

Elmhurst Youth Commission Meeting Notes
November 17, 2014
District 205 Center, 162 S. York
12:30 pm

In Attendance: Sharon Karpel Melea Smith Patty McKernan
Jackie Tamer Karen Stezowski Jeff Kucera
Dan Corrigan Derek Schlager Mark Soehn
Jan DeCoursey Lynn McCreddie

Absent: Mike LaSpisa

Guests in Attendance: Mary Ann Kalis
Corey Worden

Meeting Called to order at 12:32 p.m.

Call for Public Comments – none made

Introduction of Guests

Melea Smith

Mary Ann Kalis, District 205 Foundation – Mary Ann was principal of Lincoln Elementary for seven years before serving on the District 205 Foundation. She has a strong interest in substance abuse awareness and education, especially as she has personal experience with a former student who overdosed on heroin.

Michael Honquest was asked by Mayor Steve Morley to serve as the Elmhurst Commission on Youth liaison to Public Affairs and Safety Committee – due to business out of town, Michael was unable to attend the meeting as he had planned.

Corey Worden, Linden Oaks at Edward – invited to attend as a follow up to the November 10th Heroin Awareness program.

Review of October Minutes

Motion to approve October Minutes as presented made by Mark Soehn, seconded by Karen Stezowski. Motion carried.

Debriefing of Nov. 10 Heroin Forum

- The Youth Commission was very pleased with turnout for the Heroin Forum, estimated to be approximately 150 people, including some students.
- Corey Worden has agreed to share the presentation materials used in their PowerPoint presentation. Dr. Rich Jorgensen sent his PowerPoint to be shared. Melea Smith will post to both the City of Elmhurst and District 205 websites and inform families of the availability of the materials via the District's communication vehicle (Talk205).
- Mary Ann Kalis plans to use her column in the Elmhurst Patch online community news forum to share details from the forum and will link back to the presentation materials.

- Discussion of the fact that, given the success of this program, it may not be necessary to spend the money to bring in a keynote speaker such as Chris Herron. The Youth Commission feels that having more accessible or relatable speakers may actually prove to be more effective when communicating with local youth. Karen Stezowski pointed out that contracting with Chris Herron would be effective in drawing more people to an event, but not necessarily worth the high fees he charges.
- Discussion on next steps. Jeff Kucera pointed out that York/Elmhurst youth don't have a heroin problem at this point so much as a prescription drug problem and perhaps the focus should be on heroin gateway drugs – alcohol, marijuana and prescription drugs. Commissioners were in agreement that further focus on heroin may not be the most effective use of resources.
- Melea Smith attended a special Rotary meeting on Nov. 12. Members of the Elmhurst Noon Rotary are very committed to taking on the heroin awareness and education effort. The Youth Commission feels that this is a good plan, however, we may need to maintain a presence in order to keep the “youth” connection.

Heroin Program Feedback results

Jan DeCoursey

- Program feedback results are available as an attachment to meeting minutes.
- Feedback results indicate that program format was successful in communicating the current heroin problem faced by DuPage County. While the length of the program seemed to be adequate, respondents indicated a desire for more time to ask questions.
- When asked what other topics attendees would be interested in if sponsored by the Commission on Youth, a strong majority (81.8%) indicated that stress faced by today's youth would be a well-received topic.

Future Youth Commission Programs

- Discussion followed on what topic(s) the Commission might like to present next. There was a question of whether or not to maintain a focus on substance abuse, taking advantage of the momentum and interest generated by the November forum. Great interest was expressed in presenting some kind of youth stress management program.
- A decision was made to try to offer two programs per year – one in the fall, one in the spring – in addition to the Exemplary Youth Service Awards.
- No final decision made as to next topic.
- The Youth Commission recognizes that much of what it is interested in pursuing falls under the umbrella of parenting education.

Discussion on format of the Elmhurst Commission on Youth

- It was suggested that the Commission form sub- or ad hoc committees to take on the different “umbrellas” that we would like to cover, since it is expanding its operations. The Commission as a whole would focus on the big picture, but smaller groups would be assigned to help execute specific programs and report back to the entire group.
- Mark Soehn pointed out that given the Commission is a fairly small group and that most Commissioners have been seated for less than a full term, perhaps keeping the entire group involved in all aspects is a better way to keep everyone in the loop.
- The problem is that meeting once each month for an hour is no longer sufficient to cover all business of the Commission.

- There was discussion of adding additional meetings as needed, or scheduling bi-weekly meetings with the understanding that if the EYC has no pressing business, meetings would be cancelled. No final decision made regarding that.
- A decision was made to assign a single Commissioner to serve as the point person for specific projects. That person will be responsible for coordinating, communications, and other administrative details, with the balance of EYC commissioners serving and assisting as committee members.

Timetable for March 19, 2015 Youth Service Awards Event

- Nominations open online Dec. 1, 2014.
- Sandburg Middle School has been secured as the site.
- Melea distributed copies of the updated nomination letter and form to all Commissioners for review and approval.
- Discussion about judges ensued. There was agreement to approach two of the three judges from last year (Diane McGinnis and Deputy Police Chief Dom Panico). Commissioners felt very strongly that the third judge should come from District 205 offices as the direct connection to the youth of Elmhurst is obvious.
- Discussion followed about whether or not to allow repeat nominations and/or winners. That is, can a group receive nominations in consecutive years? Commissioners were in agreement that, yes, groups can receive nomination in consecutive years, especially given that such groups often include new members.

Youth Volunteer Fair and Job Fair Discussion – no specific details discussed, but Jackie put forth the name of Kim Brigman, of the Elmhurst Junior Women’s Club, as someone interested in helping us plan such an event. Patty has previously mentioned interest by the Kiwanis as well.

Next meeting scheduled for December 15, 2014 @ the D205 Center, 162 S. York, Elmhurst

Meeting adjourned at 1:45 p.m.