
2022

The logo for Creative Industries, featuring the words "CREATIVE" and "INDUSTRIES" stacked vertically in a white, sans-serif font. To the right of the text is a circular graphic composed of numerous thin, white lines radiating from a central point, resembling a sunburst or a stylized globe.

CREATIVE
INDUSTRIES

MUNICIPAL ELECTION

Elected Candidate Q&A

Questions

All questions posed to candidates provided by Creative Industries are listed below for clarity.

1 Question 1 **COVID + Personal Insight:**

The creative sector brings people together, creates a more inclusive community and has the ability to bridge communication. This was made even more apparent & imperative during the Pandemic. How do you feel Arts & Culture creates connection and impact for you and our community?

2 Question 2 **Approach to Support**

North Bay has a long history of strategic plans & action plans that prioritizes fostering arts and culture as a key contributor to the city's economic prosperity. What would be your approach to supporting and enhancing North Bay's creative sector?

3 Question 3 **Economic Support**

With the understanding that the Creative Sector fosters a thriving and vibrant community, mitigates youth-out migration and stimulates economic growth, would you support additional and secured investment into Creative Industries micro-grant program?

Candidates

Mayor

3 Peter Chirico

Council Candidates

4 Mac Bain

5 Gary Gardiner

6 Maggie Horsfield

8 Sara Inch

9 Mark King

10 Jamie Lowery

11 Justine Mallah

15 Tanya Vrebosh

No Response

Chris Mayne

Lana Mitchell

Peter Chirico

Website

- 1** As a long time supporter of the creative sector, I believe that through the passive interaction of the arts sector, they make a direct bridge to the City and its residents showing that North Bay can be a cleaner and more beautiful city. On a direct communication between residents and municipal government, more can be done to ensure that the arts and creative sector have a seat at the table and input on how we can do better.
- 2** Collaborative action. Speaking and doing are two different things. The creative sector is in need of long term funding with assurances of the same for growth and continued support. Those conversations and decisions will be a top priority.
- 3** Yes! It is an investment in our future.

Mac Bain

Website

- 1** We learned many things during the Pandemic, including the importance of life/work balance and how much we need to be with people. In Ontario, the financial wealth of many savers went up considerably during the lockdown, as they were confined to their homes or didn't have to head to the office to work. Now that restrictions have been lifted, people are out and about and looking for ways to connect and spend funds. I had five couples from the GTHA reach out this summer for holiday ideas in Nipissing, as they had never ventured north of Barrie before. They all enjoyed our waterfront, trails, downtown, the farmers market, restaurants; two couples attended shows at the Capital Centre, several commented on the painted boxes, and only one admitted going to the Casino. They enjoyed their time in the Bay! The arts community has a symbiotic relationship with the Downtown and the waterfront, which newcomers see and scent. I hope that relationship continues.
- 2** I can't sing, or dance and have poor fine motor skills, so I can't paint or draw, but I enjoy listening, watching, and admiring art forms. So, taking advice from me may not be a good idea. But watching Creating Industries grow and the community grow along with it. I believe the successes will continue to mount. Therefore I suggest the city double down and invest more funds in the organization. Creative Industries should continue to have Council representation on the Board, as that person can be a strong champion for you are Budget time.
- 3** I have been watching Creating Industries grow and the community grow along with it. I believe the successes will continue to mount. Therefore, I suggest the city double down and invest more funds in the organization.

Gary Gardiner

Facebook

- 1** Currently in the City's organizational the word art is included only once and the word culture never appears. Arts and culture should appear with certain titles in the organizations org chart and respective job descriptions need to include roles and responsibilities for fostering, developing and supporting initiatives from the creative sector.
- 2** Within the City there are designated staff for the support of sporting events but I believe this position should be all encompassing to support all events equally. There are lots of small things that the city can do better, including providing services and community spaces at no cost in support of events and activities. This should include insurance coverage at no charge.

It is very clear to me that the creative sector is one of the solutions to revitalizing the downtown core. Whether it's dance, the pottery guild, Capital Centre events, or the various art studios, they all have a significant contribution to the vitality of downtown. Studio entrepreneurs have made bold moves to open in the downtown core. The city needs to be bold as well in support.

