

YOUTH COMMISSION MEETING
Westborough Youth and Family Services Office
Room 21, Forbes Municipal Building
45 West Main Street, Westborough, MA
May 13, 2013
7:40 PM to 8:55 PM

PRESENT: Michelle Grasso, Patricia Ainsleigh, Oscar Najarian, Pranit Lahoty, Matt Murch, and Casey Collins.

ABSENT: Christine Anthony, Andy Rosenshine, Judith Tully and Jack Chuma

WYFS: John Badenhause, Director
Cathy Cairns, Administrative Assistant

7:34 PM: MEETING OPENED

Michelle called the meeting to order. The April 2013 minutes were reviewed. Patricia made a motion to accept the minutes, Pranit seconded, and the minutes were accepted unanimously.

7:42 PM: REPORT FROM YOUTH MEMBERS

AP exams and MCAS are happening now at the High School.
The seniors finish school on May 24 and graduation is June 8th.

Matt Murch will be attending UMass Amherst and Casey Collins will be attending University of Rochester.

Chris Herren's talk at school about drug and alcohol addiction was well received.

After reading some of the statistics in the recently published MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey, the youth members discussed whether or not drug and alcohol programs at the high school level are effective. Alcohol use jumped from 4.7% in eighth graders to 26.1% in ninth graders. The members felt more prevention programs should be targeted to middle school age and younger students. Since, according to the survey, 36% of seniors are binge drinkers (a number the youth members suggest is low), high school age programs might be too late to be effective.

The youth members say more could be done to discourage drinking through the health classes. They said you need a good coach/teacher to get the message across about the dangers of alcohol and drug abuse. Some of the health teachers are good while others don't seem to care. One member said the High School does programs promoting safe sex but could do better with the topic of alcohol use.

A few years ago the high school participated in a mock alcohol-related car crash, along with the police, EMTs and Life Flight helicopter. The response was positive, as the shocking scene was very effective in getting the message across to students. Members suggested this might be something the school should present every few years.

Project Graduation is being planned for June 8th at Teamworks from 10PM to 5AM. This event provides graduating seniors a safe, alcohol and drug-free celebration the evening of graduation.

8:15PM: OFFICER ELECTIONS

The group decided to postpone elections until the June meeting since four members were absent.

A notice stating the YC is seeking two youth members (who will be juniors in the fall) has been posted on cable, WYFS newsletter, the Principal's newsletter, local newspapers and in the schools' Virtual Backpack. John will ask the Principal to announce it at school. Pranit will hand out notices to the sophomore class history teachers so they can announce it to their classes. John will also ask the Board of Selectmen to post the notice.

8:25PM SPRING FESTIVAL

The festival was well attended and the group agreed that WYFS should plan to have a table there again next year. Lots of snacks and brochures were given out, and there was interest in the *Hot Summer Nights* program.

Next year, we should attach helium balloons to the table to be more noticeable.

8:30PM STRATEGIC PLAN

Goal #3, section 3 states: Explore year round recreational needs for older youth and consider developing programs to meet their needs.

Members discussed that kids need something to do instead of going to parties where alcohol may be served. Maybe there could be a collaboration with the Recreation Dept. or the YMCA in meeting this need. It was suggested that kids need a place to go with ongoing activities, not just one-time events.

Michelle suggested forming a sub-committee to brainstorm ideas about this goal. This sub-committee will meet an hour before the regular YC meeting next month on Monday, June 10th at 6:30 PM. An email will be sent to all members inviting them to meet with the sub-committee. Interested members should email Michelle.

8:55 PM: MEETING ADJOURNED

NEXT MEETING – Monday, June 10th, 2013 at 7:30 PM