

City of Greenbelt
Arts Advisory Board
Minutes for February 7, 2023

Meeting held at 7:00 pm via Zoom

Members Present: Tatiana Ausema, Vijay Parameshwaran, Judy Parker, Kristin Stenson, Barbara Stevens

Members Absent with prior notice: John Drago, Oliver Gaycken, Shaymar Higgs, Tom LeaMond,

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

1. Call to order: Amanda Larsen led the meeting in the absence of Tom LeaMond. The meeting was called to order at 7:03 pm. We had a quorum (5 members required).

2. Amendment/approval of the agenda: The agenda was approved as presented.

3. Amendment/approval of the November and January minutes: The November and January minutes were approved as presented.

4. Space study AAB report: Amanda reported that the Board approved the Space Study Report and she submitted it to City Council on January 17. It was presented to the Council on January 23 and J Davis reported that Council accepted it.

5. Poet Laureate (Robert Goldberg-Strassler): Robert shared on-screen during this meeting a copy of Takoma Park's poet laureate program. He would like Greenbelt to consider establishing a Poet Laureate program using Takoma Park's as a model and hopefully do so before April, which is National Poetry month. J Davis noted that the AAB would study the issue and make a recommendation to City Council for approval but Council is busy working on the budget at this time. The more specific the proposal, the better. The process could not be completed by April.

The Board had several questions:

- How many published poets are in Greenbelt (e.g., Poetry in the Park, New Deal Café Poetry open mike, etc.)

- If an honorarium is paid, can the funds come from other than the City and just have the program be recognized by the City? Do we have to pay an honorarium? Several other City positions are non-paid and volunteer. (Greenbelt's Artist in Residence receives no money, only a reduced rent on studio space.)

-If the laureate is required to create a public project, where will the budget come from? (Greenbelt's artist in residence does a public project that is incorporated into existing Greenbelt activities.)

-What poetry groups in Greenbelt could help select the poet laureate? (e.g., New Deal Café poetry open mike, Writers Guild, Poetry in the Park.) Would some other group wish to sponsor and manage the Poet Laureate program (i.e., FONDCA)?

-What is the process for selection? Do candidates apply or are they nominated by others?

-Who will do oversight of a laureate (to make sure that content is acceptable, not indecent, etc.)?

-Do candidates have to work in Greenbelt or just live here?

-Could we do a trial run of the program?

-Would the poet laureate be a representative of the City? (If the person is reading at Council meetings, etc., yes he/she would be a City representative.)

- The Takoma Park outline is very general, what are the specifics? Can the AAB see outlines of other programs (e.g., Prince George's County, etc.) to compare them?
- If we create a poet laureate, will other art groups want the same (artists, dancers, etc.)?

Some possible next steps for AAB would be:

- We could discuss the idea with poets at the May arts mixer
- Robert could provide the AAB with a more detailed plan and information via email that we could address and make a recommendation
- Robert could invite poets to address the AAB with more specifics

Robert said he does not want to spend more time gathering information unless he knows we are interested in this, and we cannot decide if we are interested until we have more information. Robert asked for a point person on the Board who would coordinate the information with him and no one volunteered. We finally decided to continue discussing this at future meetings.

6. AAB Budget report. Amanda presented the Greenbelt Arts Advisory Board Report 23-2 for FY23/24 Arts Advisory Board Programming Funds and it was moved, seconded, and approved to submit it to City Council as presented.

7. Schedule items for the new year: We discussed scheduling and themes for this year's arts crawl and arts mixer.

a. Arts Crawl 2023. We decided to hold the Arts Crawl in October 2023. As discussed previously, we want to piggyback the crawl with other events, so we decided to have it on October 1 when there will be a Studio Open House.

b. Arts Mixer 2023. We discussed having the arts mixer at the New Deal Cafe in May 2023. We looked at May calendar events, which includes the Green Man Festival and Memorial Day. On a weekend, we could hold the mixer after the noon "Art at Café". We decided the best date for the mixer would be Sunday, May 21 at 1:00 or alternatively on Monday, May 22 in the evening. Amanda will let Tom LeaMond know the preferred dates, get his input, and ask him to check with his contacts at New Deal to see if those dates are available.

We also discussed themes for the mixer. These could include AI, possible Poet Laureate program, and planning for the Arts Crawl in October. The goal would be to gauge support for these and other things the attendees are interested in. We would like to distribute a survey at the mixer about what attendees want from the AAB. Kristin will draft the survey.

8. AAB Bylaws and Attendance. We tabled this discussion until Tom LeaMond can be present.

9. Roosevelt Center Signage (V. Parameshwaran): Vijay reported that he, Tom and Effie compiled a final report with pictures, findings and recommendations. The question is how to use this information when needed in regards to the City budget or in coordination with other pertinent committees.

10. AI Art (V. Parameshwaran): Vijay distributed an article about this topic via email prior to this meeting for discussion. Artificial Intelligence is being used to transform artists' online works into new creations, often without the artists' knowledge, permission, or compensation. Vijay thought the City Government would be affected by this, but J Davis said there is nothing the City can do about it. It would

involve Federal regulations. Vijay suggested an open mike at the May mixer for people to discuss AI, but we decided this is too complicated and possibly contentious to do that. It's better done informally, just asking individuals how they feel about it and gauging interest in the topic. We could possibly do another separate event, with a panel discussion of experts on the topic followed by Q&A.

11. Recognition Group Grant Review Process (A. Larsen): Amanda reported that the grant review is coming up and we will elect a member at our March meeting to help evaluate proposals. It would involve reading all applications and attending a meeting on a Saturday morning in April. AAB usually meets with all groups who are applying for grants and we decided it is valuable for us to continue this. Amanda will contact the applicants about attending our March and April meetings. Their ability to attend will determine if we meet by Zoom or in person. Ideally we hope to have a quorum when we meet with the applicants.

12. Round Robin: J Davis said that the Mayor may ask the AAB about having artists or children decorate utility boxes (large boxes such as the one near Marie's hair salon and at Ridge & Gardenway. Amanda invited us to the Artful afternoon and a Friday evening art workshop.

13. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Next meeting: The next meeting will be March 7 at 7:00 p.m. on Zoom unless otherwise notified.

Note: Our April meeting is scheduled for April 4 (spring break). Amanda will take a poll of members before the meeting to make sure we can get a quorum that day.

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