

Lori Stegmann, Multnomah County Commission District 4
www.votelistegmann.com
February 12, 2016

1. Do you support the voter-approved Arts Education and Access Fund and do you commit to maintaining it? What changes, if any, would you make to improve its administration?

Yes, I do support and will commit to maintaining it. \$35 a year is a small price to pay to bring arts back into the class room. Arts education and access is important especially for low income communities like the Rockwood neighborhood in Gresham.

I will look to the oversight committees consisting of RACC, the Arts Oversight Committee and the school districts to get their feedback regarding how the fund is administered. Additionally I will be relying on input from organizations like yours to provide guidance.

2. In a 140-character “tweet” format, tell us why you are running for office.

#AffordableHousing #QualityPublicEducation #LivingWageJobs
#SafeandHealthyCommunities

3. How many donors have contributed to your campaign?

282

4. How much money have you raised for your campaign?

Approximately \$89,000.

5. What endorsements have you received?

I hope you will join the Gresham Firefighters and the Fairview Police Officers Association by endorsing my candidacy. I have endorsements from Senator Laurie Monnes Anderson, Representative John Davis, Metro President Tom Hughes, Metro Councilor Shirley Craddick, Fairview Mayor Ted Tosterud and other Gresham city councilors. Attached is a complete list of endorsements to date.

6. What role do the arts and culture play in the life of our region and what do the arts personally mean to you and your family?

Arts have always played a significant role in my life. I was a “drama kid” in high school and love performing arts. We have season tickets to Portland Center Stage and value that time together as a family. My daughter is a junior at Sam Barlow High School in Gresham, and I am proud to say she is carrying on the tradition of being a “drama kid” too. She was recently in the cast of “Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat”. And she just qualified for the state drama competition for her monologue and hopes to attend the regional competition.

7. How will you address the growing affordability crisis in our region for artists, arts organizations, and small arts businesses as it relates to housing and creative space?

As a previous Planning Commissioner, looking at the built environment is always the first step to good urban design. I will look for opportunities to encourage development and redevelopment that will help support creative live/work spaces for artists. In East County I have long thought about how wonderful it would be to have an “arts district” where we could have blossoming artists live and work. This is similar to the “incubator” concept for entrepreneurs. And perhaps provide assistance for those fledging artists.

8. How will you foster the growth of the creative economy in our region?

By inherently including the merits of the creative economy within our government and public institutions. For example, I had the amazing opportunity to serve on the Gresham Art Advisory Committee for Tri-Met when they retrofitted the light rail platform in the Rockwood neighborhood. Tri-Met has a policy to include 1.5% of their engineering budget for public art. Our committee selected Dan Corson and commissioned him to create and install the “Rockwood Sunrise”. This towering artwork is the backdrop to one of the most culturally diverse and most impoverished areas in Oregon. Everyone deserves access to art. I was proud to help bring a piece of art that I hope inspires people and brings a sense of place and community.

9. How will you enhance the delivery of and support for arts education in school and neighborhood settings?

I want to work with partners including the Right Brain Initiative, RACC, our schools and neighborhoods to look for creative opportunities to provide greater access to arts education. I admire the work that organizations like Caldera are doing that highlight the positive role that arts and humanities play in academic achievement and graduation rates.

We live in such a high tech world where data is coming at us so fast that we spend most of our days staring at our cell phones. Our youth have become isolated even though they are in a room full of people. Art is a way for people to reconnect, to build a sense of community and a sense of identity. At the City of Gresham we sponsor the annual Gresham Art Festival in historic downtown Gresham neighborhood where we have over 140 artisans participate each year. Events like these provide communities access to art and culture in their own backyard.

Last year, through the efforts of our Youth Advisory Committee, we were able to break the Guinness World Record for the most chalk drawings. And I’m proud to say my daughter organized that effort. By involving our youth it strengthens the connection between public service, our art community, and economic development.

