

Metuchen Municipal Alliance  
Minutes November 12, 2015

Attendance: Shivangi Mannivannan, Angela Yao, Detective Keven Doherty, Jodi Kopac, Ron Victoria, Joanne Markano, Kathy Liss, Carol Volkland, Donna Jamison, Beatrice Moskowitz, Allison Inserro

The meeting came to order at 7:38 pm.

- I. The minutes from the October meeting were approved.
- II. Introductions were made around the table. Ron Victoria, a Metuchen resident and retired teacher, attended the meeting to see if he'd like to join the Committee.
- III. Jodi and Donna reported on the October 10 Country Fair. The Alliance's booth received a third place "honorable mention" prize of \$25. We received \$80 in cash donations. The interactive games drew people to the booth where brochures and other literature were distributed.
- IV. Kathy reported on the MHS PTO Health Fair on the evening of Thursday October 27. Many health-related organizations were present including a Yoga school and the YMCA. About 50 teens and adults attended and took literature from our table. We collected an informal survey on the problems people consider most threatening and relevant to the health and safety of our community. Survey participants were entered into a lottery to win one of five Metuchen Youth Alliance t-shirts.

Shivangi reported on the survey. There were 38 completed surveys from 23 teens and 15 adults. The results are reported below for teens/adults.

22/13 Underage drinking, binge drinking

21/12 Alcoholism

18/9 Heroin and other opioids

19/8 Prescription drug abuse

11/11 Marijuana

4/6 Mental health issues

It was decided that we will distribute a similar survey at our other sponsored programs.

Councilwoman Inserro mentioned using Survey Monkey to distribute it to borough residents some time before we choose our focus for the next grant cycle.

- V. Allison shared the proposed bylaws with the Mayor and the town attorney Dennis Murphy. She reported that there doesn't seem to be anything out of compliance about the Committee's proposed voting laws. In terms of "Membership," there exists a municipal ordinance concerning the Alliance that states that there should be no more than 15 members and prescribes suggested members from different segments of the community. Kathy will include that information under "Membership" in the next draft of the bylaws. She

will then send the draft to Jodi for review, who will then send it off to Roulla for the County review. Once it is approved by the County, the draft will go to the Mayor and town attorney for final review and then brought back to our table for a vote, hopefully by January 2016.

- VI. Kathy reported for Lisa on the Sakula Fundraiser scheduled for Sunday January 31 at 2 pm. She distributed a draft flyer (awaiting approval by Dr. Caputo) that will go home to MHS students in the December issue of the Principal's newsletter. Sakula will offer a free gentle yoga class for Metuchen High School students and parents through Project Graduation. All proceeds will benefit the Metuchen Youth & Development Inc./Metuchen Municipal Alliance. Committee members are asked to support the fundraiser by attending the event.
- VII. Jodi gave her report of news from the County/State. The grant application's due date for 2016-2017 has been moved up to January 8. We will keep our focus (Heroin, prescription drugs, good decision-making) for the upcoming cycle. Our programs will remain the same, however can be modified later on if they need to be for any reason, e.g. low participation this year. Jodi reported that the Alliance has been granted an additional \$3,000 as a merit award. Upon accepting this award, we will be obligated to the 25% cash match and 75% in-kind hours, as well. This will give us an additional \$3,750 to utilize for Evidence-Based Programs with respect to our focus. Jodi brought up the fact that the Principal at St. Francis Cathedral School asked if we could bring a teacher training program to their school as an in-service for education on identification of "at-risk" students. Since SFCS does not have guidance counselors, they would benefit greatly from this knowledge. Members of the committee will look into possibly utilizing the additional award money on this type of program and will also reach out to Judy Cheung for participation of Metuchen Public Schools as well. Allison noted that Campbell School does not have a guidance counselor and may be in need of such a program.

Jodi asked if anyone would be interested in going to St. Francis to observe and evaluate the *Forest Friends* program that is being presented through our grant funding for the 1<sup>st</sup> grade. The classes take place every Thursday afternoon until December 10<sup>th</sup>. An evaluation is part of the requirement of the grant. NCADD will do an evaluation as part of the contract with the Alliance, however, it will be in our best interest to review *Forest Friends* as well. Jodi will send an email to all Committee members with dates and times for anyone interested.

- VIII. Kathy reported that at our next meeting we should vote on next year's elected officers for the Committee—Chairperson and Secretary. Terms begin in January. Kathy is willing to be Chairperson for one additional year, but she is also happy to let someone else take over the position. The Chairperson's main duty is to write the agenda (with input from the Committee); write to the Committee with announcements of meeting dates, upcoming votes, minutes, agendas, etc.; and to run the meetings. The Committee also needs a Secretary, as presently members are taking turns each month writing the minutes or taking notes. The Secretary would take minutes, write them up and send the draft to the

Chairperson for review who then sends it on to the Coordinator for review and distribution. If anyone is interested in either position, please let Jodi know.

- IX. Detective Doherty reported back that Metuchen will not have a permanent prescription drug drop-off box, but instead will continue with periodic drop-off days. It was suggested that the drop-off days be better advertised through town. The Alliance can help with distributing flyers. Kathy said the Library would take flyers as well.

Detective Doherty also reported back on the most prevalent juvenile drug problems in town. The top two problems as reflected in approximately 30 arrests and/or warnings last year were evenly split between alcohol and marijuana.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 pm.

Minutes prepared by Carol Volkland