

Statement of the Arts

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Art has been an important part of my life since I was born. My parents are both artists in Puerto Rico where I was born and raised. The both graduated from the University of Puerto Rico with degrees in art, my father is a sculptor and my mother is a photographer, as well as a painter and working in ceramics. Art was everywhere in our house growing up.

Public art was an area that specifically touched my life growing up. My father worked on sculptures that are in public spaces in Puerto Rico to this day. A statue of his of the Virgin Mary still hangs in my grandparents church, where my parents were married, where my sister and I had our first communion.

I was taught the value and importance of art at an early age. When I moved to Frederick as an adult I immediately saw the great public art in downtown Frederick and how it helped form the downtown area's identity. When my parents come to visit, they always stop at all the galleries downtown. They have had their art exhibited in several of the downtown galleries.

Performing arts have also been a big part of my life in Frederick. My son Hunter started in theater groups at the age of 4, so young he couldn't read his lines. He carried that love for performing all through school and beyond, moving to New York after High School to study acting and still lives there today, writing and performing in productions around the city.

If I am elected to the City Council, I will bring that love and appreciation for the arts with me. The city needs to support art in all areas of the city, not just the downtown area. District 2, that I hope to represent, has a lack of public art and few art offerings in the

district. Public art needs to be a consideration in all capital improvement projects. The West side Regional Park, the Hill Street Skate Park renovation, Hillcrest Elementary Renovation are just a few of the projects that are already approved where public art could be incorporated. There are many empty commercial lots where the city could help fund art galleries, art education, or artist workshops.

Funding for the arts needs to be a priority for the city to continue and build on the tradition of the arts in Frederick.

Thanks again for the invitation to the happy hour and for the opportunity to share my thoughts on the importance of art.