

**CITY OF GREENBELT
ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION**

Tuesday, March 24, 2015. Meeting was held in Council Room and presided over by Chair, Susan Breon. The meeting started at 7.05pm.

PRESENT:

ACE: Susan Breon, Don Rich, Jon Gardner, Melinda Brady, Janet Mirsky, Rosalind Ceasar, Leta Mach, Elsie Waynes, Dave Whiteman.

ABSENT:

Sudhanshu Sinha, Veronica Martin-Fredrick

PREVIOUS MINUTES:

The minutes of February 24, 2015 were approved without amendment.

FEEDBACK ON EDUCATOR AWARDS

Committee members all agreed that the event was a success. School Board Representative Lupi Grady commented that she thought it was a worthwhile effort.

Members discussed the challenge of getting nominations from the schools this year. They acknowledged that the weather may have played a role. Elsie stressed the importance of liaisons making face-to-face contact with their school's administrators and maintaining on-going relationships with their schools.

Leta reported on Council's work session with Ms. Grady. She said Council raised their concerns about students from the Metro South Core Development area not being assigned to a Greenbelt elementary school or ERHS, and Ms. Grady promised to bring it to the attention of Dr. Maxwell at an upcoming meeting.

PETITION FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE

There was an extensive discussion of the pros and cons of each of the requests submitted in the petition, guided by a draft Jon had circulated before the meeting.

Request: Direct ACE to accept grant proposals from non-profit groups representing homeschool students - Leta explained how ACE first made the determination of the schools the committee would support. She said a survey held in ACE's first year of operation revealed that children in Greenbelt attended over 100 different schools in a wide geographical area. Since it was not feasible to support all the schools, they decided to work with schools within the city's boundaries and schools attended by children as area schools. She also explained that another reason for the focus on public schools was because they became aware that professionals in the metro area were being discouraged from living in the county, hence Greenbelt, because they were being told that the county had poor quality public education. In response, the committee did a study of Greenbelt Schools for several years to determine the quality of education in the Greenbelt public

schools.

Members thought granting this request would make the management of the grant program complicated because of the challenges of determining eligibility for participation. They also pointed out that it would require a Charter change. The ACE charter was changed once at ACE's request in 2007 to clarify the ACE core schools, the nature of ACE's activities and to change members' terms on the committee. Members did not want to change the charter.

Request: Fully fund the grant requests of non-profit contribution groups that support community. Activities and events related to science and technology. Members did not think ACE was in a position to advise Council on this since that is the function of PRAB or the Arts Advisory Committee.

Request: Fund the Recreation Department to make plans for a future Science and Technology Program. Jon reported that an employee of the Rec Dept. had commented that they currently had the expertise to run arts and sports programs but would require additional staff in order to run science and tech programs. Leta said in another conversation, she was told that the Rec Dept. could contract with outside instructors to run science and tech programs but that would have budgetary implications. Based on feedback from Leta, members did not think the City could accommodate such an addition.

Request: Create an Advisory Committee on Science and Technology. Members noted that such a committee could either advise Council on its use of science and technology in the management of the city or it could advise council on the promotion of science and technology use in the community. However, members had difficulty determining what such a group would do and so concluded that without a clear need, ACE would not recommend forming a new committee.

Jon and Susan will work on a report detailing the recommendations, with rationale, for Council.

AOB

Student Awards – Rosalind informed members that she had sent out nomination forms and had so far received two responses - from RGFIS, who submitted two names and TPA, who do not have any Greenbelt Students in the graduating class this year. She reminded liaisons to follow-up with their schools since the deadline for submission is April 1st.

Rosalind said she had been informed by Councilman Todd Turner's office that ACE will receive a \$2000 grant towards the scholarship fund.

She also reminded members of Veronica's upcoming wedding. They signed a card and contributed money towards a present.

Jon said per Mr. Chris Mannino, the ERHS theater program for which they received a grant is scheduled for March 30, 31st April 1st. Jon will forward Mr. Mannino's email to committee

NEXT MEETING - The meeting ended at 8:45 pm. The next meeting will be a regular meeting on April 28th 2015.