

COMMUNITY IMPACT THROUGH VISUAL ARTS

NAME: Bill Stamats

VOLUNTEERING ROLE:

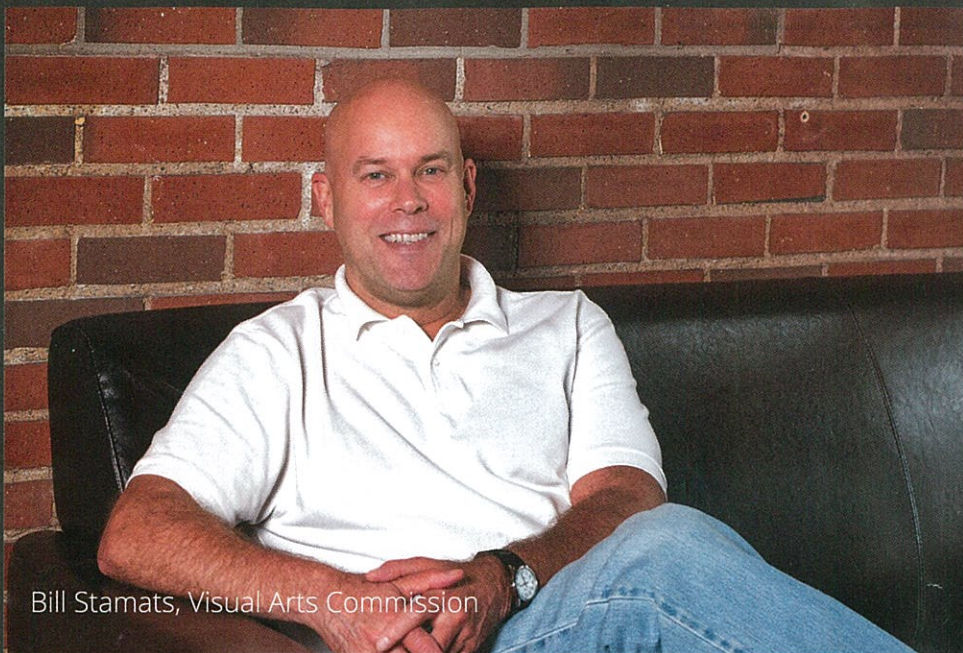
Visual Arts Commission since December 2013; chair since July 2014

WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO WANT TO GET INVOLVED WITH THE VISUAL ARTS COMMISSION (VAC)?

"My background in art is the main reason — I consider myself a working artist as well as a business man. Our charge is interesting for me — our job on the commission is to do a number of things: engage the community with public art, but also with projects on public grounds."

WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE PART OF SERVING IN THIS ROLE?

"Public art is very important; it brings an aesthetic appearance and sophistication to a city. Part of why I got involved was as an employer — we want people to want to work here and live here. My contribution is to do this through visual arts. Having interesting public artwork is critical. We have the red sculpture at the public library by an internationally known artist, the two pieces of art outside the Museum of Art, also by an internationally known artist, and to top it off, Greene



Bill Stamats, Visual Arts Commission

Square will have this fabulous Bruce Beasley piece, another very well-known international artist. So you have one, two, three really top-notch art pieces downtown...it gives me goosebumps."

FOR ANYONE WHO ISN'T FAMILIAR WITH THE VAC, CAN YOU HELP DESCRIBE WHAT YOUR WORK ENTAILS?

"We act as the recommending body to City Council for new artwork, or pieces purchased for the city. In every part of the budget for a new city building, two percent goes to public art, and we make recommendations for that. This year we are working on a plan to inventory all city-owned artwork and the condition of the art. We are also looking at future places public art could go, such as integrated into the flood control system — walls, levees, and gateways."

AS A CITIZEN, WHY DO YOU THINK IT'S IMPORTANT TO TAKE AN ACTIVE ROLE IN YOUR COMMUNITY?

"I live in this town, I've grown up here my whole life; this is my city. If I'm not involved in my city, then I'm not being a good citizen. It's so easy to get involved in something that interests you, and have the ability to make real change."

WHAT WOULD YOU SAY TO SOMEONE WHO IS THINKING OF GETTING MORE INVOLVED WITH THEIR CITY GOVERNMENT?

"Try something for a year, it's essentially 12 meetings. Try it out and see if it fits." ■



"Bill understands business, is passionate about art, and understands the needs of artists and the artistic community. He brings this passion and professional background to the VAC and is instrumental in sharing this vision and artistic appreciation with the community."

—SETH GUNNERSON, staff liaison to the Visual Arts Commission