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Mayor

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### **ARPA for the Arts: Supporting Arts, Culture and Community**

Feasibility Design for an Arts & Culture Pavilion in the Newton Centre Bowl

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Grants for Arts and Culture: Revitalize Creative Newton

Shortly after I took office, I established the Community Design for Arts & Culture Committee (CDAC) to explore how we could nourish arts and culture in Newton. With help from so many Newtonians, we developed Newton's first City-wide arts and culture plan, entitled *CreateNEWTON*, in December 2019.

Then the COVID pandemic began. The plan's implementation stopped in its tracks just as the pandemic created a devastating impact on our arts community.

Simultaneously, the pandemic also made crystal clear how much we need arts and culture to nourish our souls, to bring us together, to enliven our villages, and to bring customers to our restaurants and small businesses.

This summer, Newton Community Pride proved all of this with data. They partnered with the Brandeis University Heller School of Social Policy & Management to analyze the social and economic impacts of the arts and culture in Newton. Many Newton residents added their voices to the Heller students' surveys, helping the research team to identify the ways in which the arts contribute to our community.

The Heller students found that arts and cultural programming strengthen individual well-being and instill a greater sense of community among people who attend events.

Additionally, Newton's arts and cultural community is an economic driver. Whether concerts, theatre, movies, art shows, or more, they generate jobs, contribute to resident household income, and bring revenue to our businesses and local and state government. The Heller Report found that the arts contribute more than \$19 million in economic activity in Newton annually.

With the leadership of Newton's Director of Cultural Development Paula Gannon, we are proud to host many events and collaborate with local artists. We are grateful for the excellent work of and strong collaboration with Newton Community Pride. Our community is enriched by the Newton Cultural Alliance and the many organizations that sustain art, culture and community from the New Art Center to Boston Ballet, the Highland Glee Club to the Joanne Langione Dance Center, and the Newton Family Singers to Newton Open Studios .... and so many more.



### Feasibility Design for an Arts & Culture Pavilion in the Newton Centre Bowl

The Sunday Concert series is a summer highlight in Newton. This year it felt better than ever to be together outdoors, enjoying live music in the company of friends and neighbors.

We held our outdoor concert series at the open space adjacent to the Newton Centre Playground this summer. Take a look at some of the fun we all had at the [Newton Centre Bowl!](#)

This location allowed for more spacing among audience members. What we found was that this additional space led to increased audience sizes, drawing an average of 300 people weekly. The natural incline of the green space served as a perfect amphitheater style venue. The large park allowed children and families to focus more on the performance without worry of traffic. Plus, we had plenty of parking.

This summer we successfully produced concerts and events in the Newton Centre Bowl ranging from the New Philharmonia 50-member orchestra, a live puppet show from the Massachusetts based Tanglewood Marionettes, bands from bluegrass to world jazz, and the July 4th Kids Morning festivities.

Today we are ready to move forward with a feasibility design for a permanent performance pavilion at this location. The pavilion will provide shelter for performers, stage lighting, a solid floor, and electricity for sound equipment. An outdoor performance venue accommodating over 300 people has been a common need for our arts community. We now have evidence to support this request and I am looking forward to working together to create this unique bit of “Tanglewood” right in the center of our city.

I am authorizing the use of \$50,000 in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding to conduct a feasibility study over the next 6-9 months. An outdoor performance venue in Newton Centre could be a wonderful new community resource and gathering spot, plus create economic benefits. The ideas of our artists, performers, non-profits, businesses, residents and City Councilors will shape our decisions during the feasibility study.

In addition to the pavilion feasibility study, I know that Newton artists and arts organizations have been seriously hurt by the pandemic closures.

### Grants for Arts and Culture: Revitalize Creative Newton

I will use \$75,000 in ARPA funding for **Revitalize Creative Newton**, a grant program for the arts and culture sector of Newton to cover expenses related to reopening and resuming cultural programming and services. Newton arts and cultural organizations of any budget size that can demonstrate they have been economically impacted by COVID-19 are eligible to apply. This funding will provide much needed support to organizations within our arts community as they work to recover, rebuild and re-energize our city. We will be announcing details on this program in the coming weeks. Stay tuned.

Our ***Newton Cultural Council*** (NCC) provides grants to organizations and individuals that benefit the public by offering arts programming in our villages. From my first year in office, I have supported this initiative by matching the council's annual allocation from the state with city funding. This year, together we will infuse more than \$40,000 directly into the hands of artists and organizations who support the Newton's arts sector. NCC grant applications are being accepted now until the Oct. 15, 2021 deadline. More information [here](#).

The Heller student's summary got it right. The arts have a "positive impact . . . on developing and expressing individual creativity, providing a tool for economic growth, and connecting people across cultural boundaries in order to enrich community life."