

Greenbelt Arts Advisory Board Report 15-3
Recommendation to the Greenbelt City Council
April 29, 2015

Subject: Evaluation of FY16 Recognition Group and Contribution Group Applications

Background

At their March 3, 2015 meeting, the Greenbelt Arts Advisory Board (AAB) reviewed applications for renewal of Recognition Group status from the Greenbelt Writers Group and the Greenbelt Pottery Group. Board members present at this meeting included: Tatiana Ausema (Chair), John Drago and Anna Socrates (Vice Chair). Also present were representatives of the applicant organizations as named below and Katherine Rekkas (AAB applicant). Members absent from this meeting included Mark Granfors-Hunt and Oliver Gaycken.

At their April 7, 2015 meeting, the Board reviewed applications for renewal of Contribution Group status and FY16 funding from the Greenbelt Concert Band, Friends of New Deal Café Arts and the Greenbelt Arts Center. The Board also reviewed a second application for first time Contribution Group designation the Chesapeake Education, Arts and Research Society (CHEARS). Board members present included: John Drago, Mark Granfors-Hunt, Anna Socrates (Vice Chair), Oliver Gaycken and Katherine Rekkas. Also present were representatives of the applicant organizations as named below and Nicole DeWald (staff liaison). Chairperson Tatiana Ausema was absent.

Summary Recommendations

1. AAB members present at their March 3 meeting voted unanimously to recommend that Recognition Group status be renewed for the City's Fiscal Year 2016 for both the Greenbelt Writers Group and Greenbelt Pottery Group.
2. AAB members present at their April 7 meeting voted to recommend that CHEARS be granted Contribution Group status, with four in favor and one opposed.

Details of the Board's evaluation of all applications are provided below.

Detailed Findings: Recognition Groups

Greenbelt Writers Group

Represented at the meeting by member Mary Moien

All three Board members present provided recommendations on this application, unanimously endorsing the group's request for renewal of their Recognition Group status.

Comments: "Interesting group with a long history"; "still attracting a core group, and have had some interest from younger people"

Concerns: Members noted that the group is in a "transition period" and in need of leadership

(Subsequent to the meeting, AAB was pleased to learn that Barbara Ford had stepped up to become the new President of the Writers Group.)

Greenbelt Pottery Group

Represented at the meeting by Judith Kornett (Co-President)

All three Board members present provided recommendations on this application, unanimously endorsing the group's request for renewal of their Recognition Group status.

Comments: "very strong organization with large membership and robust programming"; "dynamic and energetic"; "great workshop ideas"

Concerns: None

Detailed Findings: Contribution Groups

Chesapeake Education, Arts and Research Society (CHEARS)

Represented at the meeting by Jeannie Bellina (Executive Director) and Richard McMullin (coordinator of the Green Man Festival). All five Board members present provided evaluations of this application.

Overall Score: 4.1 (very good)

Service to the Community: 4.2 (very good)

Organizational Effectiveness: 4.2 (good)

Artistic Merit: 3.8 (very good)

Comments: "Honors and celebrates the 'green' legacy of Greenbelt's history. Great to offer so many free programs to residents"; "inventive and progressive"; "benefits not only our Greenbelt community but the entire Chesapeake watershed"; "excellent record of programming and fundraising. Their goals are clearly articulated and reasonable – this will be money well spent"; "tries to cover all sections of the City"; members expressed appreciation for the Green Man Festival; "hope to see continued arts programming in conjunction with education outreach".

(CHEARS, continued)

Concerns: need for a “larger core of regular volunteers”; capacity for “long-term maintenance of the Three Sisters Gardens”; one member expressed that CHEARS is deserving of a grant for the Green Man Festival but should not be designated a Contribution Group status due to the organization’s primary emphasis on environmental education and advocacy.

Friends of New Deal Café Arts (FONDCA)

Represented at the meeting by Barbara Simon (President). All five Board members present provided evaluations of this application.

Overall Score: 4.3 (very good)

Service to the Community: 4.4 (very good)

Organizational Effectiveness: 4.2 (very good)

Artistic Merit: 4.4 (very good)

Comments: “the studio tours are a great idea”; “variety of funding sources”; several members expressed appreciation for the festivals in Roosevelt Center which FONDCA supports; “a big bang for a tiny budget”

Concerns: Several members expressed concern about the “closed nature of the Board”; “structure doesn’t give enough people in the City a stake in the organization”; “age diversity is lacking. The group seems to skew older and whiter than the City”.

Greenbelt Arts Center (GAC)

Represented at the meeting by Don Cook (President), Malca Giblin (Vice President) and Sandy Irving (Treasurer). Four of the Board members present provided evaluations of this application; one member (Katherine Rekkas) recused herself due to her involvement with the organization as a volunteer.

Overall Score: 4.5 (outstanding)

Service to the Community: 4.8 (outstanding)

Organizational Effectiveness: 4.3 (very good)

Artistic Merit: 4.5 (outstanding)

Comments: “provides a true theater experience without having to travel”; “the organization adjusts year to year, actively problem solving to provide a cost-effective service to the community”; the organization was commended for adjusting its programming mix “so that more local creative talent is showcased, such as playwrights”

Concerns: members encouraged “efforts to build bridges with other community groups and businesses”; interest was expressed in seeing “other types of performances” and the possible “use of outdoor space for summer theater”

Greenbelt Concert Band (GCB)

Represented at the meeting by Sean Davis (General Manager) and Paul Quillen (Treasurer). All five Board members present provided evaluations of this application.

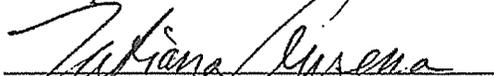
- Overall Score:** 3.4 (good)
- Service to the Community:** 3.8 (very good)
- Organizational Effectiveness:** 2.6 (good)
- Artistic Merit:** 3.8 (very good)

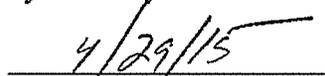
Comments: “admirable stability”; “a valuable performance outlet for members”; Board members appreciated that “they bring music to public events. They do nursing home and senior shows and have a loyal audience”; “the number of performances is impressive for a volunteer organization”

Concerns: Members unanimously expressed concern regarding the organization’s lack of fund raising; “The group is requesting more than 100% of its budget [from the City for FY16]”; several members recommended that the organization pursue 501C3 status; members noted a low level of Greenbelt resident participation (10% - about 5 members out of 53); members perceived a “need to grow the organization to appeal to all ages” and promote “multigenerational involvement”

Authorization

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


Tatiana Ausema, Chair


Date