

**CITY OF GREENBELT
ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION**

Tuesday, August 26, 2014. Meeting was held in Council Room and was presided over by Chair, Susan Breon. The meeting started at 7:06 pm.

PRESENT:

Susan Breon, Don Rich, Janet Mirsky, Rosalind Ceasar, Jon Gardner, Dave Whiteman, Sudhanshu Sinha, Elsie Waynes.

Also present: Melinda Brady, Jeffphine Dawson, George Kochell.

ABSENT: Veronica Martin-Fredrick, Leta Mach

PREVIOUS MINUTES:

The minutes of June 24th, 2014 were approved without amendment.

ELECTIONS & LIASONS

Members voted for elected positions with the following results:

Chair – Susan Breon

Vice Chair – Jon Gardner

Treasurer – Janet Mirsky

Liaison assignments were as follows:

Greenbelt Elementary School - Janet Mirsky

Magnolia Elementary School - Don Rich

Springhill Lake Elementary School – Sudhanshu Sinha

Greenbelt Middle School – Veronica Martin-Fredrick (Since Veronica was absent, Rosalind will confirm this with her)

R.G. French Immersion School – Dave Whiteman

Eleanor Roosevelt High School – Jon Gardner & Susan Breon

Turning Point Academy - None. (Elsie Waynes, who was liaison last year, informed members that she was resigning from the committee)

Rosalind asked liaisons to update information on PTA executives for the 2014/15 year. Since some members had submitted updates before the summer break, they requested that she send the list that she had received so they can fill in the missing information.

GRANTS

Jon informed members that the Greenbelt Community Foundation, which usually holds its grants workshop in conjunction with ACE, scheduled it this year without contacting ACE. He indicated that he could not attend but thought it will be good for at least one ACE member to attend.

Unfortunately, no one could make it since the workshop is tomorrow, 7pm at the Community Center.

Jon said he had talked to Mayor Emmet Jordan about running ACE's grants workshop and Emmet was willing if there was interest from the schools. Consequently, he sent emails to the listserv to encourage recipients to attend the Community Foundation's workshop and to find out if there was any interest in an ACE workshop. He said he got a response from Magnolia Elementary School principal, Phyllis Gillens, who did not think her school needed a workshop, given that last year's was held there. However, she suggested that a one page cheat-sheet with grant-writing tips would be helpful. Jon promised to work on that with Emmet.

Jon said if based on the responses he received ACE agreed to hold a workshop, it would be in early October. He said he had not sent out grants applications but would work on them as a matter of priority. He requested that the deadline for application submission be changed from Friday, 10/31, Halloween day, to Monday, 11/3. He informed members that he had not sent out reminders for overdue grant reports yet. He indicated that there were not many overdue reports this year but he will work on that asap.

REPORT ON MEETING WITH SCHOOL EXECUTIVE

Susan, Dave and Don attended the meeting.

Susan reported that Council had collected questions for School Executive, Dr. Maxwell. She thought that his report about the French Immersion School (FIS) was well received. She noted that ACE had earlier raised concerns about access and crowding at the school during arrival and dismissal but these were not addressed at the meeting. She suggested that it could be brought up at the PTA Presidents' or Principals' meetings.

She said he had stated that there were no planned changes to school area boundaries but he was unable to comment on what would happen if the FBI moved to the area.

Don recalled that Dr. Maxwell talked about overcrowding in the whole school system, not just in Greenbelt school, and said they were backlogged on building projects. He said Dr. Maxwell also provided some information about the Common Core curriculum.

Dave reported that Dr. Maxwell described the process for naming FIS. He said the school system will put together a committee of representatives from interest groups. The committee will hold a 2-hour meeting after which they will choose 3 potential names. The names will be presented to the CEO of schools for forwarding to the School Board which will then choose a name.

Dave informed members that he had been invited by the PTA of FIS to be a representative on the committee. He wanted to know if the old Greenbelt Middle School sign was considered historic art. Janet responded that because the building was constructed over a period of years, different parts were considered historic, depending on the time of construction. It was suggested that he consult Leta.

Jon wanted to know if there was a process for soliciting residents' direct input in the naming. Dave responded that he was not aware of such a process but was personally asking individuals for input. Members suggested that he create a web-link or put a post on the school's website asking for suggestions and a short write-up of why a suggested name would be appropriate.

LABOR DAY PARADE

Rosalind informed members that she had received only three RSVPs, all negative, despite sending letters and emails to all award winners. She said she will have the office make reminder calls tomorrow.

Susan, Janet and Don indicated they would be marching in the parade. Dave and Sudhanshu said there was a possibility that they would be present.

BUDGET

Janet said there was a surplus of \$2218 last year, \$2000 of which was applied to the scholarship fund. Dave suggested that ACE increase the amount of its scholarships. Susan tabled it for discussion at the next meeting.

Members approved this year's budget which allocated \$1000 for each of 4 clubs, \$500 for operating costs and \$9500 for grants.

AOB

Rosalind reported that the problem of the Springhill Lake Elementary School grant check which got locked up in the school system was resolved shortly after the last meeting and so the need for ACE or the City to intervene was eliminated. Jon and Susan suggested that the issue be brought up at this year's Principals' or PTA Presidents' meetings because some principals may have ideas for how to avoid that in the future.

Greenbelt Middle School Science Club – Dave did not have any update however, Jon said he had the opportunity to talk briefly about ACE and its programs with the new principal, Dr. Covington, during a Meet-and-Greet. Jon was of the impression that Dr. Covington would be open to the idea of a club because he had expressed that he is happy to come to a school where the community is so active in the school.

Rosalind informed members that she had received the date for City's Appreciation Dinner for Advisory Board volunteers. Dave requested that she sent an updated calendar to members.

George Kochell, of GAVA/GATE (Greenbelt Association for Visual Arts/Greenbelt Access Television) gave a brief overview of the group and its activities and shared his vision of incorporating more use of technology into their programs.

He was of the opinion that students interested in the visual arts typically do not have access to technology in their schools and so he would like to establish a community computer lab where children will be introduced to the use of technology in cartooning, animation and the creation of comic books etc.

Members were of the view that ACE could help this vision through the grants program and so Jon suggested that since George had worked in the past with a teacher to get a grant for an animation program, he should contact the new art teacher at Greenbelt Elementary School. He also said that Greenbelt Middle School had received a grant in the past to purchase art software and so George could contact the art teacher there as well.

Sudhanshu pointed out that ACE could consider supporting George by starting an art club. Susan tabled the suggestion for discussion at the next meeting.

NEXT MEETING

The meeting ended at 8:18 pm. The next regular meeting will be on September 23rd .