

**City of Ypsilanti  
Study Session Council Meeting Minutes  
Thursday, November 6, 2003 at 7:00 P.M.**

**CALL TO ORDER:**

Mayor Cheryl Farmer called the meeting to order at 7:08 p.m. in the Council Chambers at City Hall, One South Huron Street, Ypsilanti, Michigan.

Present: Mayor Farmer, Council Members Gawlas, LaRue, Nickels and Schulze. Council Member Schulze left at 8:40 p.m. and Council Member Gawlas left at 8:50 p.m.

Absent: Mayor Pro-Tem Swanson and Council Member Richardson. Council Member Richardson arrived at 7:41 p.m. and left at 8:40 p.m.

Council Member Gawlas offered and Council Member LaRue supported a motion to excuse the absence of Mayor Pro-Tem Swanson and Council Member Richardson.

**INVOCATION:** There was a moment of silence.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION:** There was none.

**DISCUSSION ITEM:**

A. Discussion of The Rise of the Creative Class, a book by Professor Richard Florida of Carnegie Mellon University.

Mayor Farmer lead the discussion with Council and the public by saying that City Council had agreed to read The Rise of the Creative Class, by Professor Richard Florida and then come back at a later date to discuss the book and invite others to join in the conversation.

The following is a summary of the points that were made in the discussion:

- ? High tech industries attract creative people. Work place habits and jobs are changing.
- ? Businesses even new ones like the architecture of old buildings because they give the impression of being established. Ypsilanti has a lot of established older buildings.
- ? Need 24 hour security and lighting at our parks.
- ? Our Depot Town was an example of artists looking for reasonable studio space and then improving the entire area.

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- ? Council Member Schulze and Jennifer Goulet, DDA Director, reported on a recent trip to Kalamazoo and Jackson. In Kalamazoo an old Jacobson store was turned into art studios, shops and cultural education venues. They reported on similar developments in Jackson.
- ? It was agreed that a "Master Plan for Attracting Arts and Culture" was needed along with an assessment of artists needs and an inventory of artists and potential space. It was said to do the planning now so when the economy improves we can act. Bring together key stakeholder groups for the planning process. Dialogue with artists and have them involved in the plan.
- ? Access to talented people is like what iron and coal used to be in making steel.
- ? Encourage business and building owners to give discounted rents for artists.
- ? Encourage financial industry to be involved and provide low interest loans for start-up art and cultural businesses.
- ? The Smith Furniture building is a possible location for low rents because it is empty now and has great window space where artists could be seen working.
- ? Do an "art walk" displaying the arts and culture we have now.
- ? We have a lot of work to do to prove to the state and corporate world that Ypsilanti is worth investing in.
- ? Have we done everything in our power to make the City attractive to artists?
- ? There could be zoning issues that prohibit artists from being able to have home studios. We may need to be more flexible and involve the Building Department.
- ? There were several references to Riverside Arts Center for bringing people together.
- ? Do we have affordable housing for artistic people?
- ? The new Water Street neighborhood will help develop the community.
- ? We need recreational activities to help attract talented artistic people.
- ? The south Depot Town area has houses that could be used to attract artistic people for combined residential-studio living.
- ? Our attractions include authentic history, entertainment, diversity and a welcome for all. We have a lot of different things for different people.
- ? The three Ts were mentioned, that being technology, tolerance, and talent. Eastern is good for the City in that way.
- ? We need high tech people to attract high tech industries.
- ? The City is still evolving and will continue to be changing.
- ? Attracting manufacturing and heavy industry may be a thing of the past.

**ADJOURNMENT:** At 8:50 p.m. there was no quorum and the meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.