

Proclamation Honoring Susan Higby

WHEREAS February, 2023 is the 20th anniversary of Susan Higby's service as the Executive Director of Studio Place Arts (SPA); and

WHEREAS during her tenure in this position SPA has grown to become a regional cultural organization of great distinction, offering more than 400 exhibits involving thousands of local artists that are free and open to the public in four exhibit spaces in the SPA building and at two other local businesses on Main Street, covered widely in local, statewide, and regional media; and

WHEREAS SPA has mounted an annual exhibit of Stone Arts every year in its main floor gallery featuring local stone artists and celebrating the important Barre legacy of stone arts and stone carvers; and

WHEREAS Susan Higby has honored 16 older artists with a retrospective exhibit, many with important links to Barre, including John Hanna (2009), Frank Gaylord (2015), and Guiliano Cecchinelli Senior (2016); and

WHEREAS Susan Higby worked to secure funds from the Semprebon Fund and leveraged these funds with business and other private donations to increase public stone sculptures from 3 to an additional 7 and created the self-guided "Art Stroll Map" to draw increased attention to Barre's stone assets (including the Zipper Park next to the SPA building, which draws many out-of-town visitors); and

WHEREAS the Vermont Creative Network estimates that Vermont's creative economy represents approximately 8.6% of the total economy, and the National Endowment for the Arts calculates that Arts and Cultural activity creates 2.9% of Vermont's gross state product (GSP); and

WHEREAS SPA significantly enhances the local economy in Barre by attracting visitors, students, and workers in the building's 12 resident studios to Main Street who also patronize many other local businesses; and

WHEREAS Susan Higby has operated SPA's diverse and year-round educational programs that provide classes and workshops for both children and adults of all abilities and experience; and

WHEREAS under Susan Higby's leadership SPA has sought out collaborations with other organizations and major institutions of education such as Very Special Arts (now called Inclusive Arts Vermont), the Ford Foundation (Reclaiming Midwives – All My Babies national traveling exhibit), the Nagoya Japan University of the Arts, the Surface Design Association, Vermont Book Arts Guild, Vermont Weavers Guild, Vermont Studio Center, the Center for Cartoon Studies, Vermont College of Fine Arts, Spaulding High School, Association of Retarded Citizens, and Washington County Mental Health Services; and

WHEREAS Susan Higby has been a tireless advocate for Barre, working with Homecoming Days, serving on City Council and for many years on the Civic Center Committee, assisting with children's activities at the Mathewson Playground, and many other projects;

THEREFORE, I PROCLAIM that on the occasion of the SPA Open Studio on Sue's 20th anniversary with SPA, February 11, 2023, be Sue Higby Day in Barre to recognize and honor her significant contributions to the vitality of the city of Barre and extend to her a Mayoral key to Barre City.

So dated this 7th of February, 2023

Jake Hemmerick, Mayor
Barre City, Vermont