

AMHERST YOUTH BOARD

Meeting Minutes

May 8, 2024

1. Attendance/Introduction of Members and Guests

Chairperson: In the place of Krista Krause, Mary-Diana Pouli facilitated

Members Present: Kristy Lindner, Kristine Arcadi, Dr. Susan McClary, Hannah Joseph
Rose Mary Buscaglia,

Excused: Tiger Li, Anagha Menon, Dawn Cwierley

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

Guest: Salil Karkhanis, AYC member and freshman at Williamsville East High School

2. Presentation by Erik Riffel of Parkitects – Amherst Central Park Playground

The following are planned for the southern end of Amherst Central Park: an inclusive playground, a splash pad, ice ribbon, a plaza for a winter market, restrooms and a concession area. The playground will include features for small children and children with visual and tactile challenges. A state grant is providing the funding for the playground equipment which will be ordered in December 2024. Schematics were distributed.

3. Meeting Minutes of March 13, 2024

MM/SC Susan McClary/Kristy Lindner to approve the minutes of the March meeting.

4. Committee Reports:

- **Finance** No report.
- **Amherst Youth Consortium** – Hannah Joseph
 - AYC members guided/played UNO, Sorry, Chutes and Ladders and Who Is It? with children attending the department's Spring Recess camps. A total of 65 children were engaged.
 - On Saturday, April 13, 21 AYC members, 2 AYC parents and Mrs. Mobarak-Miller helped to build 32 twin beds for children through the non-profit Sleep In Heavenly Peace. Since 2021, AYC has helped with 9 builds resulting in 210 beds completed. Sleep In Heavenly Peace has built over 4,000 twin beds for kids since its inception.
 - Mrs. Mobarak-Miller presented the Search Institute's 40 Assets for Healthy Youth Development to 155 Mill Middle School 8th graders on April 18 & 19.
 - The Amherst Bee column on Prom Safety included comment from AYC members and AYC parents. The column was in the Wednesday, May 1st issue, page 10. Copies were distributed.
 - A work session took place in late April with 7 AYC members to begin planning the AYC presentations at the department's 6 summer day camps. One presentation for elementary age children will focus on the assets of Honesty and the Character Trait of Kindness.
 - The AYC Celebration of the 51 Outstanding AYC Members from year 2023 is taking place on Sunday, June 2 at the Northwest Amherst Community Center from 3:00-4:30 PM. All Amherst Youth Board members are invited to attend.
- **Family Room** No report.
- **Amherst Youth & Community Coalition** No report.

5. Liaison Reports

- Councilmember Angela Marinucci greeted all. She wishes to be as helpful as possible to the Youth & Recreation Department.
- **Amherst Youth Foundation** Mary-Diana Pouli
Adults are needed to volunteer on Saturday, May 18 at the last Middle School Night for school year 2023-2024. The next Middle School Night will be held in the Fall of 2024.

6. Chairperson's Report

A Vice Chairperson is needed. The person in this position would step-in when the Chairperson is not present. Candidates are asked to reach out to Mary-Diana if interested.
Folks are also needed to serve on the By-Laws Committee.

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

- **Summer Day Camps 2024**
 - All the summer day camps are full. Parents still requesting weeks are being advised to check the department's website often as openings are posted when they become available.
 - There is one week where there are some openings, the week of July 1st.
- **Program Updates**
 - The Summer 2024 Program Guide is not yet printed.
 - The availability of some programs will be reduced because of staff shortages.
 - Summer concerts at Basset Park begin on July 4 through August 19. The rain site will be the Clearfield Community Center.
 - Friday night Outdoor Family Movies begin on August 2 through August 23. The movies start at 8:45 PM. There will be four different locations.
 - The Imagination Station Program has reduced its locations and operation hours due to a reduction of attendees.
 - Rotary 7090, encompassing 70 Rotary Clubs in WNY, held a day long gathering for over 200 members on Saturday, April 27 at the Northwest Amherst Community Center. The focus of the gathering was on mental health. The Amherst South Rotary Club donated \$5,000 to the Northwest Amherst Community Center.
 - A number of new family programs and new evening programs will be introduced this summer.
 - The Chapel at Crosspoint Serve Day took place on Saturday, May 4. 300 volunteers were involved. Their service included:
 1. Painting and cleanup at the Williamsville Youth & Family Center
 2. At the Northwest Amherst Community Center, volunteers built rolling clothing shelves, painted the main entrance room and donated artwork and a couch.
 3. New wood chips were placed at the Creekwood, Briarhurst, Bedford, Kingsgate and Dellwood playgrounds. The ball diamond at Creekwood received attention.
 4. Seven teams connected with low-income senior citizens referred by the Amherst Senior Center. They did needed work inside and outside of residences.
 5. The asylum seekers living at the Red Roof Inn were bused to The Chapel at Crosspoint and were given the opportunity to cook. The adults were also offered haircuts and a bag of personal care items. The children had opportunities to play games, make crafts and run in the gym. All costs were paid for by The Chapel.
 - On Thursday, May 9, there will be a Job Fair at the Northwest Amherst Community Center. 62 employers will be on site to meet with prospective employees.
 - The Sweet Home Family Support Center is hosting a Family Health Fair on Saturday, May 18. The Amherst YES program will provide face painting and crafts. A play, "Every Brilliant Thing" focusing on suicide prevention will be performed beginning at noon.

- On Saturday, June 1, 10 AM a ribbon cutting ceremony will happen at the Bedford Park Playground.
- On Saturday, June 1 at 1 PM, the dedication of the Mathewson McCarthy baseball complex will take place at 1995 Wehrle Drive, 14221.
- The Town of Amherst observation of Juneteenth will take place on Wednesday, June 12 from 6:00-8:00 PM at Basset Park, 14221. There will be food trucks, a performance by the Colored Musicians Club and a keynote from Buffalo Common Council Member Zeneta Everhart. The celebration is free. Attendees are encouraged to bring a lawn chair.

➤ **Personnel Updates**

- Laura Ehrenreich, Youth Centers Director, died on April 13. A celebration of her life took place at the Williamsville Youth & Family Center on Saturday, April 20.
- At this time the Youth & Recreation Department is down 3 full-time administrative staff. Positions have been posted and interviews are taking place.
- The department's front desk clerk is retiring on May 22. The position pays minimum wage, \$15 per hour.

8. Old Business No report.

9. New Business

MM/SC Susan McClary/Kristy Lindner to cancel the Wednesday, June 12 Amherst Youth Board meeting.

MM/SC Susan McClary/Kristy Lindner to move the July Amherst Youth Board meeting to Thursday, July 11.

10. Adjournment

MM/SC Rose Mary Buscaglia/Kristy Lindner to adjourn the meeting.

Next meeting is Thursday, July 11 at the Williamsville Youth & Family Center at 7:00 PM.

Minutes submitted by Kathy Mobarak-Miller.