

CITY OF GREENBELT

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Tuesday, October 27, 2009

Prior to tonight's regular monthly meeting (Minutes to follow below), ACE hosted its Annual Meeting for PTA Presidents.

PRESENT: ACE Members: Laretta Baugh, Theresa Bugg, Jon Gardner, Alla Lake, Kathy Lewis, Veronica Martin-Frederick, Sudhanshu Sinha and Staff Liaison Wendy Wexler. City Councilmember Leta Mach was also present.

School Representatives: Ruth Campbell, co-president St. Hugh's HSA; Melissa Sites, vice president Greenbelt Elementary's PTA; and Vijay Kowtha, president of the ERHS PTSA.

Following opening remarks and introductions, there was an overview of ACE activities including: the ACE Reading and Science Clubs, ACE Awards for Students and Educators, the new ACE Grants Program, the ACE sponsored music program at the City's Artful afternoon in May, the email Listserv and the ACE Newsletter for club participants. Then each school representative made a presentation.

Ruth Campbell talked about the variety of bands at St. Hugh's and would discuss their participation in the Artful Afternoon with the school. It remains unclear what will happen with their school's enrollment levels and whether they will be able to continue to offer school at that location. Ruth did emphasize that this year's atmosphere in the school was extremely positive.

Melissa Sites described new arts integration programs at GES including "Interact" (using drama to promote literacy) and an African Dance Group. She also inquired if there would be more grant application opportunities later in the year and Jon explained we thought so, but it would be dependent on how many applications we currently had during this first round of applications.

GES is also a proficient fundraiser and has the highest annual budget around for school PTA's. This is in part due to their very successful book drives each year and the writing of grants. Melissa noted that Target is currently accepting grants for field trips, Lowes has given money towards school facilities/maintenance and Lockheed Martin gives local grants.

Vijay Kowtha talked about the difficult start ERHS had this year with the programming difficulties as a result of the School Max program – which is now all fixed. He also said that out of the 12 National Merit Scholarships in PG County 10 were from ERHS (2 from home schoolers) but worried that Montgomery County has over 150. He also voiced concern that classes had about 36 kids per room and that teachers no longer had planning periods. He also raised an issue about safety in regards to the location of the bus stop on Hanover at Franfort. It was decided that if Vijay could send a letter to ACE with the specifics, ACE

could ask the City Council to contact WMATA regarding this concern. Vijay added that Principal McNeill indicated that ERHS has only one confirmed case of H1N1 flu. Vijay also described a "Science Café" designed to encourage incoming 8th graders to be interested in science. It takes place on the 3rd Tuesday of each month at the ERHS cafeteria. 3:15 – 5 PM, hands-on science; 5 – 6 PM live music; 6 – 7 PM lecturer. We discussed ways to encourage broader participation and advertising. Vijay also asked for the names of the ERHS students who are acting as assistants in the Clubs as he would like to ensure that they get special recognition at the school. Wendy will get this info and email it to him.

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Minutes of Meeting of October 27, 2009
Meeting commenced at 8:00 PM.

PRESENT: ACE Members: Laretta Baugh, Theresa Bugg, Jon Gardner, Alla Lake, Kathy Lewis, Veronica Martin-Frederick, Sudhanshu Sinha and Staff Liaison Wendy Wexler. City Councilmember Leta Mach was also present.

Minutes of September 22, 2009 approved as is.

RECAP PTA PRESIDENTS MEETING.

ACE members would like Marie to contact ERHS to follow up on Vijay's concerns about planning periods for teachers. Jon will remind Vijay to send letter about his safety concern so that we might have specific info to share with Council. Again the issue of the City hiring a grants writer came up – recalling a report that ACE sent to Council a few years ago. Leta indicates that in this current economic climate, it is unlikely that the City would be hiring new staff. All were disappointed by the low turnout and could only assume it had to do with the poor weather, as many more schools had indicated they would attend.

MEETING LOGISTICS.

This item was placed on the agenda in order to have a discussion about how to address the issue of meeting quorum levels and what to do when attendance dipped below half. The consensus was that ACE would postpone any voting if quorum is not present, unless specific proxies were assigned ahead of time. There were several perspectives on whether the meeting itself should continue without a quorum to allow for exchange of information, discussion and planning strategies. The perspectives were as follows: 1. Jon does not wish to continue discussion without a quorum and would choose to leave the meeting. 2. Alla agreed, as vice chair, to preside if others wish to continue the discussion. 3. Laretta, Sudhanshu and Theresa prefer the meeting continue with Jon as the chair presiding to allow the maximum of useful work to be accomplished. 3. Kathy and Veronica did not express a clear preference. The issue still feels a bit unresolved and probably will be dealt with on a case by case basis.

ARTFUL AFTERNOON.

Dave is out of town but has communicated with all of us that Nicole DeWald needs to have a commitment from ACE regarding the May 2 Artful Afternoon. We already have a couple of schools that have committed to participation (GMS and GES) and others that have voiced interest (SHL & St. Hugh's), so we are going to tell her yes and we will have the final count for her probably in February or March as to how many schools will join in. This year we will open the presentation up to vocal and instrumental performances. Dave will continue to be the contact person for this event.

ACE READING & SCIENCE CLUB REPORTS.

Kathy had been present for the last Reading Club meeting and said there were about 8 – 10 students present – mostly from SHL. She thought it was a fun time for the kids but felt that Violet was in need of more space flexibility than the school offered. Kathy suggested that perhaps Violet would want one of those large flip pads to write on (as she is not permitted to use the black boards). Wendy will ask her.

Jon attended the last Science Club meeting and said it was great fun for the students as well as the parents! He thought Jacob was doing really exciting experiments with the kids. Jon was concerned that there were only about 6 kids this time as opposed to 16 kids last time. Clearly this means we need to stay on top of the advertising.

Alla volunteers to send out regular notices to the News Review for the Clubs. In addition, she will share her paragraph about this with Kathy who will send it out to the local Greenbelt listservs she participates with.

Kathy and Alla would like to have the list of all the dates of the upcoming clubs. Wendy will organize that and send it out. We also want to add any parent email addresses we have on registration forms on to the Newsletter email listserv to increase knowledge sharing and participation. ACE members want as many people as possible to get the Newsletter – including THEM and all the City Council members.

ACE GRANTS.

So far, we have received only one grant application, although we have been contacted by some other schools with some questions and the deadline is not until Monday. Once we have all the grants, Wendy will copy them and mail them out to all ACE members. We will then discuss the applications and make our recommendations to Council at our November meeting.

NEWSLETTER:

Wendy reports that Karen is asking ACE members for any suggestions they have for links and events for the Newsletter. She would like to get away from just seasonal issues and be more topic driven. Please share you ideas with her directly at Karen Yoho:

klyoho@yahoo.com or Karen has created an email address for just the Newsletter. It is: acenewsletter@comcast.net This address can also be used for submitting reports and suggestions.

ACE CALENDAR – Please let Wendy know if you are **NOT** able to attend.

Unless noted all meetings will now take place in the Second Floor City Council Room, City Municipal Building.

11/17...Regular Monthly Mtg (date impacted by Thanksgiving)

December – no meeting

1/26/10...Annual Principals Mtg.
