

YOUTH COMMISSION MEETING
Westborough Youth and Family Services Office
Room 21, Forbes Municipal Building
45 West Main Street, Westborough, MA
October 18, 2010
7:30 PM to 8:20 PM

PRESENT: Kristin French, Michelle Grasso, Judith Tully, Oscar Najarian, Cameron Mattheson, Kasey Packer, Ali Strand, Ritika Lahoty

WYFS: John Badenhause, Director
Cathy Cairns, Administrative Assistant

7:30 PM: MEETING OPENED/MINUTES REVIEWED

Michelle called the meeting to order, introduced members and the September minutes were reviewed. Michelle amended the minutes in the Strategic Planning section to include the review of the needs assessment and discussion of next steps at the December meeting. Kristin made a motion to accept the minutes as amended, Judith seconded, and the minutes were accepted unanimously.

7:40 PM: REPORT FROM YOUTH MEMBERS

Kasey reported that the High School Homecoming dance, held September 24th, was attended by a record-breaking 432 students. The Festival, held the following day, was also a success.

Kasey said the student council wanted to do something in response to recent car accidents in town in which several teens were injured due to drinking and driving. The students have discussed creating a Safe Rides Program. 75% of students who responded to a recent questionnaire said they would use the program. The High School administration said they weren't in the position to help create a Safe Rides Program, as it might be perceived as condoning under-age drinking. Another idea was to have students take a pledge not to drink and drive and then to display ribbons bearing their names in the school lobby.

Ritika reported that the consequences of under-age drinking were recently addressed in the High School health classes. She said these classes are comprised of mainly freshman students.

Judith said that a rape of a high school student by a high school student had been reported. The perpetrator, a senior, had turned himself into the police.

Kasey said many students now belong to the YOU LEAD program, a substance-free group. In some schools programs such as YOU LEAD, develop by the MIAA to support substance-free youth, are replacing SADD chapters. Mr. Callaghan and Mr. Rota are the teacher advisors.

7:40 PM: REPORT ON HOT SUMMER NIGHTS

John said due to the difference in attendance (112 teens in 2009, 28 in 2010), the group needed to decide whether to run HSN again in 2011. He wondered if it was due to the lack of bus trips. The group decided to continue with HSN, and the goal should be to raise \$9000 to fully fund the program.

John has applied for two grants (Tufts for \$500 and Westborough Cultural Council for \$500) and he should hear in November if WYFS will get the funding. Also, John said the local organization, In Your Shoes, told him WYFS will be the beneficiary of their "Polar Plunge," their yearly December fundraiser. This could mean several thousand dollars for WYFS, which could help the funding of HSN for 2011. John will meet with members of the organization this coming Wednesday and should learn more details then. John reported that last year's HSN Program Coordinator, Sarah Powers, is interested in coordinating the program again next year. Kristin proposed asking the kids who attended HSN in 2009 but not in 2010 why they didn't participate, and to ask them their interests. Judith suggested including some kids in the planning of HSN 2011, and to compare the activities of 2009 to 2010. It was felt that Youth Commission members should support the "Polar Plunge" in some way, perhaps helping with refreshments.

Judith said the new library director is interested in getting youth involved by forming a youth advisory group, and that the library might be able to help organize the HSN events. John said the library does cosponsor some events with WYFS. He will meet with the library director and discuss more ways to benefit local kids.

7:55 PM

OTHER BUSINESS

John reported that the Finance Committee is conducting an online survey on the Town's website. One question asks to rank 17 different town services, and Hot Summer Nights and Youth & Family Services is one of the services.

Michelle asked if anyone went to the Art in Common (Oct. 3) on the Bay State Commons. Ritika said it was a good event. Michelle said she'd like to see more events held there.

Cameron reported that the High School sports teams would be participating in the "Week of Lights" next week, where games would be played outdoors at night. The Booster Club provided the funding for the lights.

8:05 PM

STRATEGIC PLAN

The group discussed the benefits of short term planning versus long term planning, as some goals are ongoing, some short term and some long term. It was felt that goals shouldn't be more than 2 to 3 years out. It was decided that the next meeting should start at 7:00 pm to allow more time to discuss time frames and goals.

8:20 PM

MEETING ADJOURNED

NEXT MEETING – Monday, November 8, 2010, 7:00 PM

*Youth Commission Meeting – October 18, 2010
Submitted by Cathy Cairns*