

February 3, 2009

To Mayor Dever, Vice Mayor Chestnut, and Commissioners Amyx, Hack, and Highberger,

As cities across the U.S., including Lawrence, are in the unenviable position of having to make tough decisions about spending priorities, it is vital that city leaders and citizens remember the essential roles that the Arts play in strengthening our community.

- The arts fuel an economic engine in Lawrence that employs workers, encourages tourism, and generates sales of goods and services throughout the community. Nationally, non-profit arts organizations and their audiences generate \$166.2 billion in economic activity every year\*.
- The arts are one of the primary tools used to market and promote Lawrence to businesses competing in the new economy, families, and prospective college students. The arts attract a skilled, educated, and diverse workforce to the community. That, in turn, brings new businesses looking for creative talent.
- Students with an education rich in the arts have better grade-point averages, score higher on standardized tests, and have lower drop-out rates across all socio-economic categories.
- The arts improve our quality of life by giving form to our shared histories and common aspirations. They ennoble us as people and help to build bridges between cultures and generations.
- The arts help animate democracy by offering unique programs, settings, and creative approaches that reach new and diverse participants, stimulate public dialogue about civic issues, and inspire action to make change.

\*Statistics come from Americans for the Arts- [www.americansforthearts.org/](http://www.americansforthearts.org/)

In Lawrence, we are well aware of the benefits that the arts cultivate. We are proud of our thriving music scene, packed schedule of home grown cultural and arts festivals and events, and unique arts organizations like the Lawrence Arts Center and VanGo.

Since its founding in 1973, the Lawrence Cultural Arts Commission has been actively involved in supporting these kinds of activities and organizations through our Grants program, Phoenix Awards, Outdoor Downtown Sculpture Exhibition, and coordination of the City's Percent for Art program. Just as you, our City Commissioners, are grappling with the reality of a new budget environment, the Cultural Arts Commission also has begun a discussion of ways that we can implement savings. With this letter we want to remind you of the critical role that the arts play in our community and pledge to work with you to retain a vital arts agenda.

Sincerely,

Lawrence Cultural Arts Commission

Susan Craig, Christie Dobson, Donna Griffin, Matthew Herren, Amy Kelly, Dave Loewenstein, Jane Pennington, Kathy Porsch, John Reeves, and Joanne Renfro

William Dentler  
420 Rockfence Court  
Lawrence, KS 66049

RECEIVED

FEB 03 2009

CITY MANAGERS OFFICE  
LAWRENCE, KS

2.2.09

To the Mayors and city commissioners:

Michael Dever      Mike Amyx  
Robert Chestnut      Sue Hack  
Boog Highberger  
City Hall  
PO Box 708  
Lawrence, KS 66044

Commissioners:

I understand that the City is forced to make plans for cuts if the Governor takes back the liquor tax. I certainly realize the need to find funds to support many state programs and understand some of the problems that the Governor, legislature, and city commissioners have to identify what programs to cut or to cut back.

That said, I would like to encourage you to support the city band concerts. I am in the city band and enjoy playing and, as far as I can tell (I sit in the middle of the trumpet section and rarely see anyone), many in the town enjoy the concerts. I have always thought of the summer band concerts as one of the unique events that make Lawrence a special town.

As a taxpayer, I feel that it may be appropriate to reduce the appropriation and I would be happy to reduce my small "pay" (if others do so). I also feel that complete elimination of the \$ 12,000 program will stop the band concerts but would not provide much to help other programs.

My only other suggestion is to try to find ways to save Prairie Park. I've only been there once but it seemed like a special place and it certainly is a place that was, on my visit, filled with young children.

Where to cut? I cannot offer advice because I don't know the programs well enough. I am disappointed that the proposed cuts do not deal with the high school athletic fields. For the city to have wasted money duplicating what already was available at Haskell is, in my mind, pretty sad. But this does not seem to be part of your meeting on Tuesday. For now, please consider my plea to keep the city band concerts and, possibly, the prairie park nature center.

Sincerely.



William Dentler

February 3, 2009

To Mayor Dever, Vice Mayor Chestnut, and Commissioners Amyx, Hack, and Highberger,

With budget cuts a foregone conclusion and knowing how difficult it will be to juggle the spending priorities, we want to encourage you to remember how critical a strong downtown is to our entire community.

- Downtown Lawrence is the historic core of the community and embodies the community's past and its visual identity.
- Downtown is the primary location for Lawrence's independent businesses which in turn:
  - Keep profits in town
  - Support other local businesses and services
  - Support local families with family-owned businesses
  - Support local events like the Film Festival, Busker Fest, Get Downtown
  - Provide a stable economic foundation as opposed to a few large chains with no ties to the community
- The strength of Downtown Lawrence is a reflection of the community's image, pride, prosperity and level of investment, all of which are critical factors in business retention and recruitment efforts.
- Downtown Lawrence represents a significant portion of the community's tax base. If Downtown declines, property values decline and place additional tax burden on other parts of the community.
- A vibrant Downtown Lawrence protects the property values of surrounding residential neighborhoods.
- Downtown Lawrence is our community's government center and prime location for important professional services like attorneys and financial institutions.
- Downtown Lawrence is the heart of the city and provides an important civic forum where members of the community can congregate for parades, special events and celebrations that reinforce our sense of community.

Downtown Lawrence has been blessed by many forward thinking individuals and commissioners who have fought long and hard to keep the area strong and vital. We must remain vigilant to maintain Downtown Lawrence as the core of our community.

Since its founding over 30 years ago, Downtown Lawrence, Inc. has worked diligently to preserve, protect and promote Downtown Lawrence as the retail, service and professional, governmental, entertainment and social center of our community. We have begun to look at ways to continue these efforts with a reduced budget and look forward to working with you and the City staff to find ways to do more with less while keeping Downtown Lawrence strong and resilient.

Sincerely,

Dan Hughes, President  
Downtown Lawrence, Inc.