



235 High Street, Bristol, RI 02809
artsincommon401@gmail.com
(401) 237-0779

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Arts In Common Community Meeting Announced

March 19, 3-5 PM in the Franklin Court Community Room 150 Franklin Street, Bristol, RI

Bristol, RI – March 4, 2016 –Save the Date: Saturday March 19! If you care about broadening engagement to arts and culture in Bristol and beyond, you are invited to an important meeting regarding the potential of arts and culture in Bristol.

Last fall, a weekend planning event with 50+ participants determined arts and cultural uses as the most dynamic future for the three decommissioned schools on one of the oldest colonial commons in New England.

“Much has been done to put in motion the ideas discussed, and we would like to bring you up to date, introduce you to a new organization and give you an opportunity to ask questions and get involved!” says Michael Rich, artist, Roger Williams professor, and supporter of the efforts to transform the schools for arts and cultural use.

“About 20 of us who attended the fall planning event think a non-profit group ‘Arts in Common’ should be formed to be the platform for town/community/university collaboration with artists and cultural organizations to upgrade and expand the environment so the arts can stay and thrive,” says Rich.

“Seizing an opportunity in Bristol’s historic district will help address an urgent RI challenge,” says Rebecca Riley, another supporter who attended the fall event. She detailed that in a recent report focused on competitive strategies for the flagging RI economy, the Metropolitan Policy Program at Brookings identified “quality of place” as an important driver in attracting and retaining a modern workforce. And that linking and expanding arts, education, and tourism activities is a significant target of opportunity in the state’s plan.

“Bristol has all the elements needed to make an important contribution to the RI effort, but these elements must be nurtured, networked and connected to the larger state initiatives,” Riley says.



“Reynolds and Byfield schools are home to many artists of all disciplines thriving and working together in the old spaces. Walley School is empty and in need of remediation. The town must address the future of these buildings, so we’ve come together to help create a path forward,” said Bradley Wester, artist and Bristol resident.

“A group like ‘Arts In Common’ not only bolsters local arts and culture, but also provides Bristol the imagination and energy to repurpose three old schools, stabilizing their financial future, while transforming a 17th century town commons into a 21st century space for creative civic life,” Wester added.

MEDIA CONTACT:

Doug Popovich

235 High Street, Bristol, RI 02809

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