

**City of Greenbelt  
Arts Advisory Board**

**Minutes for March 6, 2018**

Meeting held at 7:00pm in the  
Greenbelt Community Center  
15 Crescent Road, 301-397-2208

**Present**

**Board Members:** Mark Granfors-Hunt, Win Britt, John Drago, Glenn Griffiths, Ronald Lonicki, Oliver Gaycken, Anna Socrates

**Staff Liaison:** Nicole DeWald

**Visitors:** Kristin Stenson, Shaymar Higgs, Jill Connor (AAB applicants)

**Council Liaison:** Judith Davis, Mayor Pro Tem (left 7:23)

**Other Visitors:** Javian Dawson joined the meeting representing the Community Relations Board (7:40)

**Not Present**

**Members absent with prior notice:** Tatiana Ausema

**The meeting was called to order at 7:02**

**1.** The meeting was chaired by Vice Chair Anna Socrates. Verification of quorum and call to order was made with seven (of eight) members present.

**2.** Introduction of guest advisory board applicants Shaymar Higgs, Kristen Stenson and Jill Conner; also present will be representatives of the Recognition Group grant applicant organizations.

**3.** Approval of the agenda was moved by Glenn Griffiths, seconded by Oliver Gaycken and affirmed by verbal unanimous vote.

**4.** A discussion of FY 19 grant applications from the following Recognition Groups followed: Friends of New Deal Café Arts; Greenbelt Concert Band; Greenbelt Makerspace; Greenbelt Arts Center. (Ms. Davis recused herself from participating in the following conversations with the Recognition Group representatives).

George Boyce represented **Greenbelt Makerspace**. (7:20-7:41) Mr. Boyce presented a brief self bio as introduction. He reported a great year last year. They converted from private foundation last year to a community coop, setting up a board of directors with about 200 community members. One highlight is that they just finished robotics program for middle school kids. Financially he reported that Makerspace is 95% stable with 5% nail biting. Summer camps this year will include spring break with Minecraft game camp and gameplay. Two camps will be held on robotics, two on animation and game design, as well as a new camp on robotic creative design with the specifics to be determined. \$3,117 is the amount of the Makerspace funding request.

Mr. Boyce has been involved in robotics for some time, since the 70's, and with High School robotics since 2010 including three years at Roosevelt HS before leaving. From there he went to makerspace which doesn't have enough square feet to host a robotics program. They would need twice the space at least.

Mr. Boyce displayed a t-shirt from a past group he has worked with and raised money for. He passed around pictures of stock off the shelf robots that can be used as the base for the project he envisions. Part of the project is to build green walls and green roofs (plants). The robot will also be used as outreach to go to other schools. The side panels are where the art aspect comes to play with a display of graphics, knitting, or whatever. This is their sixth year of working robots at Makerspace so their kids are starting to age out.

**Greenbelt Concert Band** (7:43-7:59) was represented by Eli (Elihu) Zimet general manager for the band. Mr. Zimet reported that their new conductor this year (Joan Rackey) is bringing more people into the band so they are up to 50 in the band. He reported that the percentage of younger people in the band and people from Greenbelt has increased since last year.

A brief question and answer period followed, focusing on a concern that the band become better able to fund itself:

Q: How is your 501(c)(3) application going, is it pending?

A: It has not been completed, the application has not yet been filed.

Q: Have you looked for a fiscal sponsor to perhaps receive funds through other 501(c)(3) organizations?

A: I have looked into it but wound up giving up because I found nothing.

Q: What other funding mechanisms have you considered?

A: One is Beltsville community \$300 a year. Riderwood is good for about \$300 from a collection they take at a performance.

Q: What new music have you been using?

A: The \$1,000 in expenses last year was mostly for new music.

Q: Are you involved in any band competition?

A: There really isn't something like that. Even if the band members wanted to, which they probably wouldn't.

Q: Has the band made any CD's?

A: No, just an internet presence for our band members

The **Greenbelt Arts Center** was represented by Win Britt (8:00-8:19) who stated that their primary purpose is to put on plays and to showcase art exhibits in the GAC lobby. They also host guest productions in addition to producing their own plays. In this instance, GAC usually splits the gate with guest productions 50/50.

GAC updated their lighting grid this year, getting it in place just in time for their January production of "Almost Maine". The lighting grid update was accomplished using independently raised money and not money GAC receives from the City of Greenbelt. GAC had a financially successful season last year and so far this year looks good. It is difficult to predict with certainty how the rest of the year will go, after all, its theatre! This year's a big show was the Wizard of Oz.

They have reworked way they select guest productions moving from more of a straight space available approach to implementing an artistic review process.

Q: How do you do this (produce theatre) on this amount of money?

A: The city foots about a third, then there are admissions, charging guest productions, transaction fees, outright space rental, donations of supplies and materials, and lots and lots of volunteers. Incidentally, every five years the Coop has the option to raise our rent, and this year they raised the rent.

Q: Your costume shop must be incredible. How do you fund it?

A: Mostly they (costumes) are all done by volunteers.

Q: I see you list investments in your financials. What are they?

A: CD funds, restricted capital funds like \$25K earmarked specifically for a new space.

