting diverse populations to participate and share their cultures through different art forms.

2. What opportunities do you see for arts and culture in Amherst that have yet to be realized?

We have many artists working in isolation with limited resources. The work of the Amherst Center Cultural District and Amherst Cultural Council to help artists network with each other, the businesses, colleges, and the community can be supported to create a shared space for artists to work and showcase their work.

We can learn from other initiatives in New England such as in Maine, which has adopted creative economy as a central aspect of its economic development. They are fostering creative clusters that are supported by research in the University of Maine to fuel their growth. We too can create a creative hub downtown that hosts different artists and interns from colleges who are supported by trainings, advertising, and research by UMass and the two Colleges to help artists develop thriving business models. Amherst Media and Amherst Cinema can also play a vital role in sharing artists’ stories and use of technology to promote local artists and community building activities downtown.

3. How can we attract more arts and culture tourism in Amherst that will benefit the downtown?

Amherst is home to famous poets, such as Emily Dickinson, and visual artists, such as Eric Carle. We should have a website dedicated to the creative economy in Amherst that highlights the local artists, programs, calendar of events, and activities for tourists. For example, the Amherst Writers Walk can be a fun walking tour beyond Emily Dickinson’s home to include Robert Frost’s house and ten other famous artists include stops at local cafes and restaurants.

The Amherst Center Cultural District can coordinate with UMass and the two Colleges to make local art a part of the major events bringing parents to town. We could also be utilizing the

expertise of the Hotel and Tourism School at the Isenberg School of Management to work with the Town and Amherst Center Cultural District to come up with marketing strategies for promoting our arts and culture to tourists.

Paul Bobrowski—No response

Darcy DuMont

1. What role do you think the arts can play as an economic driver for downtown business?

I am a major supporter of the arts. As a teacher, I regularly applied for and received grants to bring in visual arts, dance and performance arts into my classroom and school. For my last 9 years of teaching, I taught art.

The arts are about bringing the beauty. If Amherst builds a vibrant arts and cultural community that attracts new artists, cultural organizations and businesses, it will improve our quality of life and make our community more attractive for the benefit of residents and visitors alike. By creating Amherst as a primary destination for individuals and families seeking the visual and performing arts, we will encourage more visitors (both local and out of town) to also come for entertainment, dining, and downtown shopping.

2. What opportunities do you see for arts and culture in Amherst that have yet to be realized?

The Town needs to provide at least modest ongoing funding and/or staff time for the arts as is done in other cities and towns in the area (i.e. Northampton and Easthampton). The recent successful utility box project, “Electrify Amherst”, is an excellent example of what can be done with a small amount of money.

Amherst needs to take advantage of the artists already living here by promoting local artists and giving them a venue for their works. It needs to use its existing strengths (museums, public spaces such as Kendrick Park, potential of its cultural diversity) to support the arts to a much greater degree than at present.

3. How can we attract more arts and culture tourism in Amherst that will benefit the downtown?

Amherst needs to continually and widely market itself as an arts and culture destination in its official publications and social media. It needs to provide a significant-sized performance space. Amherst lacks the infrastructure (i.e. studio space, affordable housing) to attract artists to work in town. Downtown businesses need to step up and actively support the arts as that will enhance their own businesses through drawing in more customers.

Samuel MacLeod

1. What role do you think the arts can play as an economic driver for downtown business?

A significant role. The arts are an important method for expression that can bring people together to participate, witness, discuss, and enjoy. One of the first things I do when travelling is to try and find local events which is something that I think most people do. The arts contribute greatly to economic vitality and is a key ingredient and indicator of a healthy and thriving local economy. This is the case for destinations around the world and it true or Amherst as well.

2. What opportunities do you see for arts and culture in Amherst that have yet to be realized? There are a number of venues for arts expression in the Amherst area that compete for audience participation. A collaboration and collective effort between venues to bring in events or awards into the downtown or other designated areas is worth exploring. Our town commons also provide great opportunities for events. Northampton has had great success for many years in this manner. The more Amherst’s downtown is viewed as a viable and additional alternative to our higher educational institutions then the better it will be for our local economy. Amherst has made great strides...let’s take some more!

3. How can we attract more arts and culture tourism in Amherst that will benefit the downtown? By working collaboratively with our Amherst based higher education institutions, BID, and other groups. We can likely generate more college organized but community-based

events to drive more activity in the downtown area. We can also continue to solicit ideas on an ongoing basis from our local participants. We could also explore a municipal collaboration with Northampton to share the timing of events. Amherst has great resources and the sky is the limit.