

**Youth Commission
Regular Meeting
Windsor Town Hall – Ludlow Room
June 6, 2007**

Present: Chair Carpenter, Commissioners Barlow, Cave, Gange (arrived 7:25 pm), Gauthier, Novak, Owens (arrived 7:45 pm), Speed-Copeland, Webber; Student Representative Deja Wright, Andre Jefferson, Brandon Rothchild; Mary-Liz Sullivan, Youth Services Bureau; Debbie Anderson, Recreation; Barbara Trinks, Superintendent's Representative; Captain Kearse, Police Department; Kathy Wise, Windsor Public Schools.

Guests: Peter Souza, Town Manager; Dr. Feser, Superintendent of Schools; Kevin Searles, Chief of Police

1. **Call To Order** – Chair Carpenter called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.
2. **Chairperson's Remarks and Welcome** – Since there were guests and new student representatives, Chair Carpenter asked everyone to introduce themselves.
3. **Minutes of May 2, 2007**

MOTION: A motion by Commissioner Novak, second by Commissioner Barlow to approve the minutes of May 2, 2007 as submitted. The motion passed 7-0-1 (Commissioner Webber abstained – not in attendance).

4. **Youth Behavioral Issues**

Chairman Carpenter welcomed Mr. Souza, Dr. Feser, and Chief Searles and thanked for coming to address the Commission's motion passed at the April meeting. Mr. Souza thanked the Commission for doing what they are charged to do and bring their concerns to the attention of staff. He stated the issues in Windsor are not exclusive to Windsor.

Chief Searles informed the Commission that he researched data for three years and reported there has been a 13.6% reduction in the number of police calls from three years ago to two years ago. There was a 10.8% reduction in calls from last year to this year for all schools. Chief Searles noted there have been changes in town; there is new administration in several of the elementary schools and a new principal at the high school. He noted that different people respond to situations differently and the good news is there has been a reduction in police calls.

There has also been a reduction in the number of arrests for youth under the age of 18. Chief Searles stated this is a result of police, teachers, parents, and administrators doing what they are supposed to do. Some other issues of concern are the growing number of people affiliating themselves with gangs. The police have also seen an increase in defiant behavior in younger children in school (elementary level) and at home.

Commissioner Gauthier was an emergency room nurse during the 90's when gang activity was prevalent, is concerned because the issues seem to be coming back. She asked about the Task Force that used to be in place and if this is active again. Chief Searles stated they talk to other towns regarding the gang issues and reconvening the task force. However, he noted there is an FBI task force and most towns are investigating their own activities on a case by case basis. He did note they are working with Bloomfield and Hartford.

Dr. Feser stated they are trying to assure there is no gang activity within the schools. (Commissioner Gange arrived.) They are looking at data with respect to kids who get suspended. She noted that this year there has actually been an increase in suspensions; however she noted this could be a result of stricter discipline and not necessarily more activity.

Dr. Feser noted that there are more repeat offenders in the elementary school level, less in the middle school and very few repeat offenders in the high school. Last year there were 44 incidents at the high school and 44 students involved. There were 72 incidents in the elementary schools and only 48 students involved. The concern in the elementary schools is that more and more kids are dealing with conflicts through fighting. Expulsions have increased over the last three years. The Board of Education is very tough on this issue and there are some chronic offenses that result in expulsion. Dr. Feser stated they meet with the families before the students go "over the edge".

There was discussion regarding the Partnership and DARE programs in the schools. The Commission is concerned with the reduction in the Partnership and the lack of Police in the elementary schools. Both Dr. Feser and Chief Searles continue to review models and programs to determine which would best benefit Windsor.

Mr. Souza stated the Town is reviewing after school activities between 4:00-6:00 pm and how to accommodate those who might be at risk, but cannot get to Windsor programs. He would like to return in the fall to discuss to follow-up on the deployment of programs and resources for Windsor's youth.

5. Standing Committee Reports

CASAC (Capitol Area Substance Abuse Council) – Ms. Sullivan reported that Ms. Wright and other students presented a workshop at the Soy Unica Conference, which was very well received. Ms. Wright stated she made two new friends at the event.

Ms. Sullivan is working on the CASAC grant. She also noted that \$500 was sent to support Project Graduation.

