

COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE

Aesthetic Renewal & Transformation Project



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A.R.T. PROJECT: HISTORY & MISSION

HISTORY: In March 2022, Town Council first proposed the Town begin funding projects which would “establish new art installations or renew existing installations.”

This was approved as part of the FY 2022-23 Budget.

MISSION: The purpose of this project was to enhance the overall public experience throughout Town and generate new or renewed interest in lesser trafficked areas.



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A.R.T. PROJECT: QUESTIONS

“Art” is an extremely subjective topic, with widely ranging opinions on what is “good” art, and what art is worth investing public funding into.

Art presented in public spaces could potentially be subject to:

- Vandalism / Content protest
- Weathering / Long-term maintenance needs
- Future ordinance changes: As interest grows, private businesses may wish to join in. You may need to define what is allowed by private businesses (murals are considered to fall under freedom of speech, unless they involve advertising or explicit content)



A.R.T. PROJECT: QUESTIONS

Because of the subjective nature of art and the wide range of artistic expression available, from the onset of the project, the Town Council would need to determine its desired level of immersion (direct control vs. general oversight).

Whether Direct Control or General Oversight, general definitions and expectations would need to be established.

A.R.T. PROJECT: OTHERS' SUCCESS

In researching this project, we looked at the challenges, solutions, and successes of 6 different, similar sized (under 40K) communities:

- Ayden, NC
- Carolina Beach, NC
- Carthage, NC
- Kinston, NC
- Hertford, NC
- Sanford, NC

*All make use of independent, non-profit committees / organizations



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A.R.T. PROJECT: RECOMMENDATION

Three options moving forward:

1. Simply donate approved funds to existing organizations, with a caveat the monies be used in Oak Island
2. Establish a staff-based committee with local partners
3. Establish a public committee of volunteers and community partners, with staff and / or Council liaisons

Either option selected would be responsible for:

- Identifying approved locations (Town vs. private property)
- Approving media & artists (murals, sculpture, mixed, etc.)
- Defining approved content (acceptable vs. obscene)

A.R.T. PROJECT: RECOMMENDATION

Regardless of option chosen, recommendation is to define accepted “Public Art” as adapted from the Carolina Beach Mural Project:

- Represents all mediums of art whose form, function, and meaning are created for the general public through a public process.
- Is visually and physically accessible to the public - it is installed or staged in public space or the public realm, usually outside.
- Embodies public or universal concepts rather than commercial, partisan, or personal concepts or interests, and it has clear aesthetic qualities in form or theme.
- Is also the direct or indirect product of a public process of creation, procurement, and / or maintenance.



