



Benjamin Lamb
North Adams City Councilor

July 27th, 2021

Dear Fellow Councilors,

As many likely remember, for several years, those walking around downtown North Adams found intrigue and a level of aesthetic beauty in the uniquely designed and painted crosswalks that we had throughout our downtown. The Art About Town volunteer efforts to create whimsy and fun through the integration of art in our downtown was not only a great way to inject high-contact visuals into the City, but it also represented a community bonding activity through their installation, and the use of a practice for traffic slowing to help make downtown more pedestrian and bike friendly.

Unfortunately, over time, the City changed its approach, and determined that these artistic crosswalk installations could no longer be permitted, restored, or re-done based on administrative interpretations.

While I don't argue here that it is the right of the City to make determinations of this type, I do wonder why so many other communities, most notably near to us in Great Barrington, Pittsfield, and Northampton, have been able to establish or make plans for art infused crosswalks without similar conflict. In discussing this with the Mayor, he agreed that a more comprehensive review and long-term policy decision would be beneficial for deciding what the future might hold along these lines.

I believe there is a way to allow, and to in fact motivate, the use of this approach again here in North Adams and I would like to request a joint review of the concept of artistic crosswalk installations by the Traffic Commission and the Public Arts Commission, to include an opinion from KP Law as the City Solicitor. The goal being to review the specific issues that such installations would present, what methods we have at our disposal to mitigate those issues, and if the risks associated create a true impasse to pursuing artistic crosswalks.

I kindly ask that the Council refer this matter to both Commissions and then to the Administration for a decision that can be set as policy going ahead.

Thank you for your time and consideration

Sincerely,
Councilor Lamb