

Greetings Craig Cassar;

Congratulations on registering to represent the residents of the City of Hamilton in the upcoming Municipal Elections. This election will provide an opportunity for Hamiltonians to voice their opinions on the path forward Hamilton takes as we transition into a post pandemic environment.

Hamilton Arts Council (Hamilton's primary advocate between arts, business and government- <https://www.hamiltonartscouncil.ca/>) and **Beyond James** (Hamilton's pre-eminent online arts news resource – beyondjames.com) have partnered **to deliver a brief survey to all municipal candidates focusing on the arts and their impact on the city.** With over 30,000 individuals* working in the arts in Hamilton – 11% of the city's work force – the arts play a key economic and social role in our city. Results of the survey will be shared amongst both organizations' community of followers and through multiple media resources.

Survey information will also be used to inform a series of town hall events organized later this year by the Hamilton Arts Council between successful candidates for election and the arts community.

Please take the time to review the questions below and submit your responses and a photo of yourself to elections@beyondjames.ca prior to **September 6**. Should you have any questions, do not hesitate to reach out at the above e-mail address.

Best regards,
Beyond James/Hamilton Arts Council

* according to investinhamilton.ca

Survey Questions:

1. What arts event is a must do for every Hamiltonian?
2. What do you see as an opportunity to expand arts and culture in Hamilton?
3. If elected, how will you leverage your position as a City Councillor to advance the arts in Hamilton?

ANSWERS

- What arts event is a must-do for every Hamiltonian?

There is such a range of events in our city that I would encourage people to get engaged and attend what appeals most to them as I think there are options for just about everybody. But, to land on just one, I would recommend Supercrawl, not just because of its imminence, but for the following reasons:

1. It's free, and that means more than ever given the challenges of the past 2.5 years and the inflation we are currently experiencing
2. It brings people together so they can feel the energy of the community and connect with others
3. It's held in an exciting part of town that offers so many shops and restaurants to explore
4. It's easily accessible by public transportation and Hamilton Bike Share
5. The caliber of artists is top notch

2. What do you see as an opportunity to expand arts and culture in Hamilton?

To preface my answer, I will say that my perspective on this topic is being provided without yet having deep involvement in the community and without conversations with community leaders. I fully expect my views to evolve, but I offer this initial thought:

I'll focus on a specific area that I believe is one of the most important long-term opportunities: encouraging and developing youth to explore the arts and develop their talents in this area. Developing arts and culture requires a growing population actively participating in the sector and bringing new ideas and energy. If you allow my answer to bleed a little bit into the next question, our city needs to provide easily accessible and affordable opportunities for youth to participate and flourish in the arts. This means high-quality programs and opportunities to connect with mentors who can encourage and guide them.

3. If elected, how will you leverage your position as a City Councillor to advance the arts in Hamilton?

As a musician and current supporter of the arts community, I will endeavour to advance the arts - at a minimum - in the following ways:

- I will lead by example and attend as many events as possible to bring profile to the arts community in ward 12 and the broader city. With the opening of the Ancaster Memorial Arts Centre, we are well poised to begin an exciting new chapter in the evolution of our performing arts community.
- I will commit significant time and effort to meet with and listen to the arts community. It is the vision of the leaders within this sector that the City needs to understand and support.
- I will work with all stakeholders to find ways to provide the arts community with the space, funding, and profile required to grow successfully