



DALLAS AREA CULTURAL ADVOCACY COALITION

## ARTS & CULTURE QUESTIONNAIRE 2021 DALLAS CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATES

Thank you being a candidate and for your willingness to serve! And thank you in advance for answering the DACAC Arts & Culture Questionnaire for candidates for Dallas City Council in the upcoming 2021 election. You can fill this out online at [this LINK](#). The responses can go below and the form saved as a pdf and emailed to [dacac@artsdallas.org](mailto:dacac@artsdallas.org).

**1. NAME: Barry Wernick**

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**2. COUNCIL DISTRICT: 11**

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### **3. YOU AND THE ARTS**

**Give us a sense about your relationship with the arts  
(Some ideas to consider)**

- *What art form or cultural organization do you particularly enjoy?*
- *Are your family members involved in the arts?*
- *Share favorite cultural experience in the last two years?*
- *What virtual arts programs have you and your family enjoyed during the pandemic?*

I am a lifelong supporter and lover of the arts, as an actor growing up in Dallas Repertory Theater and Improv Troupes, as well as a Comic Book creator, television movie producer, and SAG-AFTRA member since 1999. I'm a member of the Dallas Producers Association and Texas Motion Picture Association. I have also produced major feature films in Dallas, with ties to the Dallas Film Commission.

### **4. ADVOCACY**

The support of our elected City leaders is important to ensuring arts and culture remain a priority at City Hall and part of the civic dialogue.

**QUESTION: How have you advocated for the arts community and/or how will you do that going forward?**

I continue to support the cleanest industry there is with the greatest return on investment that our tax dollars (HOT) help fund.

And it's not just the symphony, ballet, and opera. It's so much more. We have artists who are small business owners of galleries and underground art, live performance venues, that add the richness of our diverse city. Let's celebrate it and take advantage of the economic engine that the industry provides. A stronger economy means a safer city. And a safer city brings more people to our city to take advantage of the world class cuisine, diverse culture, and arts our great city has to offer.

## **5. SUPPORT & RECOVERY**

Prior to COVID, the Dallas creative economy was on track to have an economic impact surpassing \$1B a year, a vital business sector. The pandemic derailed that momentum. Arts facilities were the first to close and will be among the last to reopen at full capacity. The city's nonprofit arts and cultural community has lost more than \$95M and over 1,000 jobs and cultural tourism has virtually stopped. City support has been critical to keeping these institutions alive. Even in a tough budget year, this need remains.

**QUESTION: Will you work to see that City support continues and how will you ensure arts and culture play a key role in the Dallas economic recovery?**

I am a huge supporter of the arts, but I'm also an artist, writer, and creator with experience of bringing productions and entertainment businesses to Dallas. A stronger economy means a safer city. And a safer city brings more people to our city to take advantage of the world class cuisine, diverse culture, and arts our great city has to offer.

## **6. EQUITY AND NEIGHBORHOODS**

The top pillar of the Dallas Cultural Plan is Equity, with a goal of ensuring arts and culture are accessible in communities that have been historically underserved. And we know when arts are purposefully imbedded in the community, they can fight urban blight and create vibrant neighborhoods.

**QUESTION: How will you keep the focus on equitable access to the arts; and specifically where and how would you like to see art used to address challenges in your City Council District.**

*(Some applications to consider)*

- *Murals*
- *Underpass transformation*
- *More opportunities for ALAANA artists in underserved communities*
- *Popup cultural centers*
- *Neighborhood performances*
- *Economic incentives for developers to create affordable galleries, workshop spaces and artists housing*

## **7. PARTICIPATION**

The Dallas arts and cultural community is diverse and growing and contains a range of genres, ethnicities, locations and more. Every group, especially those serving your district, is honored when elected officials attend a program, visit our organizations, or even stop by a monthly DACAC meeting to say hello.

**QUESTION: Will you commit to attending local programs (performances, exhibitions, classes) or meeting with a Dallas arts organization on a regular basis? What would that look like?**

I will absolutely commit to attending local programs and meeting with Dallas arts organizations on a regular basis, as I already have lifelong ties to the arts community. I value supporting the arts and cultural initiatives in our community and pledge to meet with groups and remain transparent on budgeting and city decisions. My three daughters have been in dance and theatre since they were three years old, and I want to stay as committed as possible to give them the same quality of arts and culture I had growing up in Dallas.

While DACAC does not endorse candidates, these responses do guide consideration for support by individuals such as arts patrons and advocates, artists, board members, and more. Your responses will be publicly shared on our website to review. [www.DallasNeedstheArts.com](http://www.DallasNeedstheArts.com).