

Metuchen Municipal Alliance

Thursday, September 10, 2015

Minutes

Attendance: Katherine Liss, Jodi Kopac, Lisa Freed, Donna Jamison and Carol Volkland

The meeting was brought to order by Katherine Liss at 7:45 p.m.

Kathy began the meeting by distributing a flyer from CR – Choose Responsibility—because their arguments mirror that of an article from NCADD’s recent newsletter. The organization advocates for lowering the drinking age. See www.chooseresponsibility.com.

Kathy then distributed the article from e21 of the Manhattan Institute, a conservative think tank. The article was titled “America Needs a Sober Drinking Policy,” and discusses lowering the drinking age.

<http://www.economics21.org/commentary/alcohol-drinking-age-drunk-driving-college-21-07-27-2015>

This article was published in the NCADD of Middlesex County’s August 7, 2015 newsletter without taking a position regarding the article. Kathy will call Helen or Linda from the NCADD of Middlesex to learn more about why they included the article in their newsletter, e.g. are they considering advocating for such a policy.

Old Business:

1. National Night Out – NNO was well-attended and received positive feedback. There was a strong Police and Fire Department presence throughout the evening. Donna will send Jodi an evaluation of the games and their targeted audience.
2. “Strengthening Families” program. Jodi and Kathy met with Judi Cheung and Bruce Peragallo last week at MHS to discuss the program which will begin after the holidays in the spring at Edgar School. The program is designed for 10-14 year olds and their families. We can support up to 20 families during this six week program and will involve both St. Francis and Edgar Middle School. Hoping to offer St. Francis 5-6 families after Judi finds Edgar families. Judi will be responsible for reaching out and offering the program to all types of families of Edgar MS. Jodi will be meeting with the Principal next week at St. Francis to discuss details and dates. NCADD will present the program in the evening to the families at Edgar school and charges the Alliance as listed in the Grant. Jodi stated that she was advised by the County that detailed receipts for food and incentives must be provided by the presenter to the Alliance for the quarterly reporting. The State will only reimburse the Alliance for actual monies spent. So if a few families drop out of the program and do not attend classes, our programming money will remain the same, however, food and the other expenses will be less than allocated for originally in the Grant. Bruce also asked if we had money for a motivational speaker for the High School. Kathy will talk to Danielle and see if we can do this again. Matt Bellace was well received at MHS in June 2010. He was able to do one performance on a day he was near Metuchen and charged \$1,000. Once we learn from Danielle if we can pay for the speaker again, Kathy will contact him and get available dates from him.
3. Forest Friends will be presented to the two first grades at St. Francis Cathedral School. Jodi will be meeting with the Principal next week to discuss details and dates.

New Business:

1. Country Fair – 10/3/2015 with rain dates of 10/10, 10/17 & 10/24/2015. Boardwalk theme. Donna has three carnival games she can bring to the fair. We have a little over \$200 for food/prizes. May buy taffy as the prize. We need volunteers. Jodi will send out an email with more details. Sub-committee to meet possibly next week with Kris Dubon for planning.
2. Next Grant Cycle- 1/23/2016 is the due date for our next Grant Application for the Grant Cycle starting July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2017. If we want to change our focus from Heroin/Prescription Drugs we must discuss and vote at our next meeting so that there is time to meet with the schools, select programming and complete the application process. There is a survey done each year by Middlesex County 10-12th grade students regarding alcohol and drug use. We don't have the results of that survey from the county. The police department will provide some reporting for our use to determine our focus. Judi Cheung suggested marijuana was a problem. Discussion regarding changing the focus to underage drinking took place. Discussion and voting will be added to the agenda for the next meeting. Kathy will call Jackie Gibson for her input about the survey that was conducted at MHS.
3. MHS PTO Health Fair – 10/27/2015 at 6:00 p.m. Audrey Hauser, President of MHS PTO will come to our next meeting to discuss our presence with a booth at the fair. Lisa said she could attend the event. Carolyn Taylor, President of Project Graduation will also attend our next meeting to discuss partnering with them.

Upcoming:

1. By-Laws Committee – Meeting 9/25/2015 at 10:00 a.m. at Borough Hall. Jodi will send everyone the old by-laws before the meeting. Carol, Jodi, Donna, Kathy and Lisa will attend.
2. In Kind Spreadsheets – report for 7/1-9/30 due at our next meeting.
3. Sakula Yoga- Lisa introduced the idea of working with Sakula on a Karma community event as a fundraiser. Lisa will talk to Sakula and get more information.
4. Police Officer – (reported by Jodi) No Officer has been officially appointed to the Alliance since Dave Liantonio retired in July. Artie Flaherty has offered his assistance to the committee. Officer Chris Brown is now in charge of the D.A.R.E. programming for our community. Classes will start in September in the schools. Officer Brown is meeting with Danielle McMahan, treasurer of the Youth Services Board, next week to take over the finances for D.A.R.E. The Metuchen PBA donated \$300 to National Night Out which we used towards the multiple bounce house activities. The PBA may be able to donate more towards National Night Out next year, however we must ask sooner than we did this year.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Submitted by Lisa Freed