MASSCreative Meets With Boston Mayoral Candidate Bill Walczak

Candidate would appoint a Commissioner for Arts and Cultural Affairs and calls for dedicated revenue stream to support arts and culture

BOSTON, August 23, 2013—MASSCreative announced today that Boston mayoral candidate Bill Walczak, founder of the Codman Square Health Center, met with the Create the Vote Coalition Aug. 15 to discuss his vision for the arts in Boston.

Walczak told the Coalition that he would create a Commission for the Arts and Cultural Affairs, and form a Creative Industries Office to drive the creative economy.

The Coalition—a collaboration of Boston’s arts, cultural, and creative institutions —met with Walczak at HarborArts in East Boston. Walczak cited the need for increased funding for the arts, and proposed dedicating one percent of the linkage monies that come to the city via public-funded construction projects to a new Municipal Arts Fund. “We now have $6 billion worth of construction going on,” Walczak said. “We need to reevaluate what we’re spending our money on.”

Walczak was the third candidate to meet with the Coalition. Representatives from the Boston Children’s Museum, HarborArts, ZUMIX, BostonAPP/Lab: Art in Public Places, and a working artist questioned Walczak about his vision for the arts in Boston.

The most important thing the next mayor of Boston needed to do, Walczak said, was “to elevate the arts within the administration—we need to cut through bureaucracy so we can have creativity.”

Bill Walczak co-founded the Codman Academy Charter Public School in 2000 which received special recognition from the Massachusetts Cultural Council for its innovative partnership with the Huntington Theatre Company. Together, the groups created the summer Shakespeare production as a solution to rising violence among youth in the community. The annual event continues today. He also built a black box theater at the Codman Square Health Center, and emphasizes that the arts can be a tool for many things—especially healing.

“We are encouraged by candidates who understand the value of public support of the arts and know that those investments reap tangible rewards in increased economic activity, educational opportunities for young people, and building strong communities,” said Matt Wilson, executive director of MASSCreative, and the organizing force behind Create the Vote. “We need that commitment from the next mayor of Boston.”
On September 9, Create the Vote will host the Boston Mayoral Candidate Forum on Arts, Culture, and Creativity. Moderated by arts critic Joyce Kulhawik, the forum will foster discussion of mayoral candidates’ vision for the arts in Boston. The forum will take place at the Paramount Theatre on Washington Street from 6-7:30pm. All members of the public are invited to attend.

The Create the Vote Coalition will continue to meet with candidates and share with the public what they learn. The Coalition looks forward to learning more details from candidates, including those they have already met with, about how their ideas and initiatives for the arts will be implemented from a policy and funding perspective. For more information about the coalition and the Create the Vote campaign, visit Mass-Creative.org.

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Founded in 2012, MASSCreative works with creative leaders and entrepreneurs, working artists, arts educators, and arts and cultural supporters to empower creative organizations and the public with a powerful voice to advocate for the resources and support necessary to build vibrant and connected communities.