

AMHERST YOUTH BOARD

Meeting Minutes

May 12, 2021 via Zoom

1. Attendance/Introduction of Members and Guests

Tricia Dunne, Vice-Chair, convened the meeting.

Members Present: Sharmista Bagchi-Sen, Siddarth Suresh, Josh Daniels, Angela Seo, Dean Carroll, Iris Izydorczak, Heather Toscano, Ann Nichols, Rose Mary Buscaglia, Nora Robshaw

Liaison: Councilmember Jacqui Berger

Excused: Priya Chaudhuri, Mark Forden, Susan McClary, Ariella Yonaty, Danielle Alba

Staff Present: Mary-Diana Pouli, Kathy Mobarak-Miller

Guest: Isabella – granddaughter of Rose Mary Buscaglia; Jodi Benson, prospective member

2. Public Comment/Presentation

Jodi Benson, a prospective Amherst Youth Board member, introduced herself. She has a daughter who is a 10th grader. She went through Windermere ES, Amherst MS and is currently a student at the Buffalo Seminary. Her daughter attended the Harlem Road Afterschool program. Jodi's background is in the hotel and events industry.

3. Approval of Meeting Minutes of April 14, 2021

MM/SC Dean Carroll/Rose Mary Buscaglia to approve the minutes of the April 14, 2021 meeting. Approved.

4. Committee Reports:

➤ **Finance**

Dean reported that after school program fees need to be reviewed possibly for an increase in September. Members are needed to serve on the finance committee. Please send an e-mail to Mary-Diana if you are willing to serve.

➤ **Amherst Youth Consortium**

Iris reported

- 17 young people attended the April 29th AYC Orientation. All joined. The next AYC Orientation is on May 13th.
- On May 8th, 15 AYC members volunteered at Sleep In Heavenly Peace. Over a 4 hour period, they built 24 twin beds for children. Iris reported that she had a lot of fun sanding, staining, and branding the bed frames.

Angela reported

- The May 2nd AYC zoom meeting had 31 participants. Many AYC members reported that they were studying for AP exams which started on May 3rd and end on May 17th.
- The AYC will be helping a 7 year old boy from Dodge Elementary School with a new toy collection drive. Priya and Angela met with the boy and his parents on April 24th. The boy got the idea from a zoom religion class in the fall. He wants to collect 30 new toys for boys and girls who are 10 years and younger. Collection will take place on Saturday, June 12th from 2:30-4:30 PM at the Williamsville Youth Center site, 5005 Sheridan Drive. An e-mail will be sent to Amherst Youth Board members as the date nears.

➤ **Family Room**

Mary-Diana reported that the Family Room is open and families are coming. The next field trip is to Kelkenberg Farm in Clarence.

➤ **Amherst Task Force for Healthy Community*Healthy Youth**

Kathy reported

- Many members are interested in advocating for the Town of Amherst to opt-out of allowing recreational marijuana retailers to operate in the town. A small number of members are meeting on this issue and will report out at the June 8th meeting.
- Take It To The Box – Safe Use, Safe Storage, Safe Disposal- Medication Safety Program. This endeavor which will publicize the Task Force mission statement and the location of drop boxes in the Town of Amherst.
- Project Talk It Over – A prevention and health promotion guided by PX21, the coordinating council of prevention services in Erie County. Parents are guided to the website which gives information on what parents need to know, what the law says, how to start a conversation with their child on the following topics: Alcohol, Marijuana, Opiates, Vaping, Tobacco Use, Mental Health, RX Drugs, Other Drugs and Gambling. The Task Force is supporting this endeavor.

➤ **Program Planning & Evaluation** No report

5. Liaison Reports

➤ **Amherst Town Board**

Councilmember Jacqui Berger reported:

- The focus of the town is on re-opening tasks.
- Negotiations continue for the Westwood property. Rough concept plans exist. There will be plenty of opportunity for resident input.
- Continuing to work with the Williamsville Junior Football and Amherst Girls Softball leagues.
- Need to hire persons to do roofing and painting at the Niagara Heritage Village as part of an apprenticeship program. The pay is \$15/hr. and there isn't a residency requirement. Please spread the word.
- Golf is up and operating.
- There is progress regarding security and lighting at Billy Wilson Park and Amherst Veterans Canal Park.
- Other recreation enhancements are moving along though materials are delayed.
- The Amherst YES Volunteers weeding at the Amherst State Park is appreciated. Anyone interested in doing weeding and cleanup at the Amherst State Park are welcome to contact her.

➤ **Amherst Youth Foundation**

Mary-Diana thanked all who shopped at Carousel Consignment store on Main Street on May 1st. \$259 was donated to the Amherst Youth Foundation from that endeavor.

The AYF will be holding a virtual meat raffle on Friday, June 11th. The meat will be coming from the Sloan Meat Market. There will also be a 50/50 raffle.

The first Middle School Night is tentatively planned for November 2021.

6. Chairperson's Report None

7. Executive Director's Report – Mary-Diana Pouli

Covid Update

The Northtown Center opened fully on Monday, May 3rd. People were at the doors waiting to come in. There has been steady traffic in the building. Plexiglass is installed in all reception areas. A good percentage of staff is fully vaccinated.

MOU Sweet Home Family Support Center

Members reviewed the document. *MM/SC Ann Nichols/Nora Robshaw to approve the signing of the MOU. Approved.*

Northwest Amherst Community Center

The Northwest part of Amherst is bounded by N. French Rd., Tonawanda Creek Rd., Niagara Falls Blvd. and Sweet Home Rd. The neighborhood residents have low/moderate income. A lease for a facility is being negotiated. Funds will need to be raised. The 30,000 square foot building will be home to some current operations along with being a site for other resources. We hope to start programming in September 2021.

Pools

The Recreation Commission passed a resolution that was sent to the Amherst Town Board, to sell non-residents pool passes for the summer. There will be a limit of 100. A reservation system will once again be in place for both pools. The new Splash Park is close to completion.

Afterschool Programs

Attendance at our afterschool programs ramped up after Spring break.

Hiring

The department continues to need to hire staff. Two full-time maintenance staff were recently added.

Financial Report

A financial March 2021 report was submitted as was a Revenue Comparison chart for March 2021, 2020 and 2019.

The Department was cut \$50,000 in the building and grounds line at the ice center. The Department will need the Town Board to approve a restoration.

8. Old Business

Rose Mary asked about July 4th plans. Mary-Diana responded that there may be something at Bassett Park that would include the Erie County Wind Ensemble. No fireworks.

Shakespeare in the Park will be at Bassett Park on Friday, August 6th and the Buffalo Philharmonic will be there on Wednesday, August 11th.

9. New Business None

10. Announcements None

11. Meeting ended

MM/SC /Ann Nichols/Rose Mary Buscaglia to adjourn the meeting.

Next meeting is Wednesday, June 9, 2021 at 7:00 PM via Zoom.