



Feedback from Idea Lounge (Tuesday, September 19th)



CREATIVE NEEDS FOR EAU CLAIRE

“Create a co-op or other form of info center dealing with questions of sustainability—recycling, car sharing, etc.” – Monica Herrmann

“Food co-ops, bulk purchasing, re-using our plastic jugs to fill up and use over again. Help global warming. Stop the creating of one more plastic jug to fill our land fills.”

“I would like to see a place to eat with a full vegetarian and/or vegan menu. Veggie heads struggle to eat out here. Eau Claire also needs a dance club—not a bar with a dance floor—but somewhere where the music and ambience is important instead of the booze and getting drunk. I want to enjoy the nightlife, but it all revolves around alcohol.”

“The baby boomers would love to see a dance club, so we don’t have to travel to the cities.”

“Make chain stores cooperate and take over.”

“Cheap housing development (apartments downtown) ALONGSIDE gentrified housing (mix the classes/groups).”

“We need independent films off campus during the non-summer months.”

“Independent Film Production.”

“A subsidized, specialty retail incubator site in the Barstow Business District.”

“Carriage rides along First Ave.; billboard overlooking Phoenix Park; blues band at noon; Mike Huggins-music; art Space; neighborhood coalitions; spending for the Arts.”

IDEA LOUNGE IMPROVEMENTS

“Have a night that includes specific action steps—direct communication, sign-up, organizing, etc.—for the topic you’re discussing.”

“Read the book *Negotiating Sustainable Behavior*. Include an action component to utilize the amount of minds that show interest at these events. Ask for a show of hands, to see who will take action (i.e. how many people will write letters to council people on *this* topic?).”

“Handicap access.”

IMITATE OTHER CITIES

“La Crosse’s Arts Community published brochure—Economic Impact of the Arts. They have an umbrella arts organization.”

OPINIONS AND THOUGHTS

“I agree with those who say we already have a lot going for us as a community. It’s partly a matter of attitude. Don’t wait for someone else to improve your world. Get out and make something happen. Simply providing a time and space for these people to get together and TALK is a huge step for making connections, helping us all be aware that ‘we’re not alone.’ YEA! Listen to the BUZZ of voices after the Idea Lounge ended. In that buzz are the seeds of the future creative blossoms. We don’t have to try very hard to make it happen, in my view. A little light, a little water—the seed carries its own generative power.” –Sara Bryan

“Stop describing E.C. as conservative. Creativity is about taking risks, being BOLD, colorful, full of life. Affirm these things and the creative city image will grow and blossom. Yes, one must have R&R in order to have space for ideas to blossom. Change begins with an idea. Then a person puts feet to their idea.” –Savannah Rhae

“I want to say something about the baby boomers or people who have lived here forever like me and my family and how they are afraid of the downtown, afraid of being outside the box. Because they ARE here. I think by educating the ‘boxers’ that change is okay, they don’t have to be afraid of the new. Being less conservative on the news and educating the public about what’s out there—like feng-shui. Anything Eastern thinking.”

“Complacency: Invoke passion. People are trying to make a living running around like fleas in a fit. **Promote volunteerism through the workplace**, i.e. people being paid to volunteer outside of their workplace say four hours a month. When people are giving their time in meaningful ways, work is more enjoyable. Everyone benefits.”

“When an idea or plan is bad—make it easier to challenge without putting down the challengers, i.e. moving RCU 90 ft created Phoenix Park and was almost lost by lack of open minds. What would we point to if the challenge had been squelched?”

CONCERNS AND QUESTIONS

“How is the civil union and marriage ban going to affect the community and what message does it send to creative people we want to attract to Eau Claire and Wisconsin? People need to get involved to defeat it.”

“How can we fill the State Theater and keep it viable?”

“We need to consider urban sprawl and know it will affect the Creative Class in a negative way. Making the city less unique and less attractive to creative people.”



Topics at Idea Lounge (Tuesday, September 19)



HOW CAN EAU CLAIRE REVERSE ITS NEGATIVE IMAGE?

-“Cater to Baby Boomer segment (50-60 year olds). Residents of this age need more than just restaurants. Focus on older entrepreneurs rather than young.”

-“Unite as a city. Don’t divide city into North, South, East, and West; rich and poor; etc.”

-“ Branch outside of the box. Don’t become fixated on one area or one event.”

-“Connect businesses in town with creatives.”

-“Get involved with schools and long range planning of education. This will get kids started early to become part of the creative class.”

-“Acknowledge involvement.”

-“Create a marketing art program through colleges, organizations, or government.”

-“More entertainment in a smoke-free, non-alcoholic environment.”

-“Survey non-residents at Eau Claire events (i.e. State Theater productions) about likes/dislikes and image of the city.”

-“FREE STUFF!”

WHAT COOL STUFF HAVE YOU SEEN IN OTHER CITIES?

-A privately owned folkhouse that includes soap making materials.

-(Minneapolis) Patronization and support of locally owned businesses Downtown

-(Burlington, VT) Walkable Downtown. “Eau Claire needs to market its bike-trail Downtown as a cross country ski or snow shoe trail.”

-(San Antonio, TX) Use waterfront Downtown.

-(Clayton) Decentralization. Small stores become part of city/neighborhood parks.

-Shops/centers to support alternative healing.

WHAT SHOULD EAU CLAIRE SUPPORT IN ITS CITY?

- “Full-blown food co-op.”
- “Deli/Cheese market in Downtown area.”
- “Completion of bike trails Downtown.”
- “Classes to enhance art and other interests (gardening, knitting, etc.)” (UWEX possibly offers)
- “Art Center with subsidies from the City. Rehabilitate North Barstow properties. View Humphrey Institute Study.”
(http://www.hhh.umn.edu/img/assets/6158/arts_economy_initiative.pdf)
- “Support and improve the sustainability of local designers and architects.”
- “Help artists own studio space.”
- “Start Neighborhood Coalitions by contacting Jasmine Conro at 829-2087.”
- “Start a marketing art class.” (Jen Roth from ECRAC can do)
- “Start an independent film festival.”

OVERCOMING COMPLACENCY

- “Associations in Eau Claire have power.”
- “Get together with friends and others and do something—anything.”
- “Lead by example.”
- “Do things in public spaces.”
- “Work with Chamber, Young Professionals, and Leadership EC.