Youth Services – The after school program ends on June 15. The middle school program averaged 13-18 kids in different sessions and the high school program has 15 students. The high school kids are landscaping the front entrance at L.P. Wilson. A program for adults who are involved with youth was hosted at LP Wilson this past Friday. There is also a family event scheduled this Saturday on the Green and will feature Alex's Lemonade Stand, as well as other activities. The Civitan Club will sell hot dogs and other refreshments and donate a portion of their proceeds.

PAL – Captain Kearse reported there are now 300 paid members of PAL, however he noted the facility is still not being used that much. He noted the Windsor Giants cheerleaders will be using the facility for their practices. Ms. Anderson has seen a slight increase in use with a consistent 10 to 15 participants on a daily basis. Ms. Anderson confirmed Commissioner Novak's concern that there is no activity after 7:00 p.m. as the numbers are down to 3 to 4 kids after 7pm. There have been discussions on closing the PAL Center at 7:00 pm instead of keeping it open until 9:00 pm.

Library Services – Written report submitted. Library has been very busy marketing the summer reading programs. Ms. McCue has also visited Sage Park 6th and 7th Graders to discuss summer reading, programs at the library, and passing out brochures. She also shared some of her favorite books with them. This seemed to be a very positive experience and several teachers would like her to return in the fall.

The Teen programs this past month have included the TAG (Teen Advisory Group) meeting and the Duct Tape Festival. Several activities are planned in June; including a book club meeting, and ESP evening, and a movie afternoon.

Windsor Schools – Ms. Trinks reported a busy end of the year with graduation scheduled for June 14th and the last day of school on the 15th. Leslie Sava is coordinator for the Project Graduation Event and is always looking for volunteers, especially between 2-6 am. Summer School will be getting underway. In the elementary schools, summer school is by invitation only and based on need. There are currently 130 kids committed.

The administration is also in the process of hiring for next year and reviewing and changing the bullying curriculum, as well as looking for a Science Coordinator in response to the inclusion of science in the CMTs next year.

Ms. Wise reported on the Transition programs being held in August for incoming students. She also noted the orientation for incoming freshman into the High School will now be a two day program in the summer. She also noted the summer school program for 8th graders will be extended by three days to provide additional assistance in their transition to the high school. She also noted that two students graduated from the Windsor Prep Program during a special program at the First Church Hall.

Recreation – A written report was submitted. Highlights include:

- May 12th Fishing Derby had 75 participants
- The Town pools opened for weekend operation for the Memorial Day weekend, summer hours to begin in three weeks.
- In the past two months, there has been an increase in vandalism at the skate park.

There was discussion regarding the access to the skate park and the fencing by the tennis courts. Mr. Souza noted he spoke with the Recreation Director on possible solutions to the fence problem. The Police Department, Recreation, and the Town Manager are all working on these issues.

- A Youth Service Corps will be doing several projects throughout town during the summer months.
- Family events will be hosted at the pools during the summer.
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Police Department – Captain Kearsse cited an incident at Sage Park with a bb gun that was stolen. The four youth involved were arrested. There were also three Windsor youth arrested, outside of town, on drug charges.

There was discussion on possible programs geared toward girls of color and Commissioner Owens stated she checked with area youth leaders and there are no programs being offered on self-esteem. It was noted that there are mentoring programs, with some of these that could be adapted toward girls. Chairman Carpenter suggested the Commission get feedback from the area churches regarding programs for kids.

6. Reports on Projects

Youth Council – Andre and Brandon have been very active in the Youth Services program and have been great leaders this year. Ms. Sullivan also noted that Deja will also sit on the Commission. Regarding the Youth Council meeting last month, Brandon reported that there was a request for transportation from the school to the library to do homework. The library is a great place to meet friends and do homework. However, he noted the kids really are just content playing videogames. The kids do not seem to have any concerns regarding the block scheduling for next year.

A concern for the youth is more affordable sports programs. They would like to see the boxing brought back and kick boxing at the Community Center. Karate lessons were also mentioned.

6. New Business – None

7. Round Table – No additional comments

8. Adjournment

MOTION: A motion by Commissioner Barlow, second by Commissioner Gange, and passed unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Janet M. Burke
Recording Secretary

These minutes were approved, as corrected, by the Youth Commission at their September 5, 2007 meeting.