



Greater Binghamton Chamber of Commerce creates strategic office of Placemaking Initiatives

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Binghamton, NY According to representatives from the Greater Binghamton Chamber of Commerce, the chamber has created a strategic new position with the office of Placemaking Initiatives.

Placemaking is the participatory process for shaping public space that harnesses the ideas and assets of people who use it, according to the Project for Public Spaces, one of the foremost organizations in placemaking.

Placemaking involves a hands-on approach to improve areas within a community utilizing physical, cultural, social, and other assets to create opportunities to bring people together. The Chamber stated that the goal of this position is to support existing initiatives and create new activities to make a more attractive and cohesive community.

“We wanted to create the Placemaking office to serve as a catalyst for improving public spaces to create opportunities to gather, connect and beautify the Greater Binghamton area,” said Stacey Duncan, CEO of the Leadership Alliance, a partnership between the Greater Binghamton Chamber and The Agency. “We’re looking forward to engaging and inviting the community to become part of the process.”

The Chamber’s board of directors approved the creation of the new position, noting the changing work environment and challenge to attract talent. “People are making decisions on where to live and work based on quality-of-life factors, and much less so on a specific job opportunity,” said Jon Sarra, chairman of chamber’s board of directors and assistant managing partner at Hinman, Howard and Kattell, LLP. “If we want to retain and attract talent, we need to create vibrant spaces to bring people together.”

The Chamber also hired its first ever director of Placemaking Initiatives, Jim Reyen. Reyen, a life-long Binghamton resident, is the founder of the Rec Park Music Fest, recently renamed as the Harper Stanz Rec Park Music Fest, which celebrated 27 years this past summer. Previously, Reyen was business director for Eureka / Johnson Outdoors and recently retired to focus on the Greater Binghamton community.

The Greater Binghamton area has such wonderful people, events, and public spaces, and I am looking forward to focusing my time and energy to strengthen the vibrancy of my hometown,” said Reyen. “We will focus on communicating and promoting positive programs and public spaces to

possible transplants and others considering moving to or staying in the area.”

Another goal of the office is to build strong partnerships with municipal offices to identify community assets and areas to make more open for social gathering. Placemaking has also been identified as a tool for strengthening neighborhoods and increasing public safety.

“Greater Binghamton’s vibrant public spaces are a big part of what makes our community such a great place to live, work and raise a family,” said Mayor Jared M. Kraham. “I’m grateful to the Greater Binghamton Chamber of Commerce for creating a dedicated position through the new Office of Placemaking Initiatives to help tap into the full potential of our public spaces and shine a light on our area in a way that attracts young professionals, families, and people of all ages. The City of Binghamton stands as a ready partner in this important effort.”

Reyen will begin his role on October 10, 2022. The Leadership Alliance will be hosting an inaugural Creative Placemaking Workshop with Kady Yellow on October 25th from 11:30-4:00 p.m., location not yet confirmed.

Yellow is a former Binghamton native and is currently the senior director of placemaking and events for Downtown Vision, Inc., the business-improvement district in Jacksonville, Fla. She has served in similar roles in Flint, Michigan and Anchorage, AK. She has taught the principles of creative placemaking across the country.

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