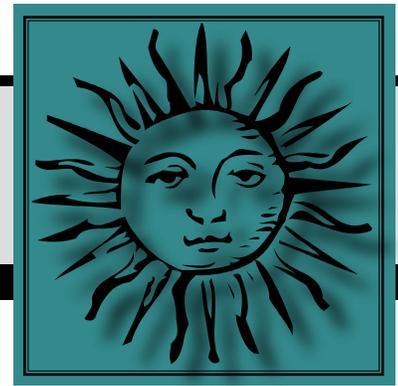


ALGER ARTS & CULTURE

APRIL 4, 2007

NEWSLETTER



THE FIRST MEETING

The first meeting of the emerging Alger Arts & Culture group occurred on April 3, 2007, at the Alger Heritage Center. Over 30 people attended the two hour meeting, which included an overview of the Balancing Nature and Culture in Gateway Communities and a discussion of the potential for Arts and Culture initiatives that can enhance our quality of life and community economic stability.



WHAT HAPPENED?

There was A LOT of energy in the room and it seemed like people had many ideas and enthusiasm that needed sharing! Bob Eslinger reviewed an MSU study (Can Small Towns Be Cool?) that revealed common attributes of successful communities. These included:

- Strong engagement between citizens, community organizations and government.
- Actively pursues cultural economic development opportunities.
- Deliberate effort to connect with youth and/or younger generation within the community.
- Attention to natural amenities.
- Local entrepreneurial investment.
- Willingness to seek help from the outside.
- Conviction in the long run that you have to do it yourself.
- Lessons are learned from setbacks, successes are celebrated.

source: <http://web1.msue.msu.edu/wexford/pamphlet/CanSmallTownsBeCool.pdf>

Phyllis Northup drew from her experiences in several parts of the country, noting several common themes for arts and culture success stories. These included:

- An organized arts association (501C. 3)
- An art festival
- Multiple galleries
- Performing arts
- Celebration of local history and heritage
- Good at promotion

She then mentioned several successful co-ops and artist communities, including Woolworth Walk and Arrowmont.

The group spent some time brainstorming items we could collectively accomplish. These included:

- Develop a community bread oven.
- Public art and sculpture - skateboard park?
- Artist incubator.
- Look into developing a community foundation to assist with funding.
- Incorporate Elm Street Players and the Mather auditorium.
- Organize / facilitate groups at Mather (Alger Parks & Rec. doing this now).
- Build on existing events with an art and culture component - marathon, bike race, snowmobile race, Taste-N-Glide, etc.
- Reinstate former Alger Arts Council as first step.
- Sell local arts products via the web.
- Consider web links from existing sites - Chamber of Commerce, MAPD, etc.
- Get a PLACE - consider renting a coop building.
- Let the community know what we have in terms of arts and culture.
- Public art on buildings - murals.
- Combine local arts and nature attributes.
- Respect/embrace what people have done here.
- Community scavenger hunt to reveal what is here, e.g. Walking Tour.
- Use Channel 21 in town to promote arts and culture.
- Youth video arts events via high school.

- Add plaques / sculpture to Walking Tour (possible DDA funding?)
- Hold art shows - sidewalk art show.
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Realizing we were out of time, the group recommended we meet in two weeks - April 17, 7 p.m., Alger Heritage Center to develop three or four "do it" projects/tasks.

TASK GROUPS & LEADERS

Possible task groups include:

- 501C.3. Incorporating - research and refile with the state.
- Arts Festival to attract residents and visitors during "down" weekends or shoulder seasons.
- Artists Coop - locate a building, gather a group and go for it.
- Develop public art in association with existing Walking Tour.

Please consider which Task Group you are willing to lead or join.

A suggestion was made: "If we all donate \$10 at the next meeting, we would have enough for the filing fee to incorporate with the state." Great idea! Bring a ten-spot next meeting.



WHAT IS NEXT?

Keep talking about Arts & Culture! Keep the momentum going! Let a friend know what we are doing!

BE THERE, BE THERE!

The next meeting of the Alger Arts & Culture group will be at the Alger Heritage Center, April 17, 7 p.m..

UPCOMING EVENTS



The Friends of the Library are holding a Mystery Dinner "Evil on the Beach", on April 28. Tickets are \$25 per person, available at the library.

The Munising Community Credit Union is rescheduling the arts show and sale originally to be held April 4. Once this is rescheduled, please stop by and visit with the artists.



LET'S TALK!

If you have ideas or would like to discuss what is going on, please feel free to contact:

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READING CORNER

If you are interested in reading about art and culture, take a look at: Girl with the Pearl Earring by Tracy Chevalier. This is a novel about Dutch painter Johannes Vermeer. If you have a book to recommend, please let Gregg or Phyllis know so we can list it here.

VISIT WITH ONE ANOTHER...

A Word file of people interested in arts and culture is available. Contact Gregg for an e-copy.

STRING ON YOUR FINGER

The Community Aesthetics discussion/organizational meeting will be April 10, 7 p.m., at the Mather Board Room. Please join us!