

Community Services and Recreation

DRAFT MINUTES/APPROVED

To: Community Services Commission Members

From: Edward J. Swinkoski, Director of Community Services and Recreation

Re: Commission Meeting February 19, 2013

Meeting was called to order at 5:37pm.

Attendance:

Present: Kristen Brandt, Lou Criscuolo, Marc Fasano, Paul Kottage, Donna Malley, Chris Orris,

Absent: Kim Karlin

Staff: First Selectman, Michael J. Freda

Edward J. Swinkoski, Director of Community Services and Recreation

Angela Belli-Infante, Secretary

1. Acceptance of Minutes of the meeting held on December 4th, 2012:

Lou Criscuolo made a motion to accept the Minutes of December 4th, 2012, seconded by Marc Fasano.

2. Correspondence:

Donna Malley shared with the Commission three pieces of correspondence that was sent by First Selectman Michael Freda to three of the commissioners. The first letter, dated January 18, 2013 was addressed to former commissioner Krista Polinsky, thanking her for the time that she served on the Commission. Following her term end on December 31, 2012, Ms. Polinsky joined the Town's Substance Abuse Action Council. The second two letters, dated January 7, 2013, were addressed to current commissioners Paul Kottage and Christine Orris, thanking them for their continued interest to serve on the Community Services Commission.

3. Old Business:

None.

4. New Business:

a. Nomination of Commission Secretary: Donna Malley entertained nominations for Secretary for the Community Services Commission. This position was formerly held by Krista Polinsky. Donna Malley made a motion to nominate Lou Criscuolo as Secretary, seconded by Christine Orris. All were in favor.

b. Review of Outreach Assistance Applications:

PTSA Road Race Sponsorship Request: PTSA submitted their request for sponsorship of 300 tee shirts for their 2013 Annual Road Race. Based upon the fulfillment of this request in previous years, this request would cost approximately \$1,500.00.

A lengthy discussion took place among the commissioners regarding this request from an organization who had been granted funds for this race in the past. Within this last year, the focus of the Outreach Fund had been realigned to meet the needs of families facing financial hardship for scholarship assistance of various programs for their children. For this reason, the Commission reiterated their feeling that these funds should be spread among as many families that can be reached who are facing financial strain, rather than utilizing them towards sponsorship of shirts for an event. Marc Fasano made a motion to deny this request made by PTSA, seconded by Kristen Brandt. All were in favor.

Max Sinoway Baseball Sponsorship Request: Max Sinoway submitted their request for sponsorship for the 2013 baseball season. Discussion ensued among the commissioners regarding the exercise and wellness that this organization provides children (and supports children who do not have the funds to play). Lou Criscuolo made a motion to grant Max Sinoway Baseball request in the amount of \$350.00 for the 2013 season seconded by Donna Malley. All were in favor.

c. Nominations for Community Services Recognition Award: Mrs. Malley reported that to date only one organization has been nominated (with four nominations). She reminded the Commission that the deadline for nominations is March 29, 2013. Final review of nominations will take place at the April meeting. A minimum of five individuals as well as a minimum of five organizations must be submitted in order to proceed with awarding these recognition awards. Nomination forms are available on the Town website under Announcements as well as in the Community Services office.

d. Child Abuse Awareness Month: April 2013:

First Selectman Michael Freda shared with the Commission of his continued commitment to provide ongoing continued support during this April and in the years to come. Mr. Freda also reviewed the Town's efforts conducted in the previous year with the support in spearheading the initiative by resident Col. Ray Fowler (who was present at the meeting). *See Public Participation.*

Mr. Freda stated that he intends on including Child Abuse Awareness as an agenda item during the March 2013 Board of Selectmen meeting.

Edward J. Swinkoski, Director of Community Services and Recreation

Director's Report:

Counseling:

Mr. Swinkoski reported that the current open client census at the Counseling Center is approximately 180 clients. The following groups are currently running: Anxiety Management Group, Substance Abuse Relapse Prevention Group, the Men's Medication Management Group, Smoking Cessation Group as well as newer groups (men's processing group, women's processing group, and a group therapy group focusing on Grief and Loss).

Mr. Swinkoski shared the good news that their counselor has returned on a part-time basis from a year-long medical leave. She is currently working three days a week and is working up to full-time schedule.

Energy Assistance: Mr. Swinkoski reported that since the start of the energy assistance season on September 19th, 2012, over 220 applications have been taken and processed. The deadline to apply for oil is March 1, 2013. The last day to apply for assistance for gas or electric is May 1, 2013.

December 2012 / January 2013 Monetary Donations to Food Bank: Mr. Swinkoski reported that \$410.00 was donated by a local group in memory resident Sal Giaimo. He also indicated that a \$3,000 check from St. John's Church was received by Community Services earlier that day.

