

YOUTH COMMISSION MEETING
Westborough Youth and Family Services Office
Room 21, Forbes Municipal Building
45 West Main Street, Westborough, MA
November 26, 2012
7:34 PM to 8:35 PM

PRESENT: Michelle Grasso, Judith Tully, Andy Rosenshine, Patricia Ainsleigh, Oscar Najarian, Jack Chuma, Casey Collins, Pranit Lahoty, Matt Murch, and Christine Anthony.

WYFS: John Badenhause, Director
Cathy Cairns, Administrative Assistant

7:34 PM: MEETING OPENED

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

7:37 PM: REPORT FROM YOUTH MEMBERS

Tryouts for winter sports have begun. The tryouts for the school musical are coming up. Westborough High School lost to Algonquin Regional by one point on Thanksgiving Day. All of the Westborough teams won their games during the Week Under the Lights. A scholarship Fund has been set up honoring Lizzi Marriott and school families are making dinners for the family.

The group discussed the sports activity fee of \$200 per activity (\$500 family cap.) A number of families are not paying the fee even though their kids are participating in sports because there appears to be little follow-through on those not paying.

7:50 PM: SELECTMAN TIM DODD DISCUSSES YOUTH INVOLVEMENT

Tim Dodd reported he researched other towns and proposed that the youth members' status be upgraded to non-voting associate members of the Youth Commission. They would be appointed by the Board of Selectmen, as the adult voting members are, but they would not be able to vote. A change in the town bylaws is required to change the youth members' status from non-voting to voting.

After more discussion, Tim said he would do further research on the possibility of the youth members becoming voting members of the Youth Commission.

The group discussed the idea of forming a youth advisory group that reports directly to the Board of Selectmen. This group can examine local issues that affect them such as: the lack of accessibility to local fields situated on the outskirts of town. The youth advisory group can evaluate options and report them to the Selectmen. This would give them a voice in town.

Michelle suggested the group advocate for one vote for the youth members as a whole. Tim said he would bring the issue up with the Board of Selectmen.

One member mentioned that the Town of Lowell is discussing lowering the town voting age to 17 by a change in the bylaws and this is something Westborough could pursue. Also, the Town of Acton uses the Senior Center vans to transport students to afterschool activities, and this idea is something the youth group could explore.

Tim said changing the youth status to associate non-voting members is easily done and does not require a bylaw change. He suggested putting this in place while exploring a bylaw change. The youth advisory group could be involved in the possible bylaw change. They could also perform surveys at the High School as to the issues students think need to be addressed. The youth members' appointments to associate members will be made in front of TV cameras which will help promote the agenda of the youth voice and raise awareness of the youth members on the Youth Commission.

8:35 PM: MEETING ADJOURNED

NEXT MEETING – Monday, December 10, 2012 at 7:00 PM