



City of New Bedford
Office of the Mayor
Contact: Elizabeth Treadup Pio
(508) 979-1410
etreadup@newbedford-ma.gov

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City of New Bedford
Jonathan F. Mitchell, Mayor

P R E S S R E L E A S E

Stakeholders Support Creation of New Arts, Culture, and Tourism Fund for New Bedford

New Bedford, Massachusetts- Arts, cultural, and business leaders in New Bedford are voicing their support for a proposal by Mayor Jon Mitchell to attract more creativity and investment to New Bedford and draw tourists through improved cultural planning, marketing, arts programming and public art.

The proposal, first announced publically in Mayor Mitchell's March 24th State of the City Address, would establish an "Arts, Culture and Tourism Promotion Fund" from a portion of the proceeds of the City's hotel and lodging tax to create a City Cultural Coordinator position and fund cultural marketing in collaboration with the Office of Tourism and Marketing, arts programming, and public art. The measure requires both approval by the City Council and passage of special state legislation, and will be taken up by the Council at Thursday's meeting.

Mayor Jon Mitchell said, "It is a matter of economic development orthodoxy that arts and culture are critical catalysts in cities' revitalization and growth. We're fortunate in New Bedford that we don't have to create an arts and culture 'scene' here out of whole cloth. We're already far ahead of many cities of our size in quantity, richness, and maturity of our cultural assets, but we need additional resources and capacity to maximize their impact on the city's growth and development."

In recent years, New Bedford's reputation has grown as the center for arts in the region and as a creative and inviting place for all types of artists to live and work. New Bedford was named the "Seventh Most Artistic City" by Atlantic Monthly, ranked Ninth on Matador Network's list of Most Creative Towns, and sixth on Bustle's Best Cities for Young Artists.

Noelle Foye, Executive Director of the New Bedford Art Museum/ArtWorks said of the proposal, "I believe that creating an Office of Arts and Culture is a significant step forward for New Bedford. Having a recognized place at the table, gives art and cultural institutions the ability to help facilitate change and support the economic development of the city."

“A great community is often identified by its commitment to arts and culture, including public art, programming, marketing and promotion. Indeed, businesses looking to relocate often measure the value of a community, in part, by its commitment to arts and culture. As one of the most arts-friendly communities in the United States, New Bedford can further show its commitment to being a new economy city by supporting this position,” said Rick Kidder, President of the New Bedford Area Chamber of Commerce.

“This proposal is the next step towards furthering economic development and tourism in our downtown cultural district,” said Senate Assistant Majority Leader Mark Montigny. “Over the years I have consistently advocated for the enhancement of our invaluable cultural institutions and programming to promote increased access to educational and experiential opportunities for residents and visitors of all ages and abilities. Providing a dedicated fund will further these efforts and promote the rich cultural heritage of our city. I look forward to filing the petition in the Senate with the collaboration of the Mayor and City Council.”

“Given the documented success the City has had with programs such as AHA! Night, a reinvigorated Zeiterion Theatre, the recognition of a cultural district, the success of organizations such as WHALE, the National Whaling Park District, and hosting educational institutions such as UMass Dartmouth and BCC, we are indeed poised to step up our presence as a destination for the arts, culture and tourism,” said Adrian Tio, Dean of UMass Dartmouth’s College of Visual and Performing Arts.

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