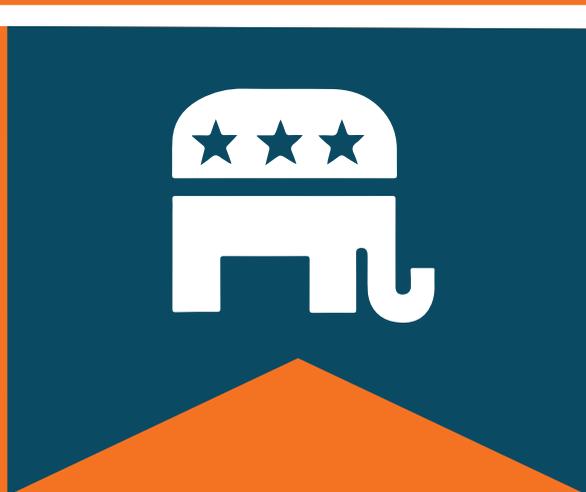


2019

# MAYORAL FORUM ON QUALITY OF LIFE

★ Presented by: ★





**Arts United of Greater Fort Wayne proudly presents the Mayoral Forum on Quality of Life.**

Because our community values Fort Wayne's arts and cultural amenities and our city's reputation as a vibrant place to live, work, and play, Arts United provided a platform to elevate this topic.

All mayoral candidates were invited to respond to six questions about their vision for Fort Wayne's arts, culture, and quality of life, and their views on supporting the excellence of Fort Wayne's flagship cultural institutions, growing our city's creative workforce, and making arts experiences more accessible for children and their families.

This document features the verbatim responses by the four mayoral candidates who submitted answers.

As a nonpartisan, charitable nonprofit organization, Arts United does not endorse, support, or oppose any candidate. Arts United hosts the Mayoral Forum to educate voters about quality of life issues that affect the community we serve.

**2019 Mayoral Forum on Quality of Life Town Hall**

Here's your opportunity to ask the candidates the questions that matter to you. This fall, Arts United will host a town hall style live event with final mayoral candidates with questions from our community. To submit, email [askthecandidate@artsunited.org](mailto:askthecandidate@artsunited.org) with your name and question.



## MAYOR TOM HENRY



**Please share your personal experience with arts, culture, history, and quality of life amenities in Fort Wayne.**

I first became involved with the arts in the late 1980's. As a member of the city council I was given a seat on the board of directors of the Fine Arts Foundation. During that period we not only worked to consolidate the various arts offerings into one recognizable group, but realized new branding was also appropriate. Thus, Arts United was born into our community. Since that time, whether on city council or as mayor I have tried to encourage the importance of art inclusivity, community creativity and cultural ingenuity. As an extremely valuable component in our quality of life offerings its imperative Fort Wayne and NE Indiana continue to provide the foundation for artistic sustainability and growth.

**Fort Wayne is increasingly recognized as a city with momentum because of investments in our quality of life. As Mayor, how would you and your administration position Fort Wayne as a nationally-recognized, culturally vibrant community where people choose to live, work, and play?**

There is no question the Arts are becoming more and more a driving force in our economic development initiative. In order, though, to attract and retain employers and the necessary talent to grow our community, we must be creative and innovative in our pursuit to be a regional point of destination. It may be necessary then, at times, to reach beyond the recognizable and politically acceptable and create more opportunities for others to think "outside the box." If, in fact, we're going to be nationally recognized, we must "dream more than others think is practical."

**Fort Wayne has a strong history of creativity and innovation, and as a result, is home to many impressive cultural institutions that make our city stand out among our peers. As Mayor, how would you and your administration help to sustain and advance the excellence and national reputation of Fort Wayne's flagship arts and cultural institutions?**

Sustainability and advancement of the arts is imperative. This can only be attained through program offerings, superior performances, financial stability, appropriate board involvement, stable management, and community support. The city of Fort Wayne, as a partner, can and should promote the arts through our marketing initiatives, financial commitments, physical participation, coordination and collaboration of efforts, and public pride.

