

**YOUTH COMMISSION MEETING**  
Westborough Youth and Family Services Office  
Room 21, Forbes Municipal Building  
45 West Main Street, Westborough, MA  
**February 28, 2011**  
**7:30 PM to 8:52 PM**

**PRESENT:** Kristin French, Michelle Grasso, Andy Rosenshine, Judith Tully, Rachel Bridge, Ritika Lahoty, Cameron Mattheson, Kasey Packer, Ali Strand, Oscar Najarian

**WYFS:** John Badenhause, Director  
Cathy Cairns, Administrative Assistant

**7:30 PM: MEETING OPENED/ MINUTES REVIEWED**

Michelle called the meeting to order and the January minutes were reviewed. Kristin made a motion to accept the minutes, Judith seconded, and the minutes were accepted unanimously.

**7:33 PM: REPORT FROM YOUTH MEMBERS**

The Youth Members reported there was one student arrested for dealing. The High School roof is leaking in the Main Lobby. On Thursday, Ernest Rugwizangoga, a Rwandan genocide survivor will speak to the junior and senior class. Since Kasey and Rachel will graduate this year, the Youth Commission will advertise for replacements in April or May. The group discussed organizing a farewell for the graduating seniors at the May meeting.

**7:45 PM: FORBES BUILDING/TOWN HALL RENOVATION PLANS**

John presented to the group the first blueprints of the proposed changes to the Forbes Building and Town Hall. The Fire Station will be rebuilt; the Police Dept. will be expanded to take over some of the office space on the second floor of the Forbes Building. Both the Planning and the Building Departments will expand and Youth & Family will moved to an, as yet, undetermined new building along with the Recreation Department, which will have a regulation sized gymnasium.

In the proposed new location, the Youth & Family Office will have three counselor offices with sinks, an equipment storage area, a copy work area, and waiting area. John expressed several concerns about the proposed design:

- 1.) The location of the office needs to centrally located downtown so youth clients can walk to the office from the high school and middle school.
- 2.) The office layout needs adjustment so that the entryway is in the middle of the office wall so it can be seen by and easily accessed from each of the counselor offices.
- 3.) The YFS Dept. needs access to a classroom/meeting space to hold 20 or more attendees for activities such as babysitting classes and HSA meetings, not to mention the space needed for the Holiday Store.

- 4.) The YFS Dept. needs to be located in an office building/professional environment, as opposed to a gymnasium environment. A counseling office should be surrounded by a quiet energy, not a boisterous one.

The group brought up other concerns for the proposed pairing the Recreation Dept. and Youth & Family.

- 1.) Since the bathrooms will be shared by both departments, the facilities will become more like locker rooms for the people using the gym, which could be intimidating for emotionally-vulnerable YFS clients. YFS would need separate bathroom facilities.
- 2.) YFS needs a more private entrance so that clients don't have to enter and exit through the public lobby used by both departments. This could be intimidating for youth clients who might encounter peers using the gym, as it would be obvious that the youths are in the building for counseling. The current YFS office is located in a building with multiple offices, so it is not obvious that clients are entering YFS for counseling.
- 3.) Since the gym is regulation sized, the Town would most likely rent it out as often as possible to help defray expenses. This would mean constant noise from activities such as basketball games and karate classes, which would be detrimental to a calm atmosphere needed for counseling sessions.
- 4.) The Recreation Dept. and YFS will share the copying equipment, which will be stored in the YFS office space. This can threaten the confidentiality clients deserve when in the waiting area and entering and exiting their counselor's office.
- 5.) There is concern of the security of client confidential files with so much public access to the proposed YFS office.

John said he will express the Youth Commission's concern with the proposed design to the Town Manager along with the list of requests and needs.

#### **8:20 PM: LETTER SUPPORTING STEP INCREASE FOR JOHN**

Michelle passed out copies of a letter addressed to Katherine Wilfert of the Personnel Board advocating for a step increase for John, since he had not received any raise in several years. She spoke to Jim Malloy, who said there would be no changes in the step increases at this time, but a 1% cost of living increase has been put into the budget. The group felt it was important that all Youth Commission Member names be included in the letter, and that it would be good for the letter to be included in John's personnel file, even if no raise was awarded at this time. John said he would check on exactly how many years it has been since he received a raise.

#### **8:25 PM: OTHER BUSINESS**

Michelle proposed presenting the Executive Summary of the Youth Needs Assessment to the Board of Selectmen, with some minor corrections. John said he would include it in the packet for the Finance Committee, as well as include it in the newsletter. He will also give the Executive Summary to Selectman Tim Dodd for the Selectmen's Meeting, along with the full report.

John reported that we now have about \$6000 raised for HSN, including over \$1000 for the Buy-a-Bus Campaign. All those who donate will be thanked personally (Cathy will write individual thank you notes) and publicly by John in the newspapers.

John and Michelle will be interviewed by Selectman Tim Dodd on Westborough TV this Thursday.

John said Dennis Fenton has sent a letter of interest and his resume to the Town Hall as a possible Youth Commission member. The group discussed that since Dennis Fenton has recently opened his own counseling business in town that his presence on the Youth Commission might be a conflict of interest. John said he would consult with Town Counsel on the matter.

**8:52 PM: MEETING ADJOURNED**

**NEXT MEETING – Monday, March 14, 7:30 PM**