- 3** Currently the city contributes \$75,000 to Creative Industries. No question the return on this small investment pays large dividends. The Gallery Hop is an example of creating that sense of place that the Baylor report speaks to (remember that report!). Arts and culture can breathe life back into a community. North Bay desperately needs life and vitality more than ever.

Increasing the amount of funding to arts and culture needs to take place. Sport and recreation see millions of investment annually. I anticipate that the City budget will be strained in this post pandemic recovery, however the City's portion of the accommodation tax continues to be deposited in a reserve fund and there is no policy that governs how this money will be distributed. It can be argued that Arts and Cultural events help draw visitors that book accommodations and therefore should be eligible for financial support.

If elected, I pledge to ensure a policy is developed for distributing the accommodation tax that will include supporting events, art and culture.

Maggie Horsfield

[Facebook](#) [Website](#)

- 1 I am a big supporter of Arts and Cultures, I believe it builds community. I try to promote and attend as many community events as possible from gallery exhibits to performances. It's about bringing people together for people to express themselves artistically in an inclusive community. It is an economic driver for the community.

There are many art galleries, shops, creative work spaces and studios that have been instrumental in supporting a vibrant Downtown North Bay. It has an impact by bringing people Downtown and creating space for people to come together to enjoy, reflect and engage with each other.

- 2 The City's current Strategic Plan has lofty statements which include important parts of our community but does not have strong actionable steps or targets that provide goals. I want to work with the creative sector and others to develop metrics and a process that could guide the City in how it enacts its Strategic Plan.

For example, under Strategic Priority - Economic Prosperity it says: "Foster arts and culture as a key contributor to attracting talent and supporting creative businesses"

- How? What does this look like? Attracting 20 new artists to the community? Keeping 20 artists in the community? Annually increasing funding? Supporting 10 arts events a year? 20? 30?

Steps I will take

- I will support developing metrics and targets for the City's Strategic Plan.
- I will support bridging the communication between the creative sector and municipality.
- I will support a strong arts umbrella that brings people and groups together.
- I will build collaborative opportunities between arts, cultures, tourism, and sports to work in conjunction and aligned.

Some ideas include:

- If there is a Curling championship (as an example) in North Bay, the City should inform and work with the creative sector to develop opportunities for folks who are attending events to also participate in other activities in the community, such as a Downtown Gallery Hop, or pop-up art display at Memorial Gardens.
 - Initiating and supporting a Winter Carnival that aligns with Ice Follies, Carnaval and local schools doing ice sculpting contests
 - Supporting local artisans and markets by promoting their events and activities and supporting their spaces
- 3** 100% yes. I think that the City should collaborate more closely with Creative Industries on supporting grant writing and investments in the creative sector.

Sara Inch

[Facebook](#) [Instagram](#) [Website](#)

- 1** To be human is to create. Art crosses barriers, it empowers, it informs, it heals, it brings people together and allows them to express themselves individually and collectively. It allows people to find community and escape isolation. Whether we are the viewer or the producer, art engages us all, consciously and unconsciously. They say a picture is worth a thousand words. I wholeheartedly agree.
- 2** I believe we need to continue to support our Arts Centre, and galleries and artists through gallery hops, and community events. I believe we need to continue to bring art outdoors, through murals, exhibits like Ice Follies, more physical mediums like the traffic boxes and Peter Wolf tree carving. We can bring more art outdoors to our waterfront and invite local artists to participate. We can also offer ‘gallery space’ in the lobby of City Hall. There are many many ways to support and enhance North Bays creative sector. For me the question is not a ‘how?’ but a ‘which way?’ will we support our local arts community.
- 3** Yes.

Mark King

[Facebook](#) [Instagram](#) [Twitter](#)

- 1** There is no question that the arts community creates a vital community atmosphere and allows many people extra activities they usually would not find in smaller communities. My support will continue, especially for the Capital Centre and what it provides to the community.
- 2** I would hope that council would continue the past support provided to the arts community. Over the next four years, it will be challenging to see whether or not many support systems can be funded.
- 3** I would suggest at this point, based on the economic circumstance and other budgetary issues facing the city, it would be challenging to commit to additional funding over and above the current budgets. In the past, council has provided support dollars for the arts community. Many of these incentives and pressures should be submitted at budget time to council for further discussion.

