

## Candidate Information

### Your name as it appears on the ballot

Justin D. Hodge

### City, State & Zip

Ypsilanti, Michigan 48197

### I am a candidate running for

Washtenaw County - Board of Commission – District 5

### Party Affiliation - I am running as a/an

Democrat

### I am currently an elected official and hold the office of:

Washtenaw County Commissioner, District 5

### As an elected official, you have an opportunity to lead and influence public policy and investment in the arts + creative industries.

### What are your personal beliefs, interests and investments in the arts + creative industries? Please check all that apply.

- I believe that the arts + creative industries are important and that they enhance and improve the quality of life, place and economy in our community making it a great place to create, live, work, learn, play and visit.
- People living in my community should have access to excellent and affordable art, creative, cultural and heritage offerings in our community.
- I believe every child in Washtenaw County should have access to excellent arts and creative education at every grade level.

### Government/Municipal Planning - Integrating the Arts + Creative Industries

- Government/Municipal Master Plans
- Government/Municipal Strategic Plans
- Government/Municipal Economic Plans
- Government/Municipal Arts + Creative Industries Plan

### Commissions - Establishing & Investing in an Arts + Creative Industries Commission

- An arts + creative industries commission charged with developing, implementing, maintaining and evaluating a comprehensive arts and creative industries plan (including public art and design). This commission will have proper resources including a budget and qualified staff resources.
- A Public Art & Design Commission (standalone) charged with developing, implementing, maintaining and evaluating a public art and design program. This commission will have proper resources including a budget and qualified staff resources.

- Working to establish a countywide arts +creative industries commission and/or agency with equitable representation and shared investment responsibilities by all Washtenaw County governments to develop, implement, maintain and evaluate a comprehensive arts and creative industries master plan.

### **Public Investment & Policy - Arts & Creative Industries**

- Appropriations - direct spending on arts & creative programs such as including funding for commissions and qualified staff.
- Municipal grant program for projects and programs (not public art & design)
- Require the integration of public art & design into government building projects.
- Establishing a program that dedicates a determined percent of municipal construction budgets to be invested in public art & design projects.
- Economic development support/grants specific to arts and creative industry projects/programs.
- Contributed public safety and services for special/community events.
- Government grants/opportunities requiring municipal engagement– with or without community partners, leading, providing staff and financial resources for planning, applications, project implementation and reporting.
- Require a percentage of Washtenaw County's accommodations tax to be used to support an arts + creative industries commission charged with, among other initiatives, subgranting to arts + creative agencies.
- Other grants/opportunities with or without community partners, leading, providing staff and financial resources for planning, applications, project implementation and reporting.
- Disaster relief funds and services should be afforded the arts + creative industries (for and nonprofit) as it is other Michigan industries.

### **Emergency Relief and Restoration**

- Yes, I will work to require that the arts + creative industries are included and have equitable decision-making responsibility at economic development agencies.

### **Arts + Creative Education Integration for Student Excellent (ACEISE) in Washtenaw County**

#### **My pre-K-12 education included arts + creative education.**

- Yes, my pre-K-12 education included arts + creative education.

### **Arts + Creative Education**

Yes, I will be an advocate in support of arts & creative education.

### **What role do you believe elected officials and government agencies should play in leading arts and creative industry development and sustainability in their communities?**

Elected officials and government agencies should have a large role in leading arts and creative industry development within the community. As a social worker, I am especially passionate about having high-quality public art, which is accessible to all people regardless of background and socioeconomic status. I believe that artists should be fairly compensated for their work and government and private agencies should contract with local artists when considering new art for public or private spaces. Additionally, we know that when arts and culture are included in

public education, youth do better academically. Elected officials should speak out against cuts in funding for arts education. Looking specifically at our community, the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners has the potential to and should play a huge role in advancing arts and creative industries, promoting tourism across the whole county, and advancing our arts and creative industry countywide. The clear economic advantages to supporting a strong arts and creative industry aside, as a social worker and a mental health professional, I understand the power of the arts in advancing social justice as well as its value for therapeutic purposes. Given that, I support the Board of Commissioners formalizing its commitment to developing our arts and creative industry through a resolution and designating funds for development under the guidance of a commission of experts.

**If elected, what role will you take in leading arts & creative industry development and sustainability in your community?**

While I am not an artist myself, I have friends and family who are and I have made efforts to learn about the industry through them. Additionally, through my mentor that is a professor of both Social Work as well as Art & Design, I have had the opportunity to learn from his perspective of community-based empowerment and social justice through the use of art. Through these experiences, as well as seeing the role of art in social change and its value in promoting mental health, I am eager and prepared to work with our arts community to fight for programming and opportunities to promote industry development. I support creating spaces in our county buildings for local artists to showcase their work, holding events countywide and working to develop an event comparable to ArtPrize, and creating mentorship and educational opportunities for amateur artists to develop their skills into professionals. I intend to be in close contact with our arts community for guidance on how the Board of Commissioners can best support industry development and sustainability in the community.

**If elected, I will be a leader and champion for the arts + creative industries in sessions, committee meetings and in my district. I look forward to working with and learning from those in my community practicing in, championing and advocating for the arts and creative industries.**

- Yes, I will be a leader and champion for the arts + creative industries.

**If elected, would you join a legislative arts, humanities and/or creative industries caucus?**

- Yes, I would join.

**If yes, which caucus would you join?**

- Washtenaw County Arts & Creative Industries Caucus - when it is formed.