

B-Line Trail Dedication Ceremony, Thursday, September 8, 2011

I'm Susan Sandberg, President of the Bloomington City Council, and on behalf of my fellow council members, thank you for being here...we are so proud of the B-Line Trail and this community. The vision for this project started with the Honorable Mayor, Tomi Allison, and here we are today at the B-Line dedication. I was reminded by Councilmember Tim Mayer, that he and then Councilmember, Chris Gaal, attended the management team meetings set up by Mayor Fernandez to transition B-Line planning to the Kruzan administration. They discussed purchase opportunities, trail build-out, neighborhood connections, business development facing the trail, opportunities for public art and art display and a signature 3rd Street element. I know how proud Tim and Chris both are, along with other council colleagues, to see this project move from the drawing board to execution, fulfilling all the hopes they had from the beginning.

In 2008 during the ribbon cutting for Phase 1 of the B-Line Trail, I referred to this project as a blank canvas waiting to be painted on in all its colorful community character. Public art and economic activity has already developed along the B-Line. As the arts are an important part of our economic vitality in Bloomington, I'd like to mention some highlights that we have come to love as we move along the B-Line Trail.

The signature piece at the head of the B-Line is the giant table and chairs by limestone artist, Dale Enochs, called Bloomington Banquet. It was exciting to watch this piece coming together, and what a powerful statement about our community. It reminds us that in Bloomington, everyone is welcome at our table, from the Farmers' Market, to our vibrant restaurant community, and our strong network of social services.

Another remarkable piece called Animal Island comes from collaborative artist Joe LaMantia leading a group of Stone Belt artisans to create this whimsical metal sculpture. Every time I walk by it, it makes me smile and reminds me how lucky we are to live in a community with the terrific artists and staff at Stone Belt, and Joe LaMantia.

Across from Animal Island is a mural created in a cultural exchange between Monroe County students and Mayan students from San Juan, La Laguna in Guatemala. Sponsored by Gracia Valliant and Sarah Irvine, this colorful work comes from the Art Across the Americas program. It speaks to the diversity of Bloomington, a place where people of all countries, languages, and cultures are welcome.

There are other notable pieces of public art along the B-Line trail including murals by Lara Moore and the Boys and Girls Club, the steel sculpture by Mark Wallis called Dancing Spirit, and another Indiana limestone piece called Figured Base by Mike Van Vooren.

Thank you to the Bloomington Community Band. It is so great to see you here this evening adding so much to all community festivities. I'd also like to thank the artists from the Limestone Symposium, the Bloomington Watercolor Society and the People's University who are here with

us on-site demonstrating their talents during this evening's dedication. We recognize them and all Bloomington artists for their work and future contributions to the vibrancy of Bloomington. Special thanks to Miah Michaelson, Assistant Director for Economic Development and the Arts. Miah's leadership, along with the work of the Bloomington Arts Commission, will leave a lasting legacy for the Bloomington Entertainment and Arts District and the B-Line Trail.