

# Megann Eberhart

Barberton

In Summit County, a healthy and fully leveraged arts and cultural sector will **attract and retain talent** to our region, **build jobs** in the creative sector, **add significant value to the education** of our community's children, and serve a leading indicator of **economic prosperity and impact**.

The creative industry in the Akron MSA supports over **17,000 jobs and drives \$1.4 billion in economic activity**.

*To learn more about the vibrant arts, culture, and environmental sector in Summit County, visit:*

*ArtsNow.org*

*SummitLive365.com*

*akronculturalplan.com*

## **Arts and Culture Questionnaire for Summit County Mayoral Candidates**

Below, you will find information and prompts related to important issues that impact the creative sector.

ArtsNow respectfully requests that you complete this questionnaire by

**5PM on Thursday, April 6th, 2023** so your constituents can learn more about your arts and culture platform. Please respond as thoroughly as possible, as responses will be shared with the public and posted in their entirety online at artsnow.org.

Responses will be published at artsnow.org

**Questions/responses begin on the next page.**

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## ONE: YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH ARTS AND CULTURE

Please give us a sense of your relationship with the arts and culture sector. Keep in mind that our sector is made-up not only of nonprofit organizations, but also artist entrepreneurs and creative businesses and venues.

### Response Prompt(s):

- What arts and culture events, performances, or experiences have you attended in the last year?
- What arts/culture organizations or commissions have you supported as a board member, volunteer, donor, or season ticket holder?

*Please list cultural groups and experiences, even if they have not taken place locally.*

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### Candidate Response: MEGANN EBERHART

There are numerous events I have attended over the past year. On any given night you can find me attending a Barberton School artistic performance, visiting a local art gallery, attending a performance at Playhouse Square, listening to a local musician or attending downtown Akron Artwalk.

My longtime involvement with the arts and culture sector has been both personal and professional. In 2017, I joined the Summit Artspace Board of Directors, holding various leadership positions. In 2020 I took a leave of absence from the Board to become Interim Executive Director, which allowed me the opportunity to position the organization for its next chapter. This included leading the organization during the national pandemic. Then I returned to serving on the Board, which continues today. I am also serving my 12th year as an elected member of the Barberton Board of Education, ensuring that the love of the arts is instilled and nurtured through arts education and extracurricular activities. My involvement with these two organizations includes financial contributions, attendance at events, and support of individual artists. Lastly during my decade of employment with the Greater Akron Chamber, I advocated on behalf of the business community for resources to support regional art and culture institutions.

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## TWO: ADVOCACY

The role of mayor includes in large part being a cheerleader and advocate for your city and the assets that make our communities special. During the process of creating the [Akron/Summit Cultural Plan](#), we heard loud and clear that residents want an administration that will make the arts and culture a centerpiece of their administration and legacy and who understands the importance of the arts to the city's economic development, tourism, public spaces, vibrancy, cultural brand, and quality of life.

### Response Prompt(s):

- As mayor, how will you use your position to strengthen the arts and culture sector in the city?
- Where will arts and culture fall within your priorities?

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### Candidate Response: MEGANN EBERHART

Strengthening and growing the creative sector is key to advancing Barberton. Arts and culture is meant to be woven into the foundation of all activity and not be isolated to a specific geographic area.

Traditionally, the creative community has not been included in Barberton economic development efforts. Creatives play an important role in the local economy. No matter where a creative is in their journey, the city will strive to be a welcoming, nurturing, and engaging place. Being inclusive in supporting all types of entrepreneurs is important to diversifying the economic base.

Additionally, my administration will value the important role arts and culture plays in making a vibrant community. We will work at the grassroots level with existing and new stakeholders to create an advisory board to increase accessibility, engagement, and diversity. Previously it has been a top down driven process. As previously stated above, arts and culture and the creative community will assist in positioning Barberton for renewal.

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## THREE: RESOURCES

A healthy cultural sector requires sustainable funding sources in order to maximize its potential for community impact. We must invest in our cultural hubs and venues. We must investigate and leverage new funding sources, and we must explore new resources for our sector.

### Response Prompt(s):

- What leadership would you provide to ensure sustainable funding of the arts and culture sector?

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### Candidate Response: MEGANN EBERHART

As a long time advocate, I will continue to support private, civic, and public resources to ensure the long term sustainability of the sector in the city and region

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