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Salisbury Cultural Action Plan Steering Committee to Begin Work in Cultivating a Creative Local Community

Team to Hold Second Meeting in Early January to Begin Systematic Exploration of Area Arts, Cultural Aspirations, Assets and Needs

Salisbury, NC_December 19, 2007 – The City of Salisbury’s Cultural Action Plan Steering Committee will hold its second scheduled meeting on Monday, January 7, 2008 at Salisbury City Hall, council chambers. The committee will begin the task of examining and exploring ways in which arts, cultural commerce and its respective creation, can contribute to the broadening of civic goals throughout Salisbury. A City Council adopted Resolution of Intent in early September provided the opportunity for investigation and creation of a Cultural Action Plan.

During the committee’s initial meeting, held November 15, 2007, the cultural action plan process was explained and thoroughly reviewed. Steering committee members were enlightened to the cultural action plan process and discovered that through cultural planning, the development of shared, sustainable, and equitable strategies are able to assist in achieving economic community development. By strengthening and increasing the diversity of arts and cultural opportunities, and consistently promoting understanding, respect and cohesiveness among diverse populations, a cultural action plan can assist with beautifying and reclaiming specific locations throughout the City. Salisbury Mayor Susan Klutz offered her appreciation to those council-appointed members present at the November meeting and shared the following thoughts, “Speaking on behalf of the Salisbury City Council, I would like to sincerely thank our committee members for their commitment of time and energy to the creation of this cultural action plan. By nurturing and retaining artists, creative workers, the arts, and cultural organizations, we will preserve and enhance a sense of place in Salisbury, while strengthening cultural commerce. Through strengthened public education and lifelong learning, inter-generational communication and activity will occur, thus allowing for the celebration of local tradition in harmony with increased opportunities for creative contemporary expression.”

Members of the Salisbury Cultural Action Plan Steering Committee, in addition to Mayor Klutz, are Councilman Mark Lewis, City Staff Liaison Joe Morris, Connie Baker, Betz Bigelow, Phillip Burgess, Michele d’Hemecourt, James Donaldson, Sarah Hensley, David Fish, Paul Fisher, Cheryl Goins, Sarah Hall, Joanne Harrison, Faleese Jenkins, Rose Jones, Katie Lipscomb, James Meacham, Edward Norvell, Foster Owen, Barbara Perry, Eleanor Qadirah, Mark Ritchie, David Setzer and Marietta Smith. Additional City

staff committee members include Gail Elder-White, Diana Moghrabi, Lynn Raker and Doug Paris.

Consultant Mary Berryman Agard, offering over twenty years of experience in cultural and strategic planning, foundation management, civic dialogue, donor advising and non-profit management, will facilitate, assist and guide the creative cultural action plan process. Agard's past works have addressed a variety of topics including arts and culture, environmental preservation and restoration, sustainable agriculture, verification of voting systems, social and economic justice, and education. During the November committee meeting, Agard shared a copy of the Cultural Planning Guidelines issued by the New South Wales Ministry of the Arts. "Culture in its widest sense is about what matters to people and communities. It is about relationships, shared memories and religious backgrounds found in most communities. It is about the things we consider valuable for passing on to future generations. It is our way of connecting the present with the past and with the future." Agard explained to committee members, that their role will be to systematically explore the area's arts and aspirations, assets and needs. Through this evaluation methodology, the team will appraise Salisbury's refined sense of history and develop a clear understanding of how local history relates to community economics. Following a review of the City's Vision 2020 Comprehensive plan, committee members participated in a brainstorming session with a discussion focusing on the most powerful attributes shaping local community activity. Additionally, suggestions for additional committee members, representative of populations not currently present on the steering committee panel were taken.

One of three planned meetings for 2008, the upcoming January gathering will focus on group discussions, potential local interviews, an established timeline process and the evaluation of community attributes which may be harnessed to attract new or underserved audiences to Salisbury's cultural activities. The Cultural Action Plan Steering Committee will present a preliminary findings report to City Council during the February 2008 Future Directions and Goals Setting Retreat. Committee members will ultimately be involved in the "hands-on" design of a cultural community event, culminating the findings of their cultural action plan process. For more information regarding the Salisbury Cultural Action Plan process, please contact Diana Moghrabi at 704-638-5240.

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