

## **Are You Interested in a New Arts Community in Waddington?**

There are a great many artists and several artist organizations geographically dispersed throughout northern New York and southeastern Canada. We have some enjoyable and successful events that temporarily gather us together.

Yet we all know the energy is exciting and creative juices really start flowing when a critical mass of artists are permanently gathered in one, vibrant location: in residence, renting affordable or shared media-centered studios and galleries, participating in art events, and supported by cafes, art related shops like suppliers and framers, specialty shops, and so on.

There is a growing regional interest to create an affordable community of artists in Waddington, NY, focused on supporting and nurturing the arts. Once established, it will be an enjoyable entertainment and educational destination for everyone - including local residents, tourists, outdoor recreational enthusiasts, retirees, college students and their families, potential real estate buyers, and business owners, etc.

### **Why Waddington?**

Come out for a visit and you'll see why.

Waddington is on the very unique and special Lake St. Lawrence section of the St. Lawrence River, drawing visitors from around the globe each year. The village community retains the charm of a small town at the turn of the 19th century. It has beautiful Victorian era buildings, most of which are already complete or in the process of being restored - and a few gems are still available.

The Clark House Preservation project is renovating a beautiful, large old inn on Main Street, and will complete it based on whatever needs are identified by project participants. The extra wide Main Street, which leads to the waterfront, provides more than ample parking and can easily host street fairs, markets, and street-side open cafes.

On the corner of Main Street and Route 37, at the gateway to the downtown business district, is an underutilized, publicly owned, old-time Town Hall auditorium with a tall ceiling, stage, seating capacity for around 200, and recently added handicap accessibility. This is an ideal venue for various arts events, classes and performances, as well as rehearsals and meetings/gatherings.

Island View and Whittaker Parks provide a walking trail, scenic vistas, fishing platforms, ball fields, concert and craft fair venues, tennis and basketball courts, and public boat docks and launches. Waddington hosts many fishing tournaments from here including the Annual Junior International Carp Championship and BassMasters' Elite Series; and provides a summer concert series along with an annual Homecoming celebration.

A new pavilion will be constructed this summer in Island View Park that will be large enough to host a variety of additional events. Adjacent to Whittaker Park, the village also operates a large civic center, with a new commercial kitchen suitable for hosting fairs and conventions.

Situated across from the village and parks, is Ogden Island - a 450 acre public property that offers incredible scenic vistas - calling out to be captured by artists working in various media. The island and hundreds of acres of other public lands along the river also provide excellent outdoor recreational opportunities.

There's a lovely riverside drive and walking trail to arguably the nicest public beach in the state, which includes a beautiful waterfront pavilion with stage and side curtains (in case of inclement weather). Also, St. Lawrence University has its boat house at the beach which provides a home for its crew teams that train and compete along this section of the river. Just up the hill from the boat house is Leishman Point, which provides incredible views of Lake St. Lawrence in all directions.

Coles Creek state campground provides both RV and tent camping along the majestic St. Lawrence just 3 miles outside of the village; and Twin Brooks Golf Course offers 18 holes of golfing fun, also on the waterfront.

There is also a lot of casino-bound, Route 37 traffic driving by - ripe to draw into the village.

**Here are some of the ideas** floated so far:

- Art and craft galleries to sell art produced by local artists (both a juried fine art gallery, and non-juried shops)
- Artist studios (private studios, or shared equipment in larger, media-centered studio and teaching space for potters, jewelers, metal workers, woodworkers, fiber artists, painters, sculptors)
- Wholesaling opportunities for artist designed and manufactured, small gift items sold through local organizations' fundraising programs
- Classroom space where artists can offer classes
- Common space where local art or craft clubs can meet
- Weekly and seasonal events, in the Town Hall auditorium, riverside, and arena:
  - Practice space for musicians, theatrical and dramatic readings, dancers, etc. in the Auditorium
  - Arts performances (music, theater, dramatic reading, dance, film) including additional performance opportunities for college music and arts students, community theater, and local schools
  - Coffee shop style venues for performers wanting to get their work in front of audiences
  - Artists in Residence programs

- Weekend or week-long intensive “boot camp” workshops
- Art shows and fairs, both juried and not
- Art related competitions
- Major speakers and regional, perhaps national art and performing arts events
- Temporary mini-condos for visiting artists-in-residence, speakers, intensive art workshop attendees, retirees seeking a place to live, and “snow birds” returning to the area for events
- Headquarters or satellite offices for one or more art organizations
- We’ll see arts-related supporting businesses pop up, like framing shops, art and craft suppliers, music stores, perhaps B&Bs, tapas restaurants with wine and craft beers, specialty food shops, rentals, etc.
- We can benefit from what’s worked and what hasn’t, from the experiences of towns on the edges or outside our region who have also fostered the arts and tourism

**The project is still fluid.** What and how much happens will depend directly on the level of participation, but we see there’s a lot of interest and energy quickly building.

**Gallery is the first step.** There is a core group of artists and business people who are meeting biweekly on Thursday evenings at Artworks Creperie in Waddington. It is anticipated that by the time this article is published, there will already be additional gallery and classroom space available on Main Street. We have identified a location which will be rented by a core group of artists and business people with the intent of inviting other artists and fine crafters to participate in a cooperative style gallery where the artists operate the venue and share the revenue and expenses.

**We’re looking for more artists, volunteers, and benefactors,** to build a contact list, participate in planning, and help us keep this project rolling. Stay tuned for an emailed interest survey coming soon.

Please contact Mark Scott at [artworkscreperie@gmail.com](mailto:artworkscreperie@gmail.com) or 315-212-0109 to join us in developing this exciting new arts community!