

3/4/2010

# City of Clinton News Release

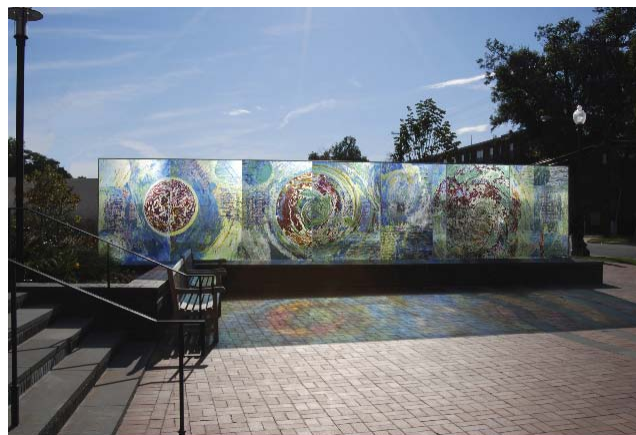


For immediate release:

## Downtown Revitalization Phase III Update

During the City Council meeting on March 3, City Manager John Connet presented Clinton City Council with an update on the proposed incorporation of public art into the Downtown Revitalization Phase III project. In a memo to City Council, Connet recaps the project history, mentions the public art design has reached a milestone, and requests guidance for city staff before proceeding with the project.

After the revitalization project was delayed in 2008, city staff began discussing the concept of public art in downtown with the Sampson County Arts Council. The city partnered with the Arts Council to receive a planning grant from the NC Arts Council. The Sampson County Arts Council established a diverse public art committee to participate in the planning process and to help guide decisions regarding what type of art would be best suited for our community. As part of the planning process, the grant was used to hire Janet Kagen, a public arts consultant, who guided the committee through an extensive planning process. She provided the committee with various examples of public art from around the world and asked the committee to focus on what type of public art they thought was best for the community. The committee unanimously agreed the art should reflect the spirit of the community and should not shock or offend potential viewers. The committee narrowed its search for an artist and eventually chose Heidi Lippman, whose projects focused on the utilization of painted glass that could be incorporated in interior or exterior spaces. The committee was especially attracted to Ms. Lippman's glass wall outside a former post office in Silver Spring, Maryland (below).



"Transforma Transforma" by Heidi Lippman

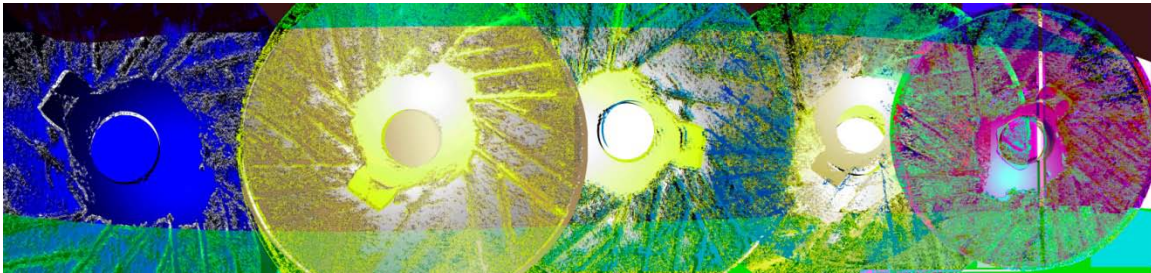
In December 2009, Heidi Lippman and landscape architect Kofi Boone spent two days in Clinton to explore downtown and meet with the Public Art Committee, City Council, David King of the Sampson County History Museum, Senator Lauch Faircloth, and city staff. They presented an initial conceptual design for the public art project at a public forum at the Small House. The design was developed from Clinton's history as the center

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of commerce in the region and they recommended placing it in a highly visible area that would enhance the downtown area. They recommended a glass wall be placed in the College Street parking lot to serve as a focal point of a downtown public gathering spot. Intrigued by a strong sense of community and synergy and the history of an old mill on the old jail site, Heidi Lippman incorporated a millstone image in her design. A design she says references cooperation, community, hard work, and productivity while incorporating part of the city's heritage. On January 7, 2010, Ms. Lippman returned to Clinton to share a more developed conceptual design with City Council and the Public Art Committee. The design was warmly received and she was directed to finalize her work in order to submit a NC Arts Council grant application by March 1. On February 22, Ms. Lippman formally presented her final conceptual design to approximately thirty citizens at a public forum. Nearly everyone in attendance agreed it was a beautiful design and that it would enhance our downtown.



Millstone Glass Wall Design by Heidi Lippman



View of wall from Main St.



Gathering area & park around wall at tip of College St. parking lot

After reviewing the project's history, the City Manager proposed several questions for City Council to consider in order to provide city staff with guidance before the project continues. He asked City Council to consider the proposed location of the art, its support of the incorporation of this project into Phase III of the Downtown Revitalization project, its support of the Public Art Committee's efforts to raise the majority of the funds necessary to fund the project, and its level of financial support to this project. The City Council approved a motion to support the Arts Council's efforts to pursue grant funding, accepted the rest as information, and agreed to revisit the issue at a later date.

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The basic design for the Phase III Revitalization approved by City Council in February 2009 will still include widening of sidewalks, relocation of utility lines underground, and streetscaping all in an effort to improve the appearance of downtown and make it more pedestrian friendly. Overall, the revitalization project will encompass the old jail site and extend down Vance Street to Beaman Street. It also will include Connesstee Street and College Street entering downtown.

To view the City Manager's memo to the Mayor and City Council, [click here](#).

For more information regarding this news release, please contact Assistant City Manager Shawn Purvis at 910-592-1961.