

Natalie Draper

From: Cecilia Cornejo <artelamilpa@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, September 27, 2021 10:04 AM
To: Cynthia Gilbertson; Natalie Draper
Cc: Shibatajs@julianeshibata.com; Todd Edwards; Karna Hauck; Heather Lawrenz; Paula Granquist; Rob Hardy
Subject: To the Arts & Culture Commission

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization.

Dear Members of the Northfield Arts & Culture Commission,

On behalf of **SAY THEIR NAMES ~ Northfield**, we write to let you know that we have decided to no longer pursue our request to the Commission that our work, including chalk work, be considered public art.

Our decision is partly based on comments made by the chair of the Commission at the September 13th meeting—comments that were not challenged by any of the other members present at the time. During the session the chair stated that “...We’re here to serve the City’s Cultural Plan. The City is not asking specifically for thought-provoking art, or art that encourages dialogue. We want art that attracts people to Northfield, art that is delightful to look at... ‘Discussion’ is not in the City’s best interest.” When a board member asked the chair to clarify how she was defining “the City,” she responded: “The government. The City Council.”

From our perspective, art that provokes reflection, dialogue, and that responds directly to community needs is of the essence. Artmaking that places community members at the heart of the creative process is precisely what Northfield needs and deserves. “Art must not be a separated space of freedom, only tolerated because it is disconnected from social and political life...” writes Amanda Priebe. In this sense, we believe Northfielders have the capacity to engage with all types of art experiences, including those that may be unexpected and even challenging. Plenty of places not only “tolerate” but encourage chalking in public property and we are frankly disconcerted that this is not the case in Northfield, a supposedly progressive and open-minded town.

Given that our understanding of art, as well as its function in society, is so radically different from that of the Commission’s leadership, we feel it’s inappropriate to ask you to make recommendations to the City of Northfield on our behalf.

We thank you again for giving us the opportunity to present our work at your meeting on Monday, August 9th. Whether through the Art in Public Spaces initiative or others already in existence, we wish you success in making Northfield a place where diverse voices, experiences, and art, such as ours, are actually respected and valued.

Sincerely,

Cecilia Cornejo, on behalf of **SAY THEIR NAMES ~ Northfield**

Please share this message with the Commission members named below, for which we don't have email addresses:

Teresa Jensen
Matthew Klooster
Bob Thacker
Edie Meehan
Sam Nelson
Kamalie Nieves
Carsten Walter

www.artelamilpa.com

<http://thewanderinghouse.com/>

<https://www.facebook.com/NotionsOfHome/>

<https://www.instagram.com/notionsofhome/>