Food Donations: Mr. Swinkoski reported that a total of 20 bags of food were donated throughout December 2012 and January 2013. Additionally, 270 meals were distributed (= 30 people) in January 2013.

2012 Christmas Food Distribution: The 2012 Christmas Food Distribution took place on Wednesday, December 19th and Thursday, December 20th. Fifty families participated in the program.

2012 Holiday Toy Selection: The 2012 Holiday Toy Selection took place by appointment: Monday, December 17th through Friday, December 21st from 9am-4pm. Mr. Swinkoski reported that 55 families/organizations donated to the distribution, and 50 families were recipients of the program took part (compared to 32 households in 2011). He reported that all appointments went well.

Storm Response: First Selectman Freda provided a high level overview of the Town's response to the recent blizzard, and provided a handful of specific instances of how residents were assisted under medical emergency circumstances. Additionally he spent a moment educating the commission as to the reason behind the methodology of how streets were addressed as it related to snow plowing.

Daycare:

Mr. Swinkoski reported the current enrollment in both Daycare Programs. Preschool currently have 15 children (all slots are filled). All School Age slots are filled with a capacity of 30 children. 3 children are currently on the waitlist.

e. Finance Report

Mr. Swinkoski distributed budget reports for (ending January 31, 2013) to the Commission for their review and welcomed any questions.

Community Services: YTD snapshot of Community Services expenditures:
66% of budget expended YTD.

Senior Center: YTD snapshot of Senior Center expenditures:
57% of budget expended YTD.

Additionally, reports of the Daycare, Emergency Fund (Fund 204) and the Outreach Fund (Fund 304) (ending January 31, 2013) were also distributed to the Commission for their review.

5. Public Comment:

Col. Ray Fowler returned to the evening's meeting to discuss the topic of Child Abuse Awareness and Prevention as National Child Abuse Awareness Month approaches in April and request the Town's continued support once again this year.

With the success surrounding the initiatives that were rolled out upon his request in 2013, he spoke to the commission to express his thanks for all that was accomplished in the previous year, and what he hopes to be accomplished this year.

In light of the recent Sandy Hook tragedy, Mr. Fowler feels that this is the opportune time to bring the Child Abuse Awareness to new heights. Mr. Fowler asked the commission to please step up their commitment from last year. After reviewing and applauding all the efforts made from last year, he hoped a few new ideas could be instilled this year.

His first idea was to have an informational pamphlet created (including facts like, "What is child abuse? What are the signs? What can you do if you see it? Who do you call?" as well as appropriate contact numbers (DCF, 2-1-1, local phone numbers). The pamphlets would be made available for distribution at a variety of public places in town including Town Hall, Community Services, Library, and schools. Mr. Fowler feels that local contact information should be included on any informational brochures, as people may have more of a comfort level (less intimidation) speaking to someone in their own neighborhood rather than at a State level. He suggested that one of the counselors in Community Services office be designated as the point person for any calls that may come in regarding this topic.

Mrs. Malley stated that she will reach out to her contact at the Milford DCF office to see what pamphlets they may be able to provide. Mrs. Orris agreed to look into what the State Library may have in their online clearinghouse of materials, and Mr. Fasano indicated that he will see what informational pamphlets may be available online.

While Mr. Fowler applauded the signage on the Town Green and the pinwheels in front of the Town Hall, Mr. Fowler made the request to the Commission that he would like to see additional signage placed in various locations all over town simply saying, "April is Child Abuse Awareness month."

Mr. Fowler indicated that he intends on bringing these requests to the next Board of Selectmen meeting in March. He also shared that has a meeting scheduled with Superintendent Cronin in the morning. Mr. Fowler also shared that Kyle Schwartz from the North Haven Citizen has asked him to speak at a young journalists group in April.

Lastly, Mr. Fowler stated that he intended on conducting the Candy Bar Campaign once again this year in memory of Savannah Hardin, the young girl whose story of child abuse called him into action last year. Mr. Fowler shared that he personally purchased and distributed over 400 candy bars last year, and some supporters of the Candy Bar Campaign purchased their own candy bars for distribution in hopes to spread the awareness of Child Abuse Prevention. He stressed the ease of initiatives that all could get involved in.

The commission felt that in order to address the Child Abuse Awareness efforts for April 2013, the a special meeting of the Community Services Commission will be scheduled for Tuesday, March 19, 2013.

6. Adjournment:

Lou Criscuolo made a Motion to Adjourn, seconded by Marc Fasano. The meeting was adjourned at 6:28p.m. The next meeting will take place on Tuesday, March 19, 2013.