

## **Westport Youth Commission**

### **General Meeting**

**February 11, 2021, at 7:15 p.m.**

The meeting was called to order at 7:23 p.m. Rachel made a motion to approve the minutes of the meeting from January 21, 2121; Lily seconded the motion, and the minutes were approved.

#### **What's Up:**

-Lily announced that the Zero Waste Committee had its first week of composting and needs volunteers. They will receive volunteer credits.

-It would appear that everyone just plans to relax over February break.

-Alex reported that Winter sports are starting up.

-Adam just got back from a vacation at a dude ranch in Arizona

-Vaccines are now available for people over 65. Tucker remarked that "Lamont has done a good job."

-James Dobin-Smith reported that Players will be broadcasting three plays: Little Women, Dracula, and a (23-minute) play called Marvelous, Mellow Melodrama.

When asked by Valerie how everyone felt about going back to a 75 percent in-school schedule, most students reported that they are happy about it. Valerie said students believe that wearing masks all day is uncomfortable.

-Sarah said that Senior Internships are about to be announced; she's going to be working at a horse stable.

-Kevin said that this is the time of year that budgets are decided: Mentors, TAG, Toquet Hall, JRB across the state, TAG Talks (discussions on mental health issues). Westport Together Coalition is working to launch a youth survey in March.

Kevin is interviewing program specialists for his team and hoping to hire one shortly.

#### **Peer Education:**

The Police Youth Group is trying to plan for a safe outdoor program on Jesup Green. A decision should be made this month.

I-Mentor participants are going to record a program; the script is almost done and will be sent to middle schools to be shown in the classroom. This program usually takes place in February. Look at the current presentation on line and add your comments. It can then be recorded and ready in March.

Mini-Mentor: Rachel and Sarah are working on a script to demonstrate who we are and what the program will look like. They will also look in parenting magazines for ideas on topics.

Kevin will send a link to the program for everyone.

We have new initiatives to address: mental health, anxiety, vaping. We can create our own program or join with other groups. Please give us your ideas. Kevin said that vaping and substance abuse are also addressed through a state grant to the Prevention Coalition.

Other towns have done initiatives. Would anyone be interested in being part of a sub-committee?

-Nominations for the Bachrach Award are going out soon. This award is given to a graduating senior (Staples, GFA, Pierrepont in Westport or for a Westport resident at out of Town Private School) for service to Westport.

### **Town Improvement:**

-Mini Golf – Sarah and Eli met with Parks and Rec; they were very receptive to our ideas. They will need more info such as the projected costs to build and maintain. We can add questions to our survey to determine the best location for the course.

How much space do we need? We might face a challenge if some land is restricted. Cost? Return on revenue? Holes could be donated. Tucker said there are models in Norwalk and Old Saybrook that could provide a lot of data.

We need to determine the interest and complete a needs assessment survey. A mini-golf course would fulfill the need for activities where kids could just be dropped off. Alison asked if it would be a permanent installation; it will

Sarah will send us copies of their presentation.

### **Student Discounts:**

Abe reported that Derek and Jordy have been reaching out to businesses. Derek reported that Freshi reached out to participate, and we approved them. Now we are drafting an email. Abe said that when we have a full list of positive responses, we'll get window stickers. By our February/March town meeting we should have a complete list of 10-15, and know who is coming back and who is new. Once Covid ends, we should be ready to go in the Fall for the 21-22 school year, meeting again in June or in the Fall.

For student IDs, they are reaching out to Rashad, who created Saturn. Lily said she could contact Dylan Diamond.

### **Open Campus:**

Abe and Eli met with Principal Thomas. He liked the idea of the open campus, especially with the new schedule where 75 percent of students will be attending in-school classes. Beginning with lunch periods, it would lower the number of students in the school.

Alex said we'll probably have to meet with the superintendent to talk about liability issues.

Abe said we had a positive interaction with the principal and will reach out to other schools that have an open campus program.

### **Needs Assessment Survey:**

We had 112 responses. Valerie said that half of the respondents have heard of us; 40 percent don't know us. Our initiatives are on the right track. Adults responding have or work with kids. Elementary school parents didn't think the issues resonated with them. Biggest issues of stress, anxiety, and depression were highest with high school age; also, underage drinking and vaping. Culture of apathy is also an issue with high schoolers.

I-Mentor issues – bullying, Internet safety, transportation.

Kevin said there used to be an after-school bus, but it no longer exists. Buses now run on an on-demand schedule. The Transportation Commission is interested in the results and would be happy to meet with us to discuss transportation related concerns/opportunities.

Mini-Mentor topics are perfect and on the right track.

Alison asked about the drive-in movie with student discounts. The Remarkable Theater was an employment opportunity for people with disabilities.

A drive-in movie could be set up with lawn chairs, not cars. Teen Flix seems to have fallen apart.

Adam said we now have raw data from the survey: outdoor activities, affordable, with friends.

Not many surprises.

Internet safety had good score. We seem to be on target with what we're addressing and have an opportunity here.

Kevin will share the survey results on Google Drive when available.

The next meeting is March 18, 2021.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.