**Fort Wayne and Northeast Indiana is home to more than 18,500 creative sector jobs. These jobs include graphic designers, printers, architects, master artisans and entrepreneurs as well as professional musicians, dancers, writers and visual artists. As Mayor, how would you and your administration help to position Fort Wayne as a place in which creative individuals, nonprofits and business thrive?**

Quality of life amenities in Fort Wayne and NE Indiana certainly dictate whether future creative opportunities come to our communities. Offering an environment to enhance creativity, imagination, and innovation is imperative. The soon to be released Public Art Master Plan along with the Art Commission, FAME resources, Arts Campus initiative, Downtown Blueprint, Front Door Fort Wayne plan, and numerous Arts festivals all are essential contributors to enriching and enhancing our position as a quality job sector.

**The currency of the 21st century workforce is the ability to think creatively and solve problems. Access to arts, cultural, and creative experiences - both during and after the school day - contributes to bright futures for our children. As Mayor, how would you and your administration help to support improved access to arts and cultural experiences for families and children?**

Accessibility and approachability to all of the Arts is absolutely essential for true overall community development and appreciation. Introduction of the Arts to those in the academic arena, random community offerings, open air public space initiations, and private receptions are all opportunities for enhanced cultural experiences. Maximizing utilization of electronic media, written media, and social media could also encourage community participation and appreciation.



## ★ DR. JOHN CRAWFORD ★

**Please share your personal experience with arts, culture, history, and quality of life amenities in Fort Wayne.**

My arts experience began in my home town of New Orleans. Like every kid, I wanted to be a musician and selected the trumpet - eventually earning a place in the NO City Band. The conductor was impressed with the accuracy of my playing but said, I just didn't have the "soul of an artist". I now thoroughly appreciate all those who DO have the soul of an artist especially the talent FW has nurtured.

**Fort Wayne is increasingly recognized as a city with momentum because of investments in our quality of life. As Mayor, how would you and your administration position Fort Wayne as a nationally-recognized, culturally vibrant community where people choose to live, work, and play?**

My plan is to continue development of the Riverfront project and support Electric Works to the fullest extent. When done well, these projects will

encourage private investment in Phases II and III of the Riverfront and increase interest in Electric Works. Once you enhance the quality of life in your community you become more appealing to employees, particularly young people, and businesses follow the people!

**Fort Wayne has a strong history of creativity and innovation, and as a result, is home to many impressive cultural institutions that make our city stand out among our peers. As Mayor, how would you and your administration help to sustain and advance the excellence and national reputation of Fort Wayne's flagship arts and cultural institutions?**

The Mayor has a "bully pulpit" which I would use to highlight the many outstanding aspects of our community emphasizing our deep roots in all of the arts and our diverse creative class!

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Again, I think improving the economic climate of the area attracts businesses. Once that is accomplished, these businesses can recruit people to our rich arts community. These potential employees serve as both artists and audience to our creative city. As one example, I feel Sweetwater has been a significant driver to our arts community and their strong financial position allows them to invest in our community, supply talent and expertise in the musical arts.

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One cannot imagine a richer environment than Fort Wayne for our young people. Whether it is Youtheatre, the FAME Festival, dance for every age, public art or the Scholastic Art and Writing Awards exhibited at the FWMoA the city beautifully highlights the talent of all of our artists regardless of age. We love seeing the diverse community savoring all that we have to offer with Taste of the Arts being a wonderful showcase.



## GINA BURGESS



**Please share your personal experience with arts, culture, history, and quality of life amenities in Fort Wayne.**

In 2004, I co-authored a book, "Discover Downtown: An Illustrated Guide to Fort Wayne, Indiana," which acknowledged and paid tribute to Fort Wayne's arts, culture, history and quality of life. This book was to be used in conjunction with my business, Model T Bicycle Rentals, which was based in Headwaters Park and encouraged the exploration of Downtown. The book was also used as the basis for the Downtown Improvement District's earliest websites.

**Fort Wayne is increasingly recognized as a city with momentum because of investments in our quality of life. As Mayor, how would you and your administration position Fort Wayne as a nationally-recognized, culturally vibrant community where people choose to live, work, and play?**

My administration's priority is going to get back to basics, re-prioritizing needs over wants, and creating a community where everyone feels included. This means as Mayor, I will explore everything in terms of no-cost to taxpayers with a taxpayer-focused return-on-investment. Culturally, I'd prefer to position Fort Wayne as an emerging International Gateway city.

