

25

4-16-11

April 15, 2011

The Honorable William D. Euille
The Honorable Kerry J Donley
The Honorable Frank Fannon, IV
The Honorable Alicia R. Hughes
The Honorable Rob Krupicka
The Honorable Redella S. Pepper
The Honorable Paul C. Smedberg
City Hall
301 King Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

Re: Funding for Arts

Dear Mayor Euille and Members of Council,

Being that I make my living from my art, I am particularly appreciative of city support of the arts and know how vitally important funding for the arts is to any community.

I was honored to join the Commission in January and experienced the Alexandria Commission for the Arts grants program process for the first time. I was incredibly impressed by the versatility, diversity and sheer artistic talent of the groups requesting funding and it was heartbreaking at times to have to cut or in some cases eliminate some of these organizations from the funding list.

It is a proven fact that the City's investment in the arts helps these organizations successfully leverage additional corporate and private funding. It is also a proven fact in Alexandria that the arts are good for business, with a \$80 million dollar impact on the local economy.

The arts should not be considered as something "nice to have". They are vital to the growth and stability of every community. In essence we should not lose sight of the fact that art is viewed and heard and felt by people. Art is not just the fodder of a close-knit group of initiates. Art is the soul food of all people.

I have lived in Alexandria for one year but was drawn to this area not only through its reputation as a leading arts destination, but its reputation as a true community that nurtures and embraces the arts from its creative community projects, its corporate sponsorship as well as strong city support. I urge that this reputation and tradition be upheld and that funding for the arts in the City of Alexandria be ~~increased~~. *maintained and increased.*

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Yours sincerely,

Leisa Collins
Commissioner, Alexandria Commission for the Arts