

Island County Children's Commission
August 7, 2008 Meeting

Minutes

Present: Paty Williams, Fran McCarthy, Kristina Saunsaucie, Bess Windecker-Nelson, Kristin Lasher, Janice O'Mahony, Cynthia Shelton, Margie Forbes, Hillary Mellish, Rod Merrell, Dave White, Tomi Whalen, Sandy Ziemer, Carol Stillian

Absent: Peggy Dyer, Mark Brown, Patty Page, Kate Grossman

Guests: Pat Kohlmann, Whidbey Island Nourishes

Staff: Dan N. Bond, Keith Higman

This meeting was opened by Chair, Carol Stillian.

Opening Thought was offered by Dan Bond, who read a poem entitled "Life As I see It", by Morgan Vance. Morgan was a youth known to the juvenile justice and shelter systems in Snohomish County. The poem depicts how this young man's life was affected by drug addicted parents, poverty, violence, drugs/alcohol and being caught up in the "system" – and how he wished for something/anything different. This was offered as food for thought as we think about "problem" youth. ** Dave White will provide the opening thought for September.

Chair Report

The minutes of the July 10th meeting were approved as written.

Executive Committee Report:

- 1) Carol explained how the meeting evaluation information is used by the Executive Committee. That information informs our setting of the Agenda for meetings, how meetings are run and agenda items.
- 2) Carol explained the need for this Commission to strategically plan which "events" we will appear at, as these events are time-consuming and we do not want to burn out our members.
- 3) Similarly, there is a need to have some quality control on items that we put out on tables at community events under the Children's Commission banner. These items should be reviewed by the Executive Committee and we should be sure that they articulate what the Commission is about - address at least one of our foci.
- 4) Carol and Dan stated that we do need work plans from each Study group ASAP, so that this information can be part of the upcoming report to the BOH.
- 5) The suggestion was raised at to whether we should move full Commission meetings around to each geographic area of the County, including Camano, to facilitate travel equity among members. Whereas this idea has merits, discussion revealed that it would be logistically too difficult and would cause more problems than it is intended to alleviate. A compromise might be to hold a meeting in each

- geographic area of the County once per year. There will be more discussion on this topic.
- 6) Dan announced that all Children's Commissioners are eligible for mileage reimbursement and that they are to contact Dan for the paperwork.
 - 7) Carol stated that we are part of a collaboration to put on a second Healthy Youth Fair, this time in Oak Harbor, on November 15th. The other collaborators are the Underage Drinking Action Committee and the Sno-Isle Libraries. Tomi Whalen led a discussion of this topic. There will be an organizational meeting in Room 131 of the Law and Justice Building – County Campus, on August 26th, from 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM. Call Dan for more details.
 - 8) It was suggested that we plan for a second Children's Commission Retreat. This may be scheduled for next January, but planning should start soon. This idea received support. More to come at future meetings.

Standing Committee Reports

Nominations/Development: Carol reported that Colleen Bowls, from Camano, must resign for personal/family reasons. This leaves two vacancies on the Commission. Strategically, we are looking for members from Oak Harbor and Camano. We may go beyond 20 members in an effort to create better geographic coverage of the county.

Public Relations: Paty reported on National Night Out, which was very successful. There were many visits to the ICCC booth, and much information given verbally and via paperwork/brochures. Upcoming are Children's Day, on September 13th and Mammoth Day on October 4th. It was noted that the Study Groups are doing P.R. as well, by virtue of their activities.

Data Analysis: Tomi related that surveys were completed by a number of parents of children ages 6 to 11 at National Night Out. These data will be collated and available soon.

Legislative Analysis/Advocacy: No report at this time.

Study group reports

Early Childhood (0-5): A reminder that Children's Day is September 13th at Castle Park in South Whidbey. Volunteers are needed. Regarding the Born Learning Trail project, money is available to implement. We are waiting to hear what our role specifically will be.

The letter of invitation to PICEL, regarding the merging of our efforts, has been sent and we are awaiting the response.

Primary (6-11): This group has been busy, as well. They have been doing assessment of needs and are focusing upon parent support, lack of supervision of children before and after school, and screen time/media awareness. They are also paying attention to the results of the work of the Early Childhood and Secondary Groups, to dovetail their work with the work of those two groups. This Primary Group has produced the Home Alone Checklist, the Parent Survey regarding childcare availability, and the School-Age Care

Resources Brochure – all for distribution. They intend to take a media awareness presentation into the schools in the Fall.

Secondary Group (12-18): This group is conducting focus groups regarding youth connection to community. They are implementing adult focus groups now, and will be going into the schools to hold youth focus groups after schools get under way. The results of these focus groups will inform the direction of their subsequent work plan. Recently, they held a focus group with Juvenile Probation Counselors. Among responses was the insight that youthful offenders in Island County are generally light offenders, but their families are often quite dysfunctional. More insights to come.

BOH Presentation/Update on August 18th

There was discussion about the plan for the update to the Board of Health. The proposed outline was reviewed. Members were asked to find time on their schedules to attend.

Announcements

It was reported that on Saturday, 9/20, the Sno-Isle Libraries are holding an open house(s) called Ready Reader – for kids 0-5, getting them ready to read. ICCC members are invited/encouraged to attend this Early Learning-focused event.

It was reiterated that Carrie McLachlan had suggested the Commission create a “map” of membership, with members’ pictures attached to the geographic area of the County that they represent. This idea is one that we will discuss more, perhaps in the P.R. Committee.

Hillary reported that she will be at the Fair, supporting youth in the arts. Also that Thursday and Friday nights, as well as Saturday afternoon and evening at the Fair, there will be performances by the 3rd Street Players, a youth drama group. This is a benefit for all age groups.

Keith spoke briefly about his support for the Children’s Commission and that he encourages us to not worry too much about funding at this point.

Guest, Pat Kolman spoke of the Whidbey Island Nourishes (WIN) organization that provides 60 sack lunches to kids on the south end twice per week – called Operation Sack Lunch. This operates on private donations, is monitored from the Island Coffee House, and distributes through the Food Bank.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Evaluations

Meeting evaluations were handed out and collected.

Meeting Adjourned