

Cain Center to take over Cornelius art programs

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CORNELIUS – The town will transition its visual arts programs, including the day-to-day management of the Cornelius Arts Center, to the Cain Center for the Arts.

The transfer date is scheduled for Jan. 1, 2021, in time for the Cain Center to launch the 2021 winter session. The facility planned for Catawba Avenue, adjacent to the Cornelius Police Department, will include a 400-seat theater, art gallery space, a dance studio and an area for an outdoor stage.

The existing Cornelius Arts Center is the Oak Street Mill, just behind where the Cain Center will be constructed. It's home to a gallery that hosts several community art exhibitions, including "Home Grown," and is the organizer of "Beyond Walls" at Robbins Park.

"The ultimate goal for this transition is to centralize the Town's arts programs and activities within the Cain Center," Cornelius PARC Director Troy Fitzsimmons said in a

letter to the community. "We anticipate the change will also result in an expanded and enhanced arts program for the Lake Norman community."

The Cain Center, with Justin Dionne as executive director, is a nonprofit organization that already has been working with the town on the facility's design. But with the recent announcement, the relationship has been enhanced. A planning team, with representation from both the town and Cain Center, has been established, and Fitzsimmons said it's "working through many components of the transition, including the development of programming, staffing, pricing and operating models that will potentially go into effect after the transition is complete."

The Cain Center for the Arts is expected to begin construction in early 2021.

The center is raising \$25 million, and a campaign by Cornelius-based Aquesta Bank has invited local businesses to accelerate donations. The Aquesta Challenge matches donations of \$2,500 to \$10,000 from local or regional businesses. □

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