Jamie Lowery

Website

- 1** Arts and culture has the ability to create understanding, generate empathy and tell stories in a way that can build a sense of inclusiveness. Expression through art can also serve as a form of therapy and assist in the healing process. Arts and culture brings people together.
- 2** Build on the many successes such as Dreamcoat, Toros, our art galleries, museums. I would like to see more public art displays particularly indigenous exhibits. Celebrations of Canadian artists. An element of Arts and culture should be incorporated into our community planning process and approvals.
- 3** Working with local government as well as other levels is paramount. partnerships with the private sector would also be beneficial. This could be done through the development process and/or special culture levy in order to create a sustainable funding source or funds to partner with agencies.

Justine Mallah

[Facebook](#) [Instagram](#) [Website](#)

- 1 The arts and culture sector has a profound impact on the well-being of those who take part within it. During the COVID-19 pandemic, I facilitated improvisation classes and an upcycle workshop for Art Fix. What I heard through these experiences was that even these time limited opportunities to engage in the arts with others fostered a needed sense of connection, humour, and respite from the strain and concerns of the pandemic. I know that so many arts organizations worked outside the box, got creative and went to great lengths during this difficult time to find safe and innovative ways to facilitate creative opportunities for people virtually or at a physical distance. They went to such pains because art is what so many people need to support their mental health, to keep them connected to others, and elicit feelings of belonging and joy!

On a personal note, as a member of the North Bay Ukulele Club, I can honestly say that the Monday practice sessions bring light to my week. During door knocking, it has been wonderful to hear how interested folks are in the artistic groups in the region (I've had many questions about the ukulele club and about how they can get involved in the great work happening at Art Fix!). These types of groups not only showcase art but also facilitate increased tourism. Art initiatives bring people in from surrounding areas, performances serve as a wonderful night out, and art installations beautify the spaces in our community (our downtown murals are a lovely example).

Creation is also a source of therapy. When I was going through cancer treatment eleven years ago, art was truly my form of therapy. It helped me shift my focus, decrease stress, and repurpose my energy towards releasing feelings and expressing myself. I am one of so many that has experienced the healing, deeper understanding, and communication that is born through engagement with art. Whether it is mental health, addiction, homelessness, disease, or any other number of lived experiences, art has been used in our community (and in countless others) to foster inclusivity, reduce stigma, and build an understanding of important issues and people with valuable stories to tell.

It is vital that we invest in the arts and as a city, we can and must do more to support the sector. The arts and culture sector creates a lot of pride in community. It showcases diverse culture and can contribute to equity, diversity and inclusion. We don't all speak the same language but we can appreciate our unique stories and common humanity through the vehicle of art. That is an undeniable impact.

- 2** I had the pleasure of attending the Capital Centre's townhall/ brainstorming session to identify ideas for future programming and initiatives that support the community. What struck me, is the need to start from a place of engagement: with artists. From these creators, we can understand different perspectives and diverse ways of knowing and culture: What to prioritize? What stories need telling? Who is under represented? One area of expansion could be in how to celebrate and prioritize Indigenous culture through the arts. Let's continue to actively include people from diverse backgrounds and lived experiences to share their perspectives around ability, language, race, creed, gender, sexual orientation, age, socioeconomic status, etc. For example, I met multidisciplinary artist Kim Kitchen last week and they have an upcoming exhibit at the WKP Kennedy Gallery that reflects deep introspection, knowledge and critical thought and the self-reflexive relationship between ability and artistic production. This is a brilliant opportunity to raise awareness and hopefully facilitate increased community among people who identify as disabled within our region. Speaking with someone like Kim is a privilege and opportunity to understand another person's lived experience. Diverse community engagement is a priority for me as City Councillor as it is the only way to build meaningful, responsive change. "Nothing for me, without me".

As referenced above, the arts are a powerful teaching tool that bridges cultures and languages. It is a way of learning and promoting a greater understanding about others. Therefore, I believe that North Bay's creative sector could be supported – but also capitalized on - to support arts-based education, allyship and advocacy around key issues such as climate change or consent. Imagining the involvement of local poets, makers, musicians, and more in mobilizing greater understanding of community needs and priorities is very exciting.

