

## ***Community Observations: Increasing Cultural Funding***

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*The following is a synthesis of a group process at a community meeting held at the Hayti Heritage Center on June 17, 2003 as part of the Durham Cultural Master Planning process. It was attended by over 110 people. Participants were able to comment on a series of seven issue areas that had been identified by the DCMP Steering Committee. We are eager to hear your reactions to these observations. In particular:*

- 1. Do you agree with these observations?*
- 2. Do you feel that there are any inaccuracies?*
- 3. Is there anything missing that should be added?*

*Please review this document and send any comments you may have to [mdemott@durhamarts.org](mailto:mdemott@durhamarts.org)*

*Thank you.*

Funding is a critical issue, especially now when arts and cultural organizations are facing funding cuts from both the public and private sectors on top of shrinking earned income. To address this, it will be necessary to come up with a variety of solutions.

- Cultural organizations need to partner more with each other in order to be more efficient. "Incubator" spaces that provide joint services and low-cost office areas should be explored.
- It is also important for cultural organizations to become more entrepreneurial by thinking about ways to fulfill their mission while developing new revenue streams. Offering classes in non-traditional settings is one option. Perhaps developing more effective concessions at their venues is another. It is also important to explore cross-marketing arrangements, more effective sponsorships, and leveraging funding opportunities.
- All of the traditional fund raising mechanisms that nonprofit cultural organizations use must be refined and improved. Strong membership campaigns are important, as are developing planned giving programs. Having a way to provide support, advice, and training to cultural groups would be very helpful. Classes in grant writing in particular would be valuable.

- Local government can help in several ways. First, tax revenue dedicated to arts and culture should be explored. Hotel/motel tax or taxes on rental cars, parking, or prepared food are all worth examining.
- Government can also help through impact fees levied on developers, builders, and businesses. These fees could be devoted to supporting the arts and culture infrastructure in Durham. Or concessions offered to developers or other businesses as “rewards” for adding significant arts and cultural components to their projects could be negotiated.
- There are a range of longer-term ways to increase the level of interest in and commitment to arts and culture. The stronger the interest in arts and cultural “product” the greater the potential audience (and thus increased earned income from tickets, etc.).
- So we should work with church groups that conduct programs for children to help develop an appreciation for arts and culture. Increased exposure to arts and culture can also help – so street fairs and festivals should be encouraged. Tourists and convention visitors can be stronger audiences if we can attract them to our cultural assets.
- We will make this task somewhat easier by redefining culture to be more inclusive of a wide range of ethnic cultural expressions as well as some aspects of popular culture and entertainment.
- In addition, electing supportive public officials is important, as is letting them know that arts and culture is a priority issue for many voters.
- As arts activity increases, the connection to increase business activity must be made. This is one of the key advantages of a culturally rich environment and this point must be made to businesses as the bedrock of the case for support of arts and culture.