

**CITY OF GREENBELT  
ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION**

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**Date:** Tuesday, October 22, 2013 **Venue:** Council Room. The meeting started at 6:50 pm. It was presided over by Chair, Susan Breon.

**PRESENT:**

Jon Gardner, Don Rich, Elsie Waynes, Dave Whiteman, Susan Breon, Veronica Martin-Fredrick, Rosalind Ceasar, Janet Mirsky,

**ABSENT:**

Sudhanshu Sinha, Leta Mach, Alla Lake

**OTHER:**

Mary Moien (Greenbelt News Review), Dawn James (MES), Melinda Brady (GES), Donna Nelson (GMS), Amy Hansen (ERHS)

**PTA PRESIDENTS' MEETING**

The meeting was preceded by a reception from 6:30- 6:50pm.

After introductions, Susan gave a brief overview of ACE and its activities. She explained the Reading and Science Clubs and threw an invitation to the presidents that ACE was looking to fund a science club in an elementary or middle school, if their schools were interested. She also talked about the Educator and Student Awards.

Jon explained the Grants program and the deadlines for this year. There was a question about the timeline being changed to better match the school calendar since the current one is not conducive to running year-round projects. After discussion, all agreed that since most proposals were for one-time events or purchases, there wasn't sufficient reason to make changes.

The presidents requested that ACE send a reminder to them and/or their schools in June to prompt teachers to consider projects for which they could apply for grants.

Dave suggested including a question on the next application form asking writers if the timeline fitted their schedules.

After ACE's presentation, Susan invited presidents to talk about their activities, share concerns and exchange ideas.

*Eleanor Roosevelt High School*

Amy Hansen, President of ERHS PTO took over the office this year to keep the group from dissolution due to lack of participation. Consequently, her main goal is to improve communication between the school, parents and the PTO.

The PTO started a listserv to post announcements and to provide a discussion forum for parents. Feedback from the site led to the planning of a College Preparation night for parents of juniors and seniors. This was in conjunction with the Guidance Office.

The PTO also organized a Support Night when parents came in and helped teachers get materials and rooms ready for the PSATs.

Next month, they are planning to invite some current and former college admissions officers to an event for parents of juniors and seniors. The goal is to educate parents on what admission offices look for in good applications.

#### *Greenbelt Middle School*

Donna Nelson is in her 1<sup>st</sup> year as president. She reported that the PTA is making efforts to diversify its membership and so this year they have more male participation than in the previous year. The PTA has also purchased a case to display awards won by the schools.

A Back-to-school dance and a STEM Nite were held earlier in the year. Donna wanted to know if ACE could assist them in finding qualified coaches for students who qualified for STEM competitions. In November, there will be an Activity Day when students can sign up for different activities like watch movies, play board games or bring electronic devices. There are plans to invite a guest speaker to hold a workshop on self-esteem.

#### *Magnolia Elementary School*

Dawn James was president of MES' PTA last year. She reported that the PTA just held a magic show and completed fingerprinting volunteers.

A Papa John's fundraiser is scheduled for this week. The PTA has acquired software that allows volunteers to track their service hours. The group will soon have a website, created by a parent. She shared that her organization uses PTO Today and a group vine for disseminating information. She lauded the group vine because it does not share personal emails and people could unsubscribe. She noted that parent participation was still a problem.

#### *Greenbelt Elementary School*

Melinda Brady is the president at GES. She informed the group that Rafael's Race raised over \$2000 this year. They hope to incorporate a fitness activity at the school into the event in the future.

Some activities they have planned include an evening to discuss strategies for homework; volunteer fingerprinting and a work night in November for parents to come in and help teachers with tasks like photocopying, cutting patterns etc. The work night is part of efforts to accommodate working parents. The PTA is also exploring ways to get parents to help from home.

Melinda said there is a Scholastic book fair coming up. She advised other presidents to take the school's share of proceeds in Scholastic dollars because schools got a higher percentage that way (50% in Scholastic dollars versus 25% in cash). In the past, GES has used the dollars to pay for magazine subscriptions or books.

Jon suggested that the PTAs could collaborate for the fingerprinting events to make sure that there were sufficient people at each event or they could designate one school to hold the event.

ACE members wanted to know if PTAs were interested in community members attending their help/work nights. GES indicated that they had plans to solicit community volunteers for their tutoring program. ERHS advised that when organizing help/work nights, it was important to coordinate the numbers of volunteers with teachers to ensure that there was sufficient work for all volunteers.

The meeting with PTA Presidents ended at 8:09pm. ACE members reconvened at 8:15pm for their regular meeting. Members agreed the Presidents' meeting it was productive, with meaningful interaction among the presidents. They were also impressed with the wide variety of activities planned.

### **PREVIOUS MINUTES:**

The minutes of September 24, 2013 were approved with no amendments.

### **GRANTS – PROCEDURES AND DEADLINES**

Members revisited the issue of changing the timeline for the grant program but decided a change was not warranted; however they are open to consider it, should the need arise. A suggestion during the Presidents' meeting was for ACE to reimburse pre-existing projects that needed to begin at the start of the academic year, before the grants program started. Members decided that would put undue pressure on ACE to approve projects which they may otherwise not approve.

Jon informed members that all schools are eligible to apply because they are up to date on their reports. The submission deadline is 5pm on 11/1/13. Rosalind will scan and send proposals to Jon the following Monday. Members' scores are to be turned in to Jon by 11/22/13. It was decided that members will be assigned their write-up proposals before discussions begin so they can take note of salient points during the discussion.

### **FEEDBACK ON CITY DINNER**

Don, Janet, Veronica, Susan and Rosalind attended. They agreed it was a nice, well-attended event. It provided an opportunity to interact with other committee members. Jon and Dave had received 5year service pins but since they were not at the ceremony, Susan presented it to them today. Alla also received a 15year pin - Rosalind will inform her about it.

### **UPDATE ON ACE CLUBS**

Rosalind informed members that the Reading Club at SHL was running smoothly - she had just received Bonnie's report for October. She was unsure about MES' Science Club because she had not received anything from the teachers – not even their contracts. Don also said he emailed them requesting a schedule and topics for the publicity article he is writing but he hadn't heard back. He promised to follow up with them.

### **AOB**

Susan apologized for ACE's lack of representation at Council's Meeting with Committee Chairs. She had forgotten to communicate with Alla, who had offered to stand in for her. She promised to find out what had transpired and inform members of any matters relevant to ACE.

Jon had forwarded an email from GES PTA soliciting community members to advocate for a full-time Art Teacher for the school during the BOE budget deliberations or through the board's website. After discussion, members decided it was important to ascertain the principal's support for the action before ACE threw its weight behind it. They concluded that Jon should get in touch with the principal and then draft a statement on behalf of ACE, if the principal was in agreement.

**NEXT MEETING**

The meeting ended at 9:00pm. The next meeting will be the Grants Review Meeting on 12/03.