

July 5, 2017

To: Ann Arbor Planning Commission

From: Nicole Patrick

Re: Distillery Co. as Arts Venue

Dear Planning Commission Members,

My name is Nicole Patrick and I am 23 years old. I graduated University of Michigan School of Music, Theatre and Dance with degrees in percussion and jazz performance in 2016.

Originally from Miami, I looked to find a school that would provide more beyond just the walls of the institution. As a musician, I learned early on that my skills on these instruments would only take me so far.

I looked for a program that would organically introduce me to other artists that would accept me into their ecosystem, therefore helping me continue my artistic journey post graduation.

I have now been living in Ann Arbor for a year and a half since graduating. In this past year, we've lost the Yellow Barn and are on the way to losing the iconic Blind Pig. This means that as a student of SMTD, I was only able to see local live arts performances at the Ark (which hosts very a specific genre, normally touring musicians) and at house concerts.

On the other hand, the Distilling Company over the past few months allowed PAT students to hold their thesis projects, a blues jam led by the Ann Arbor Blues Society, and chamber music events. These events allowed for residents of Ann Arbor to interact with the artists in this town. It has allowed for artists to celebrate their work, and share with their neighbors. It is also an unbelievably gorgeous establishment offering an experience very few other places in town can offer.

These are the opportunities that allow for entrepreneurial artists to better their own communities. This is the importance of Distilling Company's involvement in this community. For us, it allows us to become a part of this community. The Distilling Company is helping to create this wonderful culture in our town, and I'd love to see this space be granted the ability to rise to its potential.

We are in need of spaces to perform works rehearsed, created and curated by artists within this community. The gentrification of this town is taking away homes that were once used as house concert venues, and the houses in this town are rising to unreasonable rents. Artists can no longer afford to live and perform in a city without performance opportunities.

The Distilling Company is presenting a chance for artists to be employed, to engage, and to create a stronger sense of belonging.

Please consider this request as you move forward with your vote on the Distilling Company to be used as a venue rental for special events and stage production.

Thank you very much,

Nicole Patrick