**Fort Wayne has a strong history of creativity and innovation, and as a result, is home to many impressive cultural institutions that make our city stand out among our peers. As Mayor, how would you and your administration help to sustain and advance the excellence and national reputation of Fort Wayne's flagship arts and cultural institutions?**

My administration's priority is going to get back to basics, re-prioritizing needs over wants, and creating a community where everyone feels included. This means as Mayor, I will explore everything in terms of no-cost to taxpayers with a taxpayer-focused return-on-investment. As Mayor, the best thing I could do for our already impressive cultural institutions is to stay out of their way.

**Fort Wayne and Northeast Indiana is home to more than 18,500 creative sector jobs. These jobs include graphic designers, printers, architects, master artisans and entrepreneurs as well as professional musicians, dancers, writers and visual artists. As Mayor, how would you and your administration help to position Fort Wayne as a place in which creative individuals, nonprofits and business thrive?**

My administration is going to work to keep the cost of living low so that members of our Community have the time and/or the discretionary funds to develop their artistic crafts (artists), attend places that exhibit artistic crafts (art supporters), and hire artists (art supporters). Additionally, we will incorporate as many artistic approaches as possible, provided they have functional value. For example, using fire hydrants, crosswalks, basketball courts, etc. as non-traditional canvasses for items that need painted.

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If you read my online platform (<https://www.voteginaburgess.com/issues/residentneeds>), you'll note that the Safe Routes to School initiative would make school zones a priority for neighborhood street and sidewalk improvements, starting with the 31 elementary schools contained in the Fort Wayne Community School District. Starting at the school and extending out to a 2 mile walking radius, I would be willing to implement functional art by way of fire hydrants, street crossings, and more.



## TIM SMITH



**Please share your personal experience with arts, culture, history, and quality of life amenities in Fort Wayne.**

My experience in the arts began at home while being trained as a classical pianist and observing my mother perfect her oil painting skills. To this day, my favorite piece of art is a landscape scene painted by my mom. I did not develop any special gifts in the arts, but I admire artists. My tastes are traditional, rational. Nonetheless, I give latitude to contemporary artists and I credit them for understanding their art, even if I do not.

**Fort Wayne is increasingly recognized as a city with momentum because of investments in our quality of life. As Mayor, how would you and your administration position Fort Wayne as a nationally-recognized, culturally vibrant community where people choose to live, work, and play?**

Fort Wayne must be more innovative in leveraging and giving profile to our remarkably vibrant art culture. I believe the cultures of art and business are symbiotic. As I increase the profile of one I must also increase the profile of the other. I may not be a devotee of Andy Warhol, but he said it best: 'Making money is art and working is art and good business is the best art.'

**Fort Wayne has a strong history of creativity and innovation, and as a result, is home to many impressive cultural institutions that make our city stand out among our peers. As Mayor, how would you and your administration help to sustain and advance the excellence and national reputation of Fort Wayne's flagship arts and cultural institutions?**

From Bass and the Foster brothers to Rolland and Freimann, Fort Wayne's history is distinguished by private sector champions of the arts. I will partner with existing and new art & culture institutions to cultivate a new generation of financial and community support. Fort Wayne's quality of life pivots at the intersection of the arts and philanthropic support. As Mayor, I will recognize the essential relationship between business pro-growth and individual pro-quality of life.

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Fort Wayne is already well-positioned—but our creative community should expect more. As Mayor, I will advocate for districts established as centers of art and creative work. From blacksmiths to poets, visitors from within the city and from without could find coffee shops and performance venues, exhibits and salons dedicated to artistic expression. We already have a creative conscience woven into our DNA. Simply put, as Mayor, I will lead.

**The currency of the 21st century workforce is the ability to think creatively and solve problems. Access to arts, cultural, and creative experiences - both during and after the school day - contributes to bright futures for our children. As Mayor, how would you and your administration help to support improved access to arts and cultural experiences for families and children?**

The mayor has no formal powers over education or our school system but can use the power of the office to work with all school districts in Fort Wayne and the schools who teach Fort Wayne children. Art and creative thinking are key in expanding students' horizons and increasing their capacity to learn in all fields. I will use my pulpit as mayor to greater connect all local arts with students.