

Recommendation to City Council
May 8, 2008

Subject: Contribution Group and Recognition Group Applications

Background

At the April 1 meeting, the Greenbelt Arts Advisory Board discussed the FY 2009 Recognition Group applications from the Greenbelt Photo Club, Greenbelt Pottery, the Greenbelt Writers Group, the Glass Guild, and Greenbelt in Focus. The Board met with Greenbelt in Focus. The Board also discussed the Contribution Group applications submitted by the Friends of the New Deal Café Arts (FONDCA), the Greenbelt Arts Center (GAC), and the Greenbelt Concert Band. The Board met with representatives from FONDCA, GAC, and the Concert Band.

In evaluating Recognition Group applicants, the Board offered comments and concerns, as summarized below, and a recommendation as to whether the group should be recognized.

In evaluating the Contribution Group applications, the Board utilized the same rating system as was used last year. Each applicant was rated on a scale of 1 (poor) -5 (excellent) in each of three categories: service to the community, organizational effectiveness, and artistic merit. Ratings for each applicant organization, along with Board members' comments and concerns, are provided below.

Findings - Recognition Groups

Greenbelt Photo Club

Board members present unanimously recommended that the Greenbelt Photo Club be awarded Recognition Group status for the coming year.

Comments: None

Concerns: None

Greenbelt Pottery, Inc.

Board members present unanimously recommended that Greenbelt Pottery be awarded Recognition Group status for the coming year.

Comments: One Board member believes that they "provide excellent services" artistically to many "including children."

Concerns: One Board member questioned if "more individuals were needed to help with organizational duties."

Greenbelt Writers Group

Board members present unanimously recommended that the Greenbelt Writers Group be awarded Recognition Group status for the coming year.

Comments: One Board member would like to see interaction with public through readings and writing practices and/or forums with adults and children. Another would like more organizational information about the group.

Concerns: None.

Greenbelt Glass Guild

Board members present unanimously recommended that Greenbelt Glass Guild be awarded Recognition Group status for the coming year.

Comments: One Board member was impressed with the service to Greenbelt residents.

Concerns: One Board member questioned if “more individuals were needed to help with organizational duties.”

Greenbelt in Focus

Board members present recommended that Greenbelt in Focus (GIF) be denied Recognition Group status, 5 members voting against recognition and 1 member in favor. Listed are our reasons and concerns.

- ... This group doesn't qualify as an arts organization. The Board overall believes it is a marketing/promotional group; the “arts” component, video production, is minor, not the main focus. In addition, the group is using Greenbelt Access Television, Inc (GATE) for productions, which is already City-funded; perhaps these productions should become the sole responsibility of GATE.
- ... GIF is not a membership group and has no intention to include membership. Recognition Groups should have membership. (The Board would like this formally added to the criteria; Recognition and Contribution Groups both.)
- ... Although the Board thinks this was a good and well-intentioned idea, it is believed that the City of Greenbelt should be producing such promotional and marketing materials. Currently, there is no oversight to the productions being made. The Board feels GIF's intentions are to promote a positive view of Greenbelt, but there is the possibility of something in a trailer appearing as slanderous or unflattering. If these promotions are to continue, the Board strongly advises that a City staff member, such as the Public Information Coordinator, monitor and approve all productions before being shown.

In conclusion, the Board believes GIF has presented a strong marketing strategy for the City of Greenbelt. Also, GIF should be commended for creating such an innovative marketing tool, and for their passion for Greenbelt. However, if GIF is to continue, they should work with a City liaison to decide on topics, oversee editorial content, and maintain a budget. The City needs to retain some degree of control.

The Board would like to see GIF work with the City to continue in their public outreach, but it shouldn't be recognized as an arts program.

Findings - Contribution Groups

Friends of the New Deal Café Arts

Service to the Community: 4.4 (very good)

Organizational Effectiveness: 3.6 (good)

Artistic Merit: 4.4 (very good)

Overall Score: 4.1 (very good)

Comments: “Excellent service to Old Greenbelt;” helps to “keep the image of Greenbelt as an artistic community...supports the café, local artists, and local community.”

Concerns:

- ... **Community outreach:** Some Board members would like to see FONDCA work to attract community beyond Old Greenbelt. “More publicity needs to be done.”
- ... **Organizational Effectiveness:** Some Board members felt that this area needed the most improvement. The Board members would like to see FONDCA continue working for Roosevelt Center as a whole.
- ... **Artistic Merit:** Two Board members would like to see the musical spectrum and artists further vary.

Greenbelt Arts Center

Service to the Community: 4.4 (very good)
Organizational Effectiveness: 4.0 (very good)
Artistic Merit: 4.8 (very good)
Overall Score: 4.4 (very good)

Comments: “Put on an amazingly good season;” “always impressed by the schedule and quality.” Almost all Board members commented on the improvement in organizational effectiveness over last year. “They seem to be reenergized.”

Concerns:

- ... **Finances:** One Board member felt that they were still struggling with finances, although improved from last year.

Greenbelt Concert Band

Service to the Community: 5.0 (outstanding)
Organizational Effectiveness: 3.6 (good)
Artistic Merit: 4.6 (very good)
Overall Score: 4.4 (very good)

Comments: “Extensive schedule throughout the county;” “attention to senior citizen population outstanding;” “a valuable service to all.”

Concerns:

- ... **Organizational Effectiveness.** The Board suggested that the Band search and applying for additional grants to help fund the organization. The group, as in the past, is dependent solely on the City’s contributions to meet its operational costs. If fundraising is not required of Greenbelt Contribution Groups, perhaps that stipulation should be removed from the application requirements.

Two Board members feel that it is necessary to increase younger membership to continue the legacy of the organization.

Authorization

This report is submitted on behalf of the Arts Advisory Board by:

Adrienne White, Chair

Date