

**CITY OF GREENBELT  
ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION**

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Tuesday, May 24, 2016. Meeting was held in the Council Room and presided over by Vice-Chair, Jon Gardner. Meeting started at 7:05pm.

Present: Leta Mach, Jon Gardner, Melinda Brady, Sudhanshu Sinha, Don Rich, Ema Smith, Veronica Martin-Alston, Janet Mirsky, Kate McElhenny, Rosalind Ceasar

Absent: Elsie Waynes, Susan Breon

**MINUTES OF LAST MEETING**

Minutes of the April 26<sup>th</sup> meeting were approved without amendment.

**FEEDBACK ON STUDENT AWARDS**

Jon noted that in previous years the Student Awards were the first item on the agenda, but this year there were several other items first. He thought it seemed disrespectful of people's time to make so many people wait. Janet also expressed concern about the change because it made for a longer night, given that it was a school night and some families had very young children in attendance.

Leta explained that the ACE awards have always been first on the agenda because presentations are scheduled first during Council meetings but on this occasion there was more than one presentation and so the other presentations got scheduled ahead of ACE. Sudhanshu noted that the other organizations left immediately after they were presented. He thought they should have stayed for the Student Awards.

Kate noted that many in the audience did not have seats during the ceremony. Rosalind explained that she requested two extra racks of seats but only one was delivered. The students were given reserved seats, but that meant they couldn't sit with their families.

Ema informed members that she knew that one of the winners from Dora Kennedy French Immersion School did not live in Greenbelt. After the meeting, Rosalind checked the sign-in sheet from the ceremony and verified that the student lived in Bowie. Leta added that ACE was unable to verify addresses in advance due of confidentiality issues and so the onus was on the schools to do the verification.

Rosalind reported that DKFI and GMS were very late with their submissions and that contributed to some certificates not being ready at the presentation, among others. Members discussed whether to adopt the same approach to deadlines for the award nominations as it uses for grant proposals, although that could mean that some schools might not be represented at the awards. However, Leta thought some Council members would not like the idea of leaving out schools so she suggested sending a report to Council detailing the challenges ACE has been facing and proposals for how ACE intends to address them in the future.

Rosalind indicated that she had already sent an email to Cindy Murray and copied Mike McLaughlin about the matter. Jon offered to draft a report on ACE's feedback about the Student Awards and circulate it for members' comments.

In light of current issues about gender identity, members discussed whether to continue the nomination criterion of one male and one female student per school. One concern is that without that criterion schools might predominantly nominate students of only one gender. Jon said he had consulted a colleague who was active in LGBT issues who suggested that ACE solicit the opinion of the Gay Straight Alliance at ERHS.

Another option was for ACE to make the change but track the effect over time to see if there was gender balance. Janet suggested that the nomination form say that ACE expected a fair balance of the genders in nominations but would respect the schools' discretion. She noted that would allow schools like TPA to nominate two students of the same gender since the school does not have a large population of Greenbelt children. Veronica noted that the school system was already in the process of making adjustments because changes have been made to new registration forms etc. ACE decided to include this issue in the report to Council and to hold further discussions.

## **2017 BUDGET**

Janet reported that she had made minor typological corrections to the budget that was approved last month. She said she was expecting more bills to come in from the clubs as the academic year winds down but there were no further issues to discuss.

Rosalind requested that members make a decision about restocking on supplies of t-shirts and apples after reviewing the quotes she circulated. They approved the purchases.

Jon wanted to know if unused money in the budget could be rolled over to the scholarship fund. Leta responded that Council had declined a rollover request from the mayor so she did not think ACE's request would be approved. She however suggested that early in the academic year, members estimate how much will be spent on clubs and operating costs and then apply any excess funds to grants.

## **4-CITIES MEETING**

Leta informed members that a Council member from College Park had suggested that the education committees from the 4-cities work together on issues affecting their schools, how to promote schools etc., in order to draw new residents to the area. She noted that New Carrollton did not have a committee but was working on one.

Members decided that Melinda will contact the other committees and propose a July meeting to explore each other's activities and learn from each other. Leta will provide contact information.

## **AOB**

*GMS Grant Money* – Jon explained that GMS had sent an email asking if grant money could be applied to a teacher's membership in an organization. He said he and Susan found it difficult to make a determination of whether this was consistent with the original proposal that was approved. They requested a copy of the invoice but the school has not supplied it yet. He advised that members withhold a decision till the invoice was provided. They agreed.

*League of Cities Meeting* - Leta reported that she had attended the National League of Cities meeting. She invited members to take some of the materials she brought back.

*Greenbelt Theatre Collaboration* - Kate reported that she had contacted Caitlin McGrath. She said Catlin was enthusiastic about the proposal but wanted specific information e.g. timing of the movie etc. for planning purposes. Members were concerned about potential financial obligations so they requested that Kate find out exactly what ACE's obligations would be.

*Grants Reports* - Rosalind reported that ERHS had submitted a grant report and included copies of their newspaper. She invited members to take them.

#### **NEXT MEETING**

The meeting ended at 8.30pm. The next regular meeting will be on June 28.