We could also partner with organizations like the Rockwood Community Development Corporation who often serve many cultures by holding various festivals at their site. I just attended an event hosted by the Michoacan community where they celebrated their culture with food, music and dance. Rockwood is a culturally rich and diverse community. We have so many opportunities to learn about other cultures and we can do that through arts education.

10. How will you further the values of equity and access to the arts and culture?

By consciously searching for creative ways to bring arts and culture to our most vulnerable neighborhoods and citizens.

A great example of this is the partnership between Adult Learning Systems of Oregon (ALSO) with Infusion Gallery. The Gallery offers art classes to folks with developmental and intellectual disabilities to express their creativity. Their artwork is displayed in the Gallery and generates income for some of their artists.

Another idea would be to partner with businesses and organizations to sponsor access to the arts. For example, Bank of America sponsors free admission to the Portland Art Museum if you are a cardholder. Perhaps we could partner with them to sponsor free admission for low income neighborhood residents.

The Oregon Historical Society is another great institute that safeguards our history. Through that history, art and culture are often the remnants of days gone by. I know that as a Multnomah County resident admission is free. But I wonder how many low income folks know that? And even if they did, how do we address all the other barriers like transportation and childcare to truly be “accessible”? Looking through an equity lens, I will look for ways to make arts and culture more accessible for everyone in Multnomah County.

11. What do you see as the biggest challenges to progress in this area?

People must have their basic needs met. If we can meet people where they are, then we may have an opportunity to show them that there is more to life than just pure survival. My hope is that we can come alongside them and expose them to a world that values creativity and self-expression

12. What other public policies would you pursue to strengthen the creative capacity of our region?

1. I will look at the Children’s Levy that Portland passed to see if there are similar opportunities on a countywide basis. While the levy awards many educational grants, some of the service providers like the NAYA Family Center and Ethos Music Center provide cultural arts and music education.

2. I will research opportunities to include a small percentage of infrastructure costs be allocated to public art similar to what Tri-Met does.

3. I will seek partnerships. The City of Gresham recently installed the “Children’s Fountain” located in the Arts Plaza in downtown Gresham. The year that I was president of Soroptimist International of Gresham I had the honor of presenting a check for \$20,000 from our club to underwrite “Fine Tuned Tulle” on the Plaza. This public art consists of three pillars designed by Claudia Fitch which represent the four aspects of art – visual art, music, literature and dance. Visually they resemble a paint brush, trumpet, pen and tutu. The Arts Plaza was a combined effort by the City of Gresham, the Center for the Arts Foundation, and individual donors. These types of relationships are the kind of partnerships that I will create and pursue. Public, private, and nonprofit partnerships have long been a staple of community improvement and development in Gresham. I will continue that leadership once elected.

4. Once elected, I will pursue the concept of having an “economic development” department at the County. Within that department I see a role for the art community, RACC, and the Right Brain

Initiative. We need to analyze and highlight the economic benefits that the arts contribute to our Region and see how we can expand that role.

13. Each year, you will have the opportunity to vote to approve a budget for arts funding through the Regional Arts & Culture Council (RACC). Do you commit to maintaining or increasing this budget allocation and funding level?

Yes. I will make every effort to maintain funding for RACC. Hopefully as the economy improves, that will result in additional funding for RACC. I will actively look for ways to ensure that arts and culture are interwoven into the fabric of how the County delivers its services. While funding is important, there may also be other strategies that we can use to promote "An environment in which arts and culture flourish and prosper".

I understand the significant, economic impact the arts have in our region. For example, in our family it has become a tradition to make the annual trek to Ashland to spend a long weekend at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. We love immersing ourselves in theater and value that experience. But we are also fueling the economy because we purchase lodging, food, souvenirs, and of course tickets to the plays. I get it. And I'll be an advocate for the arts as a Multnomah County Commissioner, just as I am now as a Gresham City Councilor and community volunteer.