

City of Greenbelt
Arts Advisory Board
Minutes for January 3, 2023

Meeting held at 7:00 pm via Zoom

Members Present: Tom LeaMond, Vijay Parameshwaran, Judy Parker, Barbara Stevens

Members Absent with prior notice: Tatiana Ausema, John Drago, Oliver Gaycken, Shaymar Higgs, Kristin Stenson

Others Present: Amanda Larsen, Visual Arts Coordinator and Staff Liaison; J. Davis, Council Member; Robert Goldberg-Strassler, Guest

1. **Call to order:** The meeting was called to order at 7:05 pm. We did not have a quorum (5 members required).

2. **Amendment/approval of the agenda:** No action due to lack of quorum.

3. **Amendment/approval of the November minutes:** No action on November minutes due to lack of quorum.

4. **Space study; AAB statement revisions (Oliver Gaycken):** Since we had no quorum, the AAB Space Report written by Oliver will be sent by email for the Board to approve. Amanda Larsen will count the votes. Sharing our report with City Council is an important action. Ms. J. Davis noted that the City Council has more pressing issues right now such as ARPA, city manager search, budget, and reparations committee. So the space study is not top priority at this time. Amanda Larsen said that CARES and the recreation department had a productive meeting regarding the sharing of Ground Floor East space. An arrangement will need to be made once camp starts.

5. **Schedule items for the new year (T. Leamond):** Ms. J. Davis informed us that City Council is working on the budget and requires from the Arts Advisory Board a report on our expenditures from last year as well as a budget request for the coming year. They should be submitted to the Council as soon as possible. Amanda Larsen will check with Nicole about how we handled this in the past and we can finalize our budget request at our February meeting. Our expenses were for the Arts Mixer and the Arts Crawl. The budget process is a good opportunity for us to look at future planning.

a. Arts Crawl 2023. Tom said that the arts crawl was enjoyed by many and had a good vibe. Below are some comments as we discussed the crawl:

-It's good to piggyback on other events such as the Farmers Market. We could list other possible events to piggyback on like the open studios, even though the crawl is not a sales event. The open studios will be May 7 and October 1. Both events would draw the same visitors.

-Although Greenbelt Day weekend was mentioned (first weekend in June), there seemed to be agreement to continue the 2023 arts crawl in October.

-If the weather is not beautiful, what would the event look like? How would it be different?

-We could improve on emphasizing the open houses at Greenbelt Arts Center, Old Greenbelt Theatre, and New Deal Cafe, so more people would go into the establishments.

-It would be a benefit to attract more arts groups to participate. We could advertise the number of visitors to attract more participation by arts groups.

- We could give more guidance to the tabling organizations, such as “How does your group support the arts in Greenbelt?” i.e., be more specific to Greenbelt and focus less on general information.
- The Greenbelt Concert Band’s small subset of musicians would be a good musical group to perform.

b. Arts Mixer 2023. We discussed having the arts mixer in May 2023. It may be possible to recruit people there who would help with the arts crawl, so the crawl would be more “community planned” rather than “AAB planned.”

c. AAB project suggestions.

Signage Report (V. Parameshwaran): We want to finish our sign report and send it to the City Council. Ms. Davis said the City’s wayfinding study is continuing as well as an Anacostia signage study. If we make specific suggestions for signs in Greenbelt, we can ask City Council to include money in the budget for that. The City is well aware of sign issues on Kenilworth Avenue and Greenbelt Road. The AAB should focus on signage required in Greenbelt once people are here (e.g., signs for Roosevelt Center). It was decided that Tom will draft an executive summary of the sign report that we can forward to City Council. The summary will make specific suggestions for signs needed in Greenbelt and possibly link to some photos as background. Vijay will update the photos to address the fact that signs were recently removed.

Poet Laureate (Guest, Robert Goldberg-Strassler): Robert said that in the next few months he will put together some specifics regarding a possible poet laureate program for Greenbelt. He is looking at Prince George’s County Poet Laureate and Youth Poet Laureate programs as models, as well as what they are doing in Takoma Park. Once he has some material, he will present it to the AAB for consideration.

6. Round Robin:

Judy Parker said she learned that Shaymar Higgs’ “The Space” in Beltway Plaza will soon occupy the old Big Lots space.

Vijay noted a general arts trend involving A.I. (artificial intelligence) art apps and how they affect copyright protection for artists’ work and styles. It involves software companies creating algorithms that transform photographs into the styles of artists.

Ms. Davis recalled John and Effie’s idea for an outdoor art show where artists could sell their work. We decided it would be better for the AAB to create a “list of opportunities” where artists can sell their work. Such a list might include FONDCA events, Green Man Festival, and the Labor Day Craft Fair. The list would provide fees required and where to apply.

Ms. Davis noted that we have two official vacancies on the AAB and that Amanda Spaid will not be returning to the Board, as she wishes to remain a City employee. Our goal is to recruit new members who will be engaged and active in our work.

We discussed what action should be taken regarding members who have been absent from AAB meetings. Amanda will check our charter and see what our policy is regarding absences. Ms. Davis said the process would be for the AAB to call the member and discuss their intentions, after which the AAB will make a recommendation regarding the member and inform City Council. Some boards keep an attendance chart to see at a glance who has been attending or not. Tom agreed to call the member(s) in question and proceed from there.

7. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Next meeting: We did not discuss when the next meeting will be, but the first Tuesday of February is February 7. We did not discuss whether the next meeting will be on Zoom or in person.

AAB members include: Tatiana Ausema, John Drago, Oliver Gaycken, Shaymar Higgs, Tom LeaMond (Chair), Vijay Parameshwaran, Judy Parker, Kristin Stenson, Barbara Stevens (Secretary)