

## **BeaconArts Report to City Council**

2/21/2017

**Promoting the cultural vibrancy that has become Beacon, New York's trademark is our mission at BeaconArts, a nonprofit organization founded in 2002 to organize, promote and nurture the city's multi-faceted arts community.**

BeaconArts has over 160 artist members and 87 business members. **Second Saturday**, organized and promoted collaboratively between the two, draws hundreds of visitors over two days each month – indeed if you happened to be out and about this past weekend, it was clear that every weekend has become as popular as a **Second Saturday**.

Citywide events draw thousands to Beacon, New York, from the tri-state region and beyond: **BeaconOpen Studios, Windows on Main Street, Beacon Independent Film Festival** and **Beacon 3D**, and more are happening every day. As fiscal sponsor of these grassroots projects, BeaconArts is intrinsically involved in their planning and promotion.

Here's what else we do:

- Publish and distribute **an illustrated, annotated map** of Beacon four times a year for galleries and business members, distributed throughout the city and beyond.
- Serve as Beacon's ad hoc **advertising agency, publicity agent and tour guide**, working closely with Arts Mid-Hudson, Dutchess County Tourism and a variety of publications to ensure that Beacon is literally on the map as a destination in the Hudson Valley.
- We are fiscal sponsors of the **Beacon Arts and Education Foundation** a coalition of parents, educators, businesses and other organizations that raise funds for enhanced art programming and other special opportunities for the students of the **Beacon City School District**.

BeaconArts is **the artery through which much of the city's creative efforts flow and manifest**, with expenses offset mostly by business owners and arts minded individuals who recognize the economic value in supporting local arts and culture.

Our [mission](#) is to enable artists to continue to live and work here by promoting their projects to a larger audience. Indeed, a wonderfully diverse array of new restaurants, bars and independent businesses are opening here all the time, but **what sets Beacon apart from other Hudson Valley towns is our legacy as a home for artists and makers.**

To that point, I'm here tonight to add our voice to the discussion regarding Beacon's Updated Comprehensive Plan. First of all, thank you all so much for the

work you have done. I have read through it, and appreciate that the Arts and the Art Community have been recognized as a valued part of the economic vitality of the city (Section 4.8 - .10 and Section 9.16).

As I understand it, the Comprehensive Plan focuses on land use issues. Would the designation of an arts/cultural district be considered a land use? It does seem that Beacon has what is referred to as a Naturally Occurring Cultural District (NOCD), and if so, I think it would be good idea to get an official designation. I've read that that a bill passed in the NYS Senate regarding this issue, and is now in the House. An example of an NOCD in which cultural/arts institutions act in alliance in NYC (perhaps BeaconArts evolving into a similar role?): <https://nocdny.org/>

Another land use issue I have been thinking about is the possibility of a percent-for-art program or other ways of working with developers who are building in Beacon, to help fund and strengthen the arts. I don't know that it could be added to the Comprehensive Plan, but I think this is another idea that could be explored through the development of an arts and culture plan.

Cities of all sizes have engaged in arts and cultural planning, and given that much of Beacon's tourism and "brand" is arts related already, I believe (as I know you do as well) that investing in fostering the arts and having a vision for how to do this now as well as in the future, at the City level, is especially important for Beacon.

Would it be possible to include language in the Comprehensive plan that would more explicitly recommend an arts and culture plan created through an Arts and Culture Commission that could include the above points?

For example:

*The City of Beacon recognizes the tremendous role that arts and culture has played in drawing both new residents and tourism to Beacon, as well as enriching the lives of much of the community for almost 15 years. In order to preserve and strengthen the arts in Beacon, the City will engage and work with*

*BeaconArts and other leadership to develop a comprehensive plan for Beacon that will address issues such as affordable housing for artists of all disciplines; affordable studio and gallery space; development of live/work space; potential sites for performing arts and film centers or venues in existing, new, or re-purposed structures; funding for the arts through incentivized partnerships with developers and/or a commitment to fund the arts through a percent-for-art program; the potential for a certified "cultural district" in the city of Beacon; as well as other issues which have been identified identified by the City and BeaconArts through public forums and surveys of the arts community.*

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## **NEWS**

At our Annual Meeting on January 25, 2017, the membership voted in new officers and members to our Board of Directors – Artist Rick Rogers joins the Board as a Member at Large; Terry Nelson of the Beacon Independent Film Festival begins a new 2 year term as Member at Large, as does Sommer Hixson, who brings PR and Marketing expertise to our board as the Director of Communications at for Glynwood, an agricultural nonprofit and teaching farm in Putnam County. Financial Planning professional Aaron Verdile is now our Treasurer; Artist and Beacon Open Studios founder Theresa Goodman is our new Vice President, and yours truly will finish out a total of 8 years on the board as President for 2017-2018. Pamela Dailey and Christina Jensen remain for 1 more year as Members at Large; Artist Erica Hauser continues as Secretary.

### **Dutchess County Tourism Guide Ad**

Beacon 3D event next weekend to raise funds for the acquisition of a permanent sculpture to be sited on City of Beacon property