

4 June 2024

TO: Bowdoinham Select Board

FROM: Community Development Advisory Committee

RE: Request for approval of TIF funds to enable public art project in the village

Dear Select Board,

We are writing to request approval for the use of \$xxx in TIF revenues to fund the design and execution of a public art mural within the village district.

As you are aware, at the most recent Town Meeting, town members approved an amendment to the TIF Development Program to allocate up to \$100,000 for the following activities:

Cost associated with the acquisition or construction of land, improvements, public ways, buildings, structures, fixtures and equipment for public, new or existing recreational trail, commercial development district use and costs of funding economic development programs or events developed by the municipality or plantation or funding the marketing of the municipality as a business or arts location. TIF revenues may be used to design and install signage, benches, gateways, public art, and other welcoming improvements to beautifying the downtown to draw consumers to the Main street leading traffic beyond the downtown towards other businesses.

Further, in the updated Comprehensive Plan, the vision statement describes Bowdoinham in 2034 in the following ways:

“Bowdoinham is a place where small businesses thrive. Farmers, artisans, and local entrepreneurs feel welcome and supported here.”

“The village is not significantly different in size or character from the past. It has improved sidewalks and looks more attractive.”

In an effort to beautify the downtown village so as to attract further investment and enhance Bowdoinham’s identity as a community supporting the arts, CDAC has developed a plan to commission a mural on the outside of the Merrymeeting Arts Center pottery studio facing Three Robbers Pub. See the picture of the wall below. The wooden sculptures will be moved elsewhere prior to the mural installation.



Fred Haer, owner of FHC and owner of the building, has provided his approval for this project. The Merrymeeting Arts Center is willing to manage the mural project with the key activities outlined below:

1. Develop a call for submissions to share with interested artists/muralists in Maine and beyond
2. Form a jury of Bowdoinham citizens to review submissions, selecting the top 2-4 to be put before the town
3. Town members would then vote on the final proposal, potentially at Town Meeting
4. Liaise with the awarded artist/muralist on execution of the mural painting/installation

Our goal is for this to be a serious installation of public art capturing some of the spirit of Bowdoinham. Depending on the timing, we could potentially have a public unveiling of the mural during Celebrate Bowdoinham in 2025.

We appreciate your consideration of this important project that we believe will strengthen the collective identity of Bowdoinham while beautifying our village in way that attracts further economic investment in our town.

Sincerely,

Community Development Advisory Committee
Jean de Bellefeuille, Chair
Laleah Parker
John Scribner
Ian McConnell