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Art frames need more discussion - but artists do need a space

The proposal to install art frames in the Village of Lewiston has my support in general - but as the Oct. 6 Tribune/Sentinel article and letters to the editor point out, the specifics need further detail and discussion. The details should be more clearly defined and discussed: How tall will the frames be, where they will be placed, what they will look like, how will the art be selected and by whom?

Here is something completely missing from the discussion thus far - artists in Lewiston have no place to display and sell their art. These art frames, if managed well and fairly, could provide such a space. Doing so will require input

from local artists with care taken to include the involvement of the many local visual artists.

Lewiston likes to portray itself as a community friendly to, supportive of, and supported by artists, but Lewiston has no avenue to support its visual artists. The Lewiston Art Festival is laudable, but its benefit to local visual artists is questionable; the number of local artists participating has decreased and is decreasing; the costs of exhibiting are too high. The fact is, there is no exhibit space or gallery conducive to selling art by local artists year-round.

I do not agree with the opinions stated in the Tribune/Sentinel

that portray Lewiston as an 1820's village. While there are some historic buildings, they are by no means the majority. We do not live in a living history museum; this is not Williamsburg, Virginia. We live in this century. Those opinions also seek to position the art frames as a similar irritant as the excessive highway signage. That is unfair and wrong.

The design aspects should be revealed, but I liked the designs shown in the newspaper. Some fact-checking is needed. The letter to the editor wrote that the visual art frames will be 8- to 10-foot tall. Is that true? I hope not, because then no one will be able to cor-

rectly see the art and it will be too difficult to reach the frames to change out the art regularly.

I support the proposal to put art frames on Center Street and elsewhere in Lewiston. Doing so will support Lewiston's brand as an art-supporting community. Having art on the street will be visually appealing and interesting. Visitors walking down the street will have a reason to stop and look around; that will help local businesses, too. The art frames will offer Lewiston's visual artists space to exhibit, and hopefully, to sell their work.

Michelle Marcotte Lewiston

Art proposal not the right fit for Lewiston

As a resident of the Village of Lewiston, I oppose the recent "Lewiston Public Art Project" to install 8-foot art towers and bright blue metal benches along Center Street. These installations are not only historically inappropriate, but are also a distraction rather than an attraction for the village.

The art towers and benches do not belong on Center Street. The

art deco tower design and bench color conflict with the architecture and historic era of Lewiston. Center Street is already "visionally impaired" with signs. As they say, sometimes less is more. I also believe these towers may be a driving distraction. Artwork is meant to draw the eye, plus these towers are solar illuminated at night.

Lewiston is unique. Residents

live here to enjoy its quaint, historic, small-town atmosphere. Visitors and vacationers come here to get a taste of what we enjoy every day. In recent years, it has become a destination for many visitors who come here because they are interested in our 19th-century history, not local art. As someone once said, "Lewiston's future is rooted in its past." Its history and heri-

tage is what residents treasure, visitors seek and local businesses appreciate.

I would suggest that the Village Board use their time, efforts and any available funds for projects that will enhance or improve Lewiston, rather than make inappropriate additions or changes.

Joan Maulis Lewiston

More information, more input sought on signs before board votes

I attended the Lewiston Village Board meeting on Oct. 2 and was concerned about the proposal to place art signs along Center Street.

I feel this subject should be open for public discussion before any decisions are made. Businesses on Center Street should be polled to see if they want more distractions in front of their businesses. If I owned a business

on Center Street, I would like pedestrians to be looking in my windows instead of art signs. I certainly don't want drivers being distracted by art signs with people crossing Center Street in between parked cars.

It was mentioned that bicyclists who may be traveling down Center Street will enjoy seeing the art signs. If a bicyclist is riding down Center Street, they

are probably more concerned about car doors opening, people crossing the street and moving cars. Certainly not looking at art signs!

The director of the Greenway Commission threatened the board that, if a decision cannot be made on the art signs, the commission may not award the money to the village to bring the bike path through the village.

He also said they may need to look at alternative bike paths around the village. I wasn't aware that the Village Board has even determined where the bike path will be coming through the village yet?

Bob Albee Lewiston

Not the right location for art

I have lived in Lewiston most of my life and am a former clerk-treasurer and employee of Artpark. From those perspectives, I am saying that the proposed art towers on Center Street are not a good idea. In one respect, Center Street does not need any more dis-

tractions; there are more than enough as it is. Secondly, I don't think our main street is the proper venue for viewing art. Maybe at Artpark or another park?

Also, I don't understand why the residents, business owners, Historic Commission and

Planning Commission were not originally consulted on such a major streetscape addition.

Bonnie Fyfe Moore Lewiston

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