

Youth Advisory Committee Meeting

Monday, July 10, 2017

5:30 pm at the Youth Center Conference Room

**Present:** Ema Smith (Chair), Selim Boukabara, Findley Holland, and Julia Sharapi

**Absent:** Jeremy Tuthill (Vice Chair), Honora Hammett, and Hunter Whaples

**Staff:** Alison Longworth, Liaison

Ema Smith called the meeting to order at 5:36 pm.

**Old Business**

1. **June Minutes:** Approved
2. **Youth Forum Update:** The YAC is still waiting for a response from Principal McNeill. They hope to hold the Youth Forum in the week of September 25-29 or October 2-6, preferably on a Wednesday. Ema Smith suggested that the free pizza offered at the forum would be served at the end of the meeting, enticing people to stay for the full time.
3. **YAC Liaison Reports:**
  - Ema Smith – Advisory Board on Education (ACE): ACE’s last meeting was very short. They discussed the stepping down of their staff liaison.
  - Honora Hammett, Findley Holland – Community Relations Advisory Board (CRAB): Honora Hammett was absent, Findley Holland will attend the next meeting.
  - Hunter Whaples, Selim Boukabara – Parks & Recreation Advisory Board (PRAB): Hunter Whaples was absent, Selim Boukabara will attend the next meeting
4. **Web Addition to [greenbelt.gov/YAC](http://greenbelt.gov/YAC) – submit bios:** Selim Boukabara, Julia Sharapi, and Ema Smith have all submitted their member bios.
5. **Voting age public meeting update:** Ema Smith, Julia Sharapi, and Findley Holland attended the public meeting held Wednesday, July 5<sup>th</sup>, 2017. The meeting opened with Council mentioning talking with council members from Takoma Park, Hyattsville, and Glenarden, which have all lowered their voting ages. The meeting majorly focused on whether Council would go about this issue through charter amendment or a referendum. In the local cities listed above, the age has only been lowered through charter amendment. During the meeting, Council discussed possible problems with lowering the voting age, mostly the add-ons that it may come with due to the language used in the city charter. These problems arise as the terms “eligible voter” are used throughout the charter for many separate issues, such as who may run for council. If the city is to redefine who an eligible voter is, they would need to change the language various other places to restrict possible add-ons if they did not want them. If council wants to allow 16 and 17 year olds to vote in the upcoming election, they will need to act fast. The public seems to have mixed opinions on the issue, however most of the people who spoke at the public meeting seemed to favor lowering the voting age. Council will vote on this issue at their August meeting. Ema Smith

asked YAC to try foster a heavy youth presence at this meeting by reaching out to local youth and friends to get them to attend this meeting.

6. **Mission Suggestions:** Ema Smith brought in two possible mission statements. Ema Smith will create a word document so YAC can add to and revise her proposed mission statement.
7. **Letter to Local Governments:** Ema Smith has drafted two letters: one reaching out to cities with youth commissions and one to cities lacking youth commissions on why they should consider creating one. She will reach out to Laura Furr, who has extensive experience working with youth commissions to see if Ema Smith can refer cities without youth commissions to her. Hyattsville and Baltimore's youth commissions will be contacted directly via letter. Ema Smith will figure out specific contact points in the cities without youth commissions, such as their mayors or city councils.

#### **New Business**

1. **Secretary Vote:** YAC voted unanimously for Julia Sharapi to be their new secretary.
2. **Committee Initiated Discussion:**

Julia Sharapi attended the MasterPlan focus group meeting on June 21, 2017. At the meeting, they discussed the overall process of creating a masterplan and asked the focus group for positives and negatives about the city of Greenbelt. Based on the focus group's opinion, it seems that communication between all sections of Greenbelt is a major issue. It seemed those who did not live in central Greenbelt found it harder to learn about city events and therefore found it harder to participate in the community. YAC could possibly try to help this lack of communication by trying to get new members from all sections of Greenbelt, so the youth presence all over Greenbelt would be fully represented. Findley Holland volunteered to update the YAC flyer so that the committee can hang posters around to encourage youth from all parts of Greenbelt to participate in YAC. Selim Boukabara, who is the president of NHS at Eleanor Roosevelt, mentioned that NHS is trying to hold a TEDx talk at this year. He invited Ema Smith to give a speech there on youth civic engagement.

Ema Smith adjourned the meeting at 6:29 pm.