

**CITY OF GREENBELT
ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION**

Tuesday, September 23, 2014. Meeting was held in Council Room and was presided over by Chair, Susan Breon. The meeting started at 7: 09pm.

PRESENT:

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

ABSENT: Janet Mirsky, Veronica Martin-Fredrick

PREVIOUS MINUTES:

The minutes of August 26th, 2014 were approved without amendment.

REPORT ON LABOR DAY PARADE

Susan reported that she and Janet walked in the parade. 6 ACE-award students and a teacher joined them.

PTA PRESIDENT'S MEETING

Rosalind informed members that she had sent out invitation letters but had not received any responses yet. She reminded members that she did not have updated information for all the schools. Sudhanshu said the executive for SHLES had not changed. Dave promised to send FIS information as soon as possible, and Elsie agreed to contact TPA.

Susan asked liaisons to send reminders to their school presidents as time drew closer for the meeting.

Jon told members that he had invited the new GMS principal and PTA president, via email, to join ACE's Yahoo group but they had not responded. He said he will follow-up with them. He also informed members that he was unable to simply add new addresses to the group because Yahoo had changed its protocol. He asked if members wanted to change to Google which allows for addresses to be added without an overt invitation. Members opted to remain with Yahoo. He asked Dave to provide contact emails for FIS so he could invite them. Dave promised to.

SCHOOL BOARD CANDIDATES DEBATE

Rosalind reported that she had sent out invitations to the two candidates and they had both accepted to participate; one of the candidates, Ms. Grady, had asked about the format.

Leta said in the last debate, candidates made introductory statements, answered questions from the committee and then made closing remarks. The audience was invited to ask questions when there was extra time. Jon thought making accommodation for audience questions was important. He suggested setting time-limits on candidate statements. Members discussed whether candidates should be given questions in advance and decided against it. Dave wondered if candidates should be given directions regarding issues to cover in their statements but members thought the questions addressed that.

Rosalind said her attention had been drawn to the fact that certain members of the City Council, in their individual capacities, had endorsed Candidate Higgins in the News Review. Members did not think this jeopardized the authenticity of the debate.

This was the debate format that was agreed upon:-

- *Opening statement from candidates - up to 4minutes each.*
- *5 Questions from ACE - Each candidate will answer all questions. They will alternate who answers first.*
- *Audience questions*
- *Closing statement – up to 3minutes each*

Suggested issues for creating questions:

- *How to address overcrowding in schools in light of the South Core development and the possible move of the FBI into the area.*
- *Candidates' commitment to all Greenbelt children attending Greenbelt schools.*
- *Candidates' thoughts on how to maintain ERHS as a premier science school, with different academies etc. (Susan noted that the principal recently talked about challenges with finding appropriate staff to keep their technology program current.*
- *Candidates' views on the different types of schools in the area i.e. magnet programs, charter schools, traditional etc.*

Jon volunteered to moderate the event. Rosalind will send out sample questions from the last debate. Members are to send their questions to Rosalind who will work with Susan and Jon to streamline them.

Members also thought it would be a good idea to publicize the event in the News Review, Gazette and listserv; and to have it filmed by the city and broadcast on GATES. Sudhanshu suggested using the homeowners' association emailing list. Leta said Rosalind could obtain the list from the City Manager's office.

Members are to bring refreshments for the event. Sudhanshu offered to bring punch. Rosalind will get ginger ale.

CLUBS

Rosalind reported that the Reading Club facilitator at MES had requested to run two monthly meetings instead of one, at no extra cost to ACE. Members were impressed with her dedication, gave the go-ahead but expressed concern that she was not paid last year because she did not submit the required paperwork. They wondered if patronage was so high that she could not accommodate all the children in one meeting.

In Veronica's absence, there was no update on the proposed science club at GMS. Rosalind will get in touch with her about that. Sudhanshu said he was still open to working with SHLES about starting a science club but Susan suggested he hold off until GMS' position was confirmed. He pointed out that a club at GMS will be conveniently located for students at both SHLES and FIS anyway.

It had been suggested at the last meeting that ACE start an art club. Susan said she surmised from emails following the meeting that members were not in favor because there were a number of programs already available, some offered by the City.

Dave wondered if Council had voiced any concerns about having two clubs in one school, but Leta said it had not come up. Susan suggested that ACE invite the club facilitators to one of ACE's meeting, to acknowledge and thank them and also to find out about their experiences with running the clubs. Members decided it could be added to the February meeting.

SCHOLARSHIP AMOUNT

Dave's suggestion in the last meeting that the scholarship amount be increased was tabled for discussion this month. Leta explained that the seed money for the scholarship fund was raised from residents and organizations through solicitation. Later, County Council Member Ingrid Turner contributed \$2000 and the City contributed \$1000 annually.

Members debated whether increasing the scholarship amount would deplete the fund and what the consequence would be. Leta pointed out that donations from the County Council could cease because Ms. Turner was leaving office. Since members did not have current figures on the fund, they decided to table the issue again and requested that Rosalind get bank reports from the finance office.

TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE

Leta informed members that George Boyce had brought a petition to council and among the requests was one to set up a Technology Committee. Council held a work session and decided it would review the issue based on recommendations from the economic development study. In the interim though, there were a number of other issues that Council thought either impacted ACE or ACE could weigh in on - e.g. the petition suggested that ACE grants should go to home-schooled students - and so Council was referring the issue to ACE.

Leta suggested that ACE obtain a copy of the petition from the City Manager's office and respond to the points based on ACE's charter.

Jon was of the opinion that if Council made referrals to a committee, it should be in writing with specifics of what Council wanted addressed.

Leta said Council did not typically send written referrals. The liaisons provided the information. In this particular situation, some of the questions that had been raised by Council were

- Should grants go to home-schooled students?
- Should there be a technology committee or should another committee handle technology?
- How does ACE feel about technology programs in the schools? Should the city be supporting programs in the school instead of setting up a technology committee?

Susan asked if Leta would ask Council to provide Ace with specific questions to address. Leta agreed to bring it to the attention of Council.

UPDATES

Jon informed members that he had sent out grant application forms and final report reminders. He said that this year he sent the final reminders to the principals and copied the teachers, and he had already got some responses back.

He reported one overdue report from ERHS, which the PTA president was working to get in; MES has one outstanding report because the end dates for the projects are beyond the report submission date; SHL has two overdue reports; and he has not heard back from GES.

Sudhanshu offered to follow up with SHLES and so Jon will send him the name of the teachers. He said ACE will not run a workshop this year.

Rosalind reminded members to send their RSVPs for the City Dinner.

Leta informed members that Melinda Brady was appointed to ACE at the last Council meeting.

NEXT MEETING

The meeting ended at 8: 35 pm. The next regular meeting will be on October 28.