

Island County Children's Commission
March 6, 2008 Meeting
Minutes

Members Present: Don Cook, Kate Grossman, Patty Page, Carol Stillian, Dave White, Hillary Mellish, Sandy Ziemer, Paty Williams, Colleen Bowls, Bess Windecker-Nelson, Kristina Saunsaucie, Tomi Whalen, Peggy Dyer, Kristin Lasher, Fran McCarthy, Janice O'Mahony, Margie Forbes

Members Absent: Mark Brown, Rod Merrell, Cynthia Shelton

Guest: John Dean

Staff: Dan N. Bond

This meeting was opened by Chair, Don Cook, at 4:35 PM.

The opening thought was offered by Kristin Lasher, who led the group through a guided, closed eye visualization exercise, remembering key times, thoughts, feelings and people from our own childhoods. This exercise was designed to reconnect us to what it feels like to be a child or youth – a very important thing for us to remember as we move forward.

Minutes were corrected to include Hillary Mellish as a member of the P.R. Committee. Minutes were then approved as corrected.

Chair Report

Don suggested that this Commission might engage in “breakfast sessions” in different parts of the county, in order to outreach to the community. This would make us visible in the community and allow citizens to sit down with us in a community setting and discuss issues regarding children and youth. He further made reference to “events” such as an open house which might raise our visibility and help us outreach to the community. These ideas received favorable input. Further discussions will occur both at the Executive Committee and in full Commission meetings.

Changes that were made to the **By-Laws**, from the February meeting, as well as further changes made by staff to page 3, sections 3 and 4, were approved. The By-Laws were then approved, with corrections, and are now in finalized form. Staff will make sure that all members have hard copies of the By-Laws in final form for their manuals.

The **Mission, Vision Values** document was then reviewed. The Mission and Vision portion was approved as written. Removed from the Core Values Statement was the phrase “Families, most often, know best the needs of their children.” The Core Values Statement was then approved, with the understanding that it is a living/fluid document that may grow and change over time, as the Commission itself evolves.

Standing Committee Reports

Nominations and Development – This Committee has no report, as it functions primarily when there are vacancies to fill. Carol did suggest that the Committee will

need to work on development of protocols for both recruitment and for Commission development sometime in the near future.

Public Relations – This Committee is working on development of a Commission logo and “tag line”. Sample tag lines were introduced and discussed, and it was decided to move forward on the logo and continue to work on a tag line. Sandy and Committee members reported on the Logo Contest that they are implementing, inviting area youth to create and submit logos, and possibly suggested tag lines as well, with an April 10th submission deadline. There was discussion around how submissions might best be done – mail vs. electronic – and drop locations. How to work with school districts was also discussed. The goal is to have finalists for the May 1st meeting, and to have our logo and tag line done for the May 10th Youth Fair.

Data Analysis – There is no report from this Committee at this time. The understanding is that this Committee will keep the full Commission updated about relevant data over time. Paty stated that Carrie McLachlan will be consulted as a key contributor for data.

Legislative Analysis/Advocacy – There is no report at this time from this Committee. There was discussion of connecting up with the Children’s Alliance, either as individual Commission members, or as a full Commission. Membership on the Children’s Alliance is seen as a key way to stay abreast of legislative issues affecting children and youth. Members were directed to the “Did they vote for kids?” document in their manuals which is a score card depicting how our legislators voted on issues affecting children during the 2007 legislative session. It also contains contact information for the Children’s Alliance.

Continued Discussion – Prioritization of Issues

This discussion was led by Don, members of the Executive Committee and staff. It was suggested that the Commission approach prioritization of issues by dividing up by age categories, and exploring issues related to each category. The categories are: 0 to 5 yrs. of age, Primary (6 to 11 yrs. of age), and Secondary (12 to 18 yrs. of age)

Members were asked to identify themselves as interested in working on a particular age category (and their names would be listed under that category on the white board in the front of the room). It was then suggested that each group (by age category) might form into a committee and meet outside of the full Commission to explore issues relevant to that age grouping of children/youth. In other words, the 0-5 group would meet to research and choose key issues relative to that age of children in this county, determine who else might be addressing that issue(s) and determine how to begin to address the issue(s). It was asked that a member of each group identify him/her self as willing to call the first meeting. For the edification of the full Commission, at this point, members of each grouping were asked to identify issues that they already know about relative to children/youth in each age category. This was done by a brainstorming process.

It was first suggested that these age groupings would constitute the first three issue-specific sub-committees. Through discussion, it was determined that a better approach would be to call these groups “study groups”, rather than issue-specific sub-committees. Their tasks would be to research issues relevant to these age groupings of children/youth, and come back to the full Commission with the results of their research, and with a suggested format to proceed, so that better informed decisions could be made about formation of sub-committees. This is the will of the members present. The following are the three age groupings:

0 to 5

Carol Stillian

David White

Sandy Ziemer

**Bess Windecker-Nelson

Kristin Lasher

Identified issues:

Child Care

Parent Education/Support

Fire Arms in the Home

Infant/Family Mental Health

Nutrition

Education (Systemic)

Child Abuse

****Bess will call the first meeting of this group.**

Primary (6-11 yrs. of age)

Paty Williams

Tomi Whalen

**Kristina Saunsaucie

Fran McCarthy

Margie Forbes

Identified Issues:

Education (