Q: Has anyone ever asked what the building would cost that the theatre is currently house in? Is that where the one million dollar estimate comes from?

A: It would cost a lot more than that for a new building.

Thanks for supporting the James E. Duckworth students who come almost daily and do light custodial work.

Peter May represented **FONDCA** (8:20-8:42) as its current president. They are submitting a project specific grant (\$2,750). This past year Fondca lost a blues festival sponsor (ouch) but still had over 800 people attending their various festivals. Another funding change implemented this year was

that instead of going door to door they opted for soliciting digital donation requests which did not do as well. A local benefit to the city is that GATE is recording their festivals and using them as a training tool.

Q: Are businesses seeing any benefit from these festivals?

A: They are trying to get some numbers associated with any benefit, trying to get some hard numbers. Fondca met with the NDCA (New Deal) board to see how they may best support them and provide a more thriving economic environment.

Q: How are you advertising?

A: Local radio stations for advertising. We haven't entered social media yet.

Q: What's really up with the New Deal Cafe?

A: In this past year it has spent a lot of money and it's on shaky ground because of the food changes and menu changes. They were looking for an entity through RFP's to have someone come in and run it. You need the right entity and someone who is willing to work with a cooperative. The out of towners have left.

Q: Any arts initiatives you want to try?

A: Saturday night once a month to have a late-night DJ electronic thing and then at 11 or so move into a different crowd. Monday night twice monthly meetings, meal and reel night and then maybe a bunch of blues performers on a consistent basis. Music when there is no live music. NDC (New Deal Café) radio station that plays music of the groups who have played there. Lots of ideas.

Following presentations by the above groups, the Arts Advisory Board continued with a follow-up conversation on the groups.

This year the Greenbelt Concert Band, this year they is only asking for \$600. That is because their director salary was funded directly through the city council last year and we expect the same to happen this year. Some upset was expressed that the band seems reticent year after year to engage in fund-raising activities. The AAB wants the band to succeed and members feel that in order to do so, some additional funding streams must be created. Jill Conner related that she talked to several members of the concert band following a rehearsal and heard firsthand how meaningful the band is to them.

The Greenbelt Arts Center and Fondca were both commended as positive examples of organizations engaging the community in fiscally responsible ways.

One overarching observation is that all of our organizations appear to need a much larger digital base.

Makerspace could use Python as a tracking tool with slight modifications.

**5.** Selection of a representative to serve on the review panel for FY19 Recognition Group grant applications.

Nicole DeWald provided an overview of the panel qualifications and offered to make available those qualifications in written form as requested.

Anna Socrates shared some of her experience of serving on the review panel last year (FY18).

Council woman Davis talked about the panel being new last year and that the overall experience from the City Council perspective was that the new process went very well.

Nominations from the Arts Advisory Board to serve on the review panel are as follows: Oliver Gaycken as delegate, Ronald Lonicki as alternate. The nominees were approved by unanimous acclamation.

**6.** Request from the City of Greenbelt for letters of support from AAB for grant applications to the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority and the Maryland Historic Trust for funds to clean and restore the Mother and Child statue and the Community Center friezes.

Nicole read aloud the to the AAB the letter that Mr. Gaycken wrote in support. The letter was approved by unanimous acclamation.

**7.** Vote on proposed amendments to the AAB bylaws. See item 6 in the August 1, 2017 minutes. The proposed amendments were presented and given their final reading.

Article 4: Membership, Section 1: The membership (which is appointed by the City Council) shall be composed of ~~nine~~ **seven** to ~~eleven~~ **nine** citizen members plus the Arts Coordinator **Supervisor** as a non-voting member.

Article 6: Meetings, Section 1: A simple majority of the voting Board members shall constitute a quorum; in the absence of a quorum the chair may designate a date at which business may be conducted in the absence of a quorum, the notice of that date to be ~~mailed~~ **sent** to the Board members at least two weeks in advance.

Article 6: Meetings, Section 2: The Board shall ~~meet at least nine times a year.~~  
reserve a standard monthly meeting date and convene as needed at the discretion of the chair with the input of the members.

Article 6: Meetings, Section 3: The minutes of each meeting and announcements of upcoming meetings will be ~~mailed~~ sent in a timely fashion to each member before the next meeting.

Article 10: Amendments, Section 1: After amendment changes have been read at two ~~monthly~~ consecutive meetings, the By-laws may be amended by a vote taken at the third ~~monthly~~ consecutive meeting.

Glenn Griffiths moved, and Win Britt seconded the changes to the AAB bylaws. They were approved by unanimous acclamation.

It was further proposed that the following additional change be made:  
Article 4: Membership, Section 1 be changed from "seven to nine" to "seven to eleven." A first reading of the proposed change was made.

**8.** Review and approval of November 7, 2017 meeting minutes (MGH).

The minutes for the November 7, 2017 meeting of the Arts Advisory Board were approved as edited.

**9.** Other business. Praise was raised that the Greenbelt Movie Theatre has shown all the Oscar movies. "Loving Vincent" and "I Tanya" are great.

**10.** Adjournment: 9:21

Respectfully Submitted,

Mark Granfors-Hunt  
Recording Secretary  
Arts Advisory Board