

WORK SESSION OF THE GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL held Wednesday, August 31, 2016, for the purpose of discussing the proposed recognition and contribution group policy.

Mayor Jordan started the meeting at 8:05p.m. It was held in the Multi-Purpose Room of the Greenbelt Community Center.

PRESENT WERE: Councilmembers Judith F. Davis, Konrad E. Herling, Leta M. Mach, Silke I. Pope, Edward V.J. Putens, Rodney M. Roberts and Mayor Emmett V Jordan.

STAFF PRESENT WERE: Michael P. McLaughlin, City Manager; Julie McHale, Director of Recreation; Greg Varda, Assistant Director of Recreation; Nicole DeWald, Arts Supervisor; Andrew Phelan, Recreation Coordinator II and David E. Moran, Assistant City Manager.

ALSO PRESENT WERE: John Drago, Arts Advisory Board; Lola Skolnik, Park & Recreation Advisory Board; Marc Siegel, Park & Recreation Advisory Board; Betty Sonneveldt, Park & Recreation Advisory Board; Sandy Irving, Greenbelt Arts Center; Jennifer Ward, Swim Team; Charlette Wilson, Arts Advisory Board; Linda & Kelly Ivy, Jake Chesnut, Bill Orleans and Kathleen Gallagher, News Review.

Mayor Jordan discussed the prior work session on July 25, 2016.

Mr. Varda presented the Power Point from the prior work session.

Mayor Jordan believed the former process was confusing and the new process was clearer. He asked if groups could obtain both operating and project grants. Ms. DeWald clarified that a group can only submit one application, but that the operating grant can include project expenses.

Mayor Jordan requested that a non-advisory group member be included in the review panel.

Ms. Davis asked that someone review the amendments. Ms. DeWald reviewed each of the amendments where there was consensus (see 8/22 Memo).

There was discussion of eligibility for political groups. There was clarification that partisan political activities, candidate support, etc. were ineligible for funding. Groups that do advocacy or policy work would be eligible.

Ms. Davis clarified that non-classified employees could serve on organization boards and that Council members are not classified employees. Mr. Putens noted that some Council members serve on their homeowner association boards and didn't see a problem. It was noted that if a group receives a large funding amount there could be a conflict.

Under complementary services, Mr. Putens expressed concern about the conflict with City provided services and cited Greenbelt Soccer Alliance as an example. Ms. Davis noted that sometimes an existing group gets complacent and a new group might challenge the established

group. Ms. Mach did not want to make value judgments. She wanted the review panel to make this decision where funding was involved. Ms. Pope wanted a fair process.

Mr. Varda noted there were some constraints and cited basketball and the lack of gym time as an example. Mr. Putens wanted Council to be made aware of any potential conflicts. Ms. Pope also wanted notification to Council. Mr. Herling indicated there are practical concerns. He encouraged collaboration with existing organizations.

Mr. McLaughlin suggested using more positive language under Complementary Services. Ms. Davis believed that the Policy needed to state that facilities, resources and parks were limited. Mr. Roberts agreed that the City has limited resources.

Ms. Mach asked if all of the panel would be scoring. Ms. DeWald responded yes. Ms. Davis wanted a representative from GreenAces included on the panel.

Mayor Jordan favored inclusion of an at-large seat with a panel member who was not on an advisory board. Mr. Herling was open to a non-advisory member and liked the variety on the panel. Mr. Putens liked the idea of a non-board at-large member. Ms. Davis expressed concern about someone with a hidden agenda. Ms. Mach asked about education of the grant review panel. Ms. DeWald reported staff was looking at other models and envisioned a panelist handbook.

Ms. Davis stated the current contribution group process was stagnant and there needed to be a change.

Mayor Jordan indicated that some folks consider the City's current process as insular.

Ms. Sonneveldt questioned how long a group could receive an operating grant before they would be denied. She believed this was adding a whole new level to the grant process. She wondered how new groups would be notified about the new process.

Ms. Skolnik noted that the Park & Recreation Advisory Board (PRAB) had not discussed the policy. She appreciated the effort and thought put in to the recommended policy. Ms. Skolnik noted the 501c3 process was stringent and would be more restrictive. She expressed frustration that PRAB's recommendations haven't been followed in the past and hoped they would be followed under this new process.

Ms. Skolnik noted the application asked for the percentage of Greenbelt residents. She believed this criteria had not been applied in the past.

Ms. Davis stated it was to a group's benefit to obtain 501c3 status and thereby make their donations tax deductible.

Mr. Putens indicated that this was still City taxpayer money and the residency requirement needed to be stressed.

Mr. Siegel expressed concern that PRAB had not had an opportunity to review the draft policy. He also stressed the need for Council to follow whatever standards it sets.

Mr. Herling supported training to help these volunteer groups become more effective.

Ms. Ivy believed it was good to provide a written document that outlined fundraising opportunities and avenues in Greenbelt. She believed such a document should be provided at every step of the process. Council liked this idea.

Mr. Orleans was glad the meetings of the review panel would be open to the public.

Ms. Davis asked that the policy clarify that any items purchased by the City belong to the City.

Mr. Putens wanted the scoring rubric to contain very clear criteria.

Information Items

Mr. Putens reported on vandalism in Greenbrook Estates. He also reported a tree limb down on Ora Glen Drive.

Ms. Mach announced that the Berwyn Heights Committee on Education was concerned about the number of Greenbelt students attending Berwyn Heights Elementary.

Ms. Pope reported a problem on the asphalt ramp from Edmonston Road to Kenilworth Avenue. She also reported a school bus that picks up a handicapped student in the morning which blocks Lakecrest Drive causing traffic to back up.

Ms. Davis requested that City Solicitor review the New Deal Café letter.

The meeting ended at 10:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*David E. Moran
Assistant City Manager*