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TOWN OF ARLINGTON MASSACHUSETTS 02476-4908

June 29, 2020

National Endowment for the Arts
Our Town Grant Program
400 7th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20506-0001

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of the Select Board, the highest governing body of the Town of Arlington, Massachusetts, I write to enthusiastically endorse the application of True Story Theater -- in cooperation with Arlington's Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion -- for an "Our Town" grant to fund their proposed "Dialogue Project" in Arlington.

As elected officials, we often discuss ways to engage members of the public in new and creative ways that will encourage them to honestly share their wealth of experience and insight. It is only through such honesty and openness that we grow, and conversations of this nature are more important than ever during these trying times.

True Story Theater has proven itself time and again to be a strong partner to our community, particularly to Town commissions working on diversity, and to local government organizations seeking an active and participatory means to envision the future of our community. This summer, True Story Theater's use of participatory theater for deep listening will be integrated into a series of online community forums to explore ways the town can dismantle systemic racism. Over the coming years, the Select Board will engage in policy discussions and decisions that further this and other community diversity and inclusion goals, and we welcome True Story Theater's involvement in the process.

Through this grant proposal, True Story Theater seeks to extend a proven record of success, helping segments of the town understand each other better across differences of age, race, class, religion, disability, sexual orientation, gender expression and identity, and other characteristics that serve to divide us. This work is extremely important, serving to reconstitute a respectful public square at a time of great cynicism and erosion of civility.

We strongly encourage your favorable consideration, and we invite you to contact us with any further questions.

Very truly yours,

John V. Hurd, Chair
Select Board