

Thursday, January 26th, 2023

Westport Youth Commission Meeting Minutes

Alex welcomes the meeting

Jared makes a motion to approve the minutes, Caroline seconds

The ayes have it

What's Up

- Staples We The People class got 2nd place in state, received a wild card, and will be going to nationals in April
- Juniors and seniors at Staples have counties and red and whites
- Boys basketball team is 8-2, biggest crowd in years. People are coming back to sports

Youth Services

- New outreach counselor starting at Staples February 6, coming from Turning Point CT, which is run out of Positive Directions. Will be working with TAG, will be supporting students struggling with substance abuse, office will be off of the nurse's office
- Prevention Coalition hosted legislative forum, partnered with Norwalk, Fairfield, Wilton, Weston, discussed impact to youth over cannabis legalization. Prevention, youth services, enforcement. Legislatures drafted legislation to close over loopholes that could get youth access. Trying to prevent youth use
- Launched liquor sticker campaign, will go over bottles of unused alcohol, and to open, seal will need to be broken. New cards with info on social hosting laws and substance abuse resources.
- Met with officials from GFA, hoping to get more GFA representation on WYC and Toquet Hall Board.
- Toquet Hall
 - Charity concert 1/27, money to help with mental health awareness. Dulcit, Next Day Delivery, and Primate
 - A few programs a month for middle schoolers, and having a club option
- Survey sent out to other Youth Commissions in other towns
 - Greenwich, Darien, New Canaan, Wilton, Weston, Trumbull, Fairfield so far
 - Getting benchmark of how our program compares to others
 - Questions
 - What city/town does your commission support
 - What is the makeup of your commission
 - What are the issues youth in your town are facing
 - What events are you planning
 - What have been your most successful events
 - Thoughts and comments

Peer Education

- Police-youth
 - Dodge-a-cop in November, debriefed last meeting
 - Important that we get more support and collaboration for planning spring Corn-a-Cop so juniors can learn how to run event, juniors need to take more charge
 - Corn-a-cop will be mid-May, will begin shortly
- iMentor
 - Wish it had been more communicative
 - Two issues to emphasize (Coleytown says) groupchats, exclusion via TikTok videos. Permanency of what you post-it will live forever
 - FaceTime, groupchat, once something is sent, you have no control
 - Need to make it buttoned up
 - **Deadline is by Monday**
 - Cite your sources
- Bacharach award and new member applications will come out in February
 - Bacharach award recognized a Westport senior with service to community. Target of their work has to be within Westport.
 - Students can nominate other students.
 - New member slots will be open.
 - Successful membership drive comes from people on Commission bringing other people in.

Town Improvements

- Skate Park
 - There is now a skate club at Staples, Mr. Buchs is club sponsor. They are doing things to help improve it
 - Meeting will be happen, WYC helping bring officials to meet with club
 - People of all ages use the skate park
- Creation Market
 - Last year not enough student vendors
 - We need to identify whether student businesses not having enough chances to fundraise or outreach is a present issue, especially if it conflicts with corn-a-cop
 - If we don't have enough businesses, it's not something we can do
- Student Discounts
 - Could be a good part of WYC legacy to revive it
 - You need to meet with businesses themselves. In the past, there were too many "We'll get back to you" and going to corporate. Not enough people we had last time, we only had 2 people.
 - Need to either refine or create new list of businesses students will go to.
 - We have a script of what to say.

- Coordinate with Downtown Merchants Association
 - Kevin recommends to gather materials we have and to start with Chamber and DMA, because they are critical to getting businesses involved.
- We need a team, and set up meetings to reintroduce program
- Helped getting together with friends and keeping you in Westport easier for kids

- New Police Initiative
 - Chief wanted to ask WYC if they would be interested in developing a youth concert at Levitt pavilion, bringing in artist youth in town would like and is appropriate
 - Getting Levitt will be done by Chief
 - Geared towards mostly high school, maybe middle school

- Laskin brings up afterschool program possibility at Bridgeport sports center

New Business

- WYC needs our own answers to survey

What issues are facing youth this year?

Instructing younger kids with helpful information that would translate later in life, internet

Drug use that is continuously getting younger — even 6th graders

Engagement — its a key focus of WYC

Unecessary school pressure. People crying about bad grades even in 6th grade, need someone telling you when you should be caring about your grade

Things that came up earlier

Mental health, wellness, anxiety

Activities for youth in town

What is Greenwich working on

Mental health, substance use prevention, financial aid, political discourse, teen dating violence

Ideas shared by groups

Group 1

Assigning a group of people businesses to track

Toquet hall open on Sunday when Library is closed, to have snacks. But also want Toquet hall day off. Library is open 1-5 and they have live music. Was more of an end of quarter need, leading up to breaks, midterms, finals. Maybe coordinating more with library schedyle

Group 2

College, so many intricacies of process and CommonApp, and guidance counselors are spread too thin and they can't help. Very difficult to navigate process. Presentation put together. Maybe a presentation about the track and the classes you took, people don't know about credits they need, electives

Group 3

Would like to add community engagement page on WYC web site, bio, who to contact, what's to be expected of you if you do volunteer

Helps people get involved

Can help make WYC more relevant, have a page with traffic

With general concerns over teenage mental health, helps people with serotonin boost

Group 4

Addressing competitive nature of Staples, pressure and judgment about honors and APs starting very young.

Forum to have conversations and for youth to speak up to parents. Maybe parents don't realize

Highlighting people in Westport who have done things other than go to college, boiling down how we define success

Lola says they always have orientations for freshmen, people don't pay attention. What if you just did then of what to expect in high school. And maybe on Back to School Night for parents.

Where do we go from here

Need a meeting to summarize thoughts

Need to anchor calendar

Engagement

Student Discounts

iMentor

Corn-a-Cop

Concert

Need to start meeting about what we want to do at subcommittee meetings, bring things to commission in February

Jared makes a motion to adjourn, Cooper seconds

The ays have it