The city has funded numerous initiatives in the past and I am completely supportive of continuing this funding. We need to listen to what creatives want, work with creative industries, and determine how to best support them. We need to hear from people who are in this artistic community and deeply engrained in this work.

I also think that City Council has a responsibility to help promote initiatives that are done by Creative Industries or other arts groups. Working in collaboration, to increase opportunities for classes, workshops and other types of involvement among different populations would be terrific. One way the City can help promote, facilitate and encourage creative work is through the City's website and social media accounts. We could spotlight events, community groups doing great things, and championing more meaningful initiatives in our city (like the traffic boxes)!

Another area of Council contribution could be support for groups sourcing locations to host arts-based initiatives. I volunteer with Gateway Theatre Guild, and we continuously have issues finding spaces for theatre presentations. Dreamcoat Fantasy Theatre is also searching for a new home. 250 Clark Street in Powassan feels like a great model for a multi-use space in North Bay. There may be an existing space which could repurposed and adaptable to be safe, usable, and accessible.

I am all about enhancing the health, livability, prosperity, and beauty of North Bay. Our downtown, neighbourhoods, businesses and community spaces depend on our city's support for the arts. Our ability to attract new residents, appeal to students and engage those already living here requires a thriving arts scene. Our health and economic growth, therefore, rely on our City Council to champion this sector as not a 'nice to have' – but a 'need to have' which can count on engagement, promotion, collaboration, and funding.

- 3** In a nutshell: ABSOLUTELY. I love the idea of building the creative economy in our region and this investment is certainly a way to engage new and existing residents. I would need to familiarize myself with the city budget as a Councillor to speak more specifically to the size of investment, but I do appreciate that there are direct and positive effects on economic growth when we invest in the arts.

I also recognize that the arts was among the sectors hardest hit by the pandemic. We need to invest in a commitment to our artists and artistic groups that they can count on, which needs to be sustainable and representative of the creative sector's value to our community and its residents.

Tanya Vrebosch

- 1** I think arts and culture impact people in different ways. For a long time, I never saw myself as an art lover until I went on one of the gallery hops and someone said "art is more than paintings on wall, it can be music, fashion, theatre, photography etc." It really opened my eyes. I have always been supportive of the arts and culture industry but never realized how much I actually enjoy the various forms it can come in.

Arts and culture, as we know from Stats Canada, is over 3.5% of the province's GDP and there are over 300,000 jobs in the sector. Arts and culture not only can be looked at in relation to business, jobs and entertainment but it is also a key factor in relation to economic development and attracting new citizens and new businesses. People want things to do and see.

I'm hoping we get back our pre-COVID momentum (we are getting there) with the help of things like Bay Block Party, Gallery Hops, Artisan Markets, First Fridays, Capitol Centre events, Farmers Market, Workshops, Paint Nights etc. Whether it's a love of art, a date night or a family outing, arts and culture brings us together. It's also a big piece of supporting our downtown - bringing more people and having things to do supports the health of our downtown.

- 2** We currently support the Capitol Centre and Creative Industries. We also have the PAAC and we provide incentives through the GCIP for art projects in the downtown core. I have always been supportive of arts and culture in our community. Different ideas that have been brought forward to council have always been considered but it would be nice to have a long-term plan on how arts and culture will evolve in the future amongst all groups.
- 3** The previous council supported the micro grant program in the amount of \$20,000 from reserves over 2 years. I may be mistaken; however, I believe the micro granting program was supposed to become self-sufficient which is why we took the money from reserves (to be used for one off requests or emergencies). I believe it was figured 2 years would be long enough to get it off the ground. I would want to see some data on how the initial investment has been spent and the value / benefits.

I think we also need to see a long-term plan of what Creative Industries is looking for from council. This way we aren't just throwing money here and there. If we're going to support the arts, let's make sure we have a long-term plan. It helps the City's budget planning, and it would help the art sector as well.

THANK YOU!

**For further election information and contact
details about candidates, please visit The
City of North Bay's website**



HERE