

# Dynamic Governance Comes To Greenbelt Organizations

by Matthew Arbach



PHOTO BY AILEEN KROLL

**Edwin John facilitates while John Buck transcribes participant ideas during a session at the Greenbelt Youth Center on April 23.**

Beginning in 2014, the Center for Dynamic Community Governance (CDCG) has endeavored to bring their organizational philosophy of Dynamic Community Governance (DCG) to the groups and residents of Greenbelt. Conceived in the 1970s in the Netherlands by Gerard Endenburg, DCG, says co-director and president of CDCG Aileen Kroll, “focuses on transparent communication, equivalence amongst participants and consent-based (vs. consensus-based) decision making.” Through this approach, “meetings are energized, different perspectives are valued, the decision-making process is streamlined and participation is increased because people feel heard and valued...there is an opportunity for conflicting points of view to both be true and to be included in the final decisions,” said Endenburg.

DCG was introduced to Greenbelt in 2013 via a speaker on the subject, hosted by the Chesapeake Education, Arts and Research Society (CHEARS). In the audience was Kroll, already a member of CHEARS and several Greenbelt groups such as Greenbelt Time Bank; she described the experience as “a light-bulb moment.” Kroll says that “she could see this process as not only invigorating and inspiring groups from within, but also as a modality that could create interlinked circles throughout Greenbelt.” This led Kroll to seek out John Buck, now co-director of CDCG, a leading expert on DCG. After being trained by Buck, both decided to form CDCG in 2014. By 2015, CDCG had achieved non-profit status.

Training in DCG develops equivalency among participants, consent decision-making and the “circle concept,” says Kroll, “in which people are welcomed and participation is encouraged.” Consent-driven decisions result in a “final decision ... that everyone can accept and avoids the endless deliberations that can occur with consensus, where people are asked to agree, or bitterness that can occur with a winners-losers majority vote. “Every aspect of the election process is rendered ‘transparent,’ with ‘no back-door politicking.’” Training prepares the participants to train others in the basic DCG processes.

Buck was introduced to CDCG in 1985, while on a professional trip to the Netherlands. At this early time, DCG was dubbed “sociocracy” or “rule by the socios: people with a social relationship, partners,” says Buck. Buck is the author of *We the People: Consenting to a Deeper Democracy* as well as an upcoming work with Jutta Eckstein that seeks to “create a synthesis of the several streams that have developed in the past 30 years to improve the management of our organizations,” says Buck.

In 2016, CDCG trained some of the board members of Greenbriar, who were in search of a way “to conduct meetings that would encourage diverse thinking and resolve conflicts,” says Kroll. Consulting support was given to the board members of Greenbriar “which helped them reach a resolution on a contentious matter,” she said. This led CDCG to seek a grant from the City of Greenbelt to “help Greenbriar

residents address obstacles that are impacting their use of Greenbelt services offered by CARES and GAIL programs,” says Kroll. This grant is under review, with a decision pending soon.

In addition, CDCG trained representatives from many Greenbelt organizations including the New Deal Café, Old Greenbelt Theatre, Greenbelt Time Bank, Greenbelt Public Works as well as many environmental efforts.

Among some of the future plans for CDCG are continued trainings and the spreading of the DCG message to all ages and groups

CDCG will have a table at the upcoming Green Man Festival on May 13 and 14, where they plan to “have fun, educational, engaging and interactive activities for all ages,” says Kroll. For more information, refer to [dynamic-governance.org](http://dynamic-governance.org) and [dynamic-governance.org/library](http://dynamic-governance.org/library) for their online library.

## May 19 is Bike to Work Day

Registration for Bike to Work Day (BTWD) 2017 is officially open. Celebrating its 16th anniversary this year, BTWD is again expected to break participation records as commuters embrace bicycling as a clean, sustainable and healthy transportation option. The event will be held on Friday, May 19. Registration is free and open to anyone who commutes in the region, from first-time to daily cyclists. All registrants will be entered in a regional bicycle raffle; the first 16,000 to register and attend will receive a free T-shirt at one of more than 85 pit-stops throughout the District, suburban Maryland and northern Virginia. Participants can register online at [biketoworkmetrodc.org](http://biketoworkmetrodc.org).

More than 17,500 cyclists pedaled to work in metropolitan Washington during last year’s event. “Bike to Work Day is a great opportunity for commuters to discover the benefits of bicycling to work,” said Nicholas Ramfos, Commuter Connections director. “This event started with the goal of promoting bicycling as a viable commute alternative, and has grown into one of the largest bike to work events in the country.”

Visit [commuterconnections.org/commuters/bicycling/](http://commuterconnections.org/commuters/bicycling/) for information on bicycles, rules of the road and bicycling in traffic, outfitting both rider and bicycle, transit and bikeshare. Follow this year’s event on Twitter via Commuter Connections at @BikeToWorkDay and by using #BTWD2017 or #BTWDC.

Join a Greenbelt bike commuter convoy on Bike to Work Day. Meet up at the Greenbelt pit stop at 6:50 a.m. Jeff Lemieux’s group will depart at 7 a.m. sharp, and make brief stops at Lake Artemesia (7:20), downtown College Park (7:30) and the Met Branch trail in NE DC (8:15-ish), before heading to the Freedom plaza pit stop (9 a.m.-ish). Laurie Lemieux’s group will take a more direct route down the trails from Greenbelt via Lake Artemesia to DC, without stopping in College Park. Yet another group, guided by Marc Christophersen and starting from Lake Artemesia, will take the newly finished Anacostia River Trail all the way to South Capitol Street and Nationals Park. Register (it’s free plus you get swag) and learn more at [biketoworkmetrodc.org](http://biketoworkmetrodc.org) or contact [jlemieux256@gmail.com](mailto:jlemieux256@gmail.com).

## School Artwork on Display



Artwork by 4th grader Toni King is part of a display by Greenbelt Elementary and Greenbelt Middle School students. The artwork will be on display in the Community Center hallway through June 4.

- Photos by Anne Gardner



Artwork by 5th grader Ava Howard



PRELIMINARY AGENDA

**GHI BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Thursday, May 18, 2017

GHI ADMINISTRATION BUILDING

### 1. GHI Open Session – Begins at 7:30 p.m.

- Approve Minutes for the GHI Special Open Meeting Held on April 20, 2017
- Approve Minutes for the GHI Regular Open Session Meeting Held on April 20, 2017
- Certification of Election, Chair, N&E Committee
- Board Reorganization and Election of Officers
- Code of Ethics Acknowledgement
- Appointment of Member Complaint Panels
- Designation of GDC Stockholders
- Board Meeting Procedures
- Proposed Date for Board Orientation Training
- Establish Date and Agenda Items for Stakeholder's Meeting with the City of Greenbelt
- Proposed Joint Board/Audit Committee Work Session to Discuss Governance Matters
- Proposed Meeting Dates During the New Board Term
- Permit Request from the Member of 59-G Ridge Rd to Install an Unapproved Rain Barrel
- Establish a Task Force to Draft New Restriction Language in Investment Documents re: Transfer of funds
- Item of Information:
  1. Rental Permit Granted to the Member of 9-R Southway



To request a sign language interpreter for a board meeting, go to <http://www.ghi.coop/content/interpreter-request-form>, or go to the GHI Office (One Hamilton Place) or contact us by phone (301-474-4161) or fax (301-474-4006).

Regular Board meetings are open to Members  
For more information, visit our website: [www.ghi.coop](http://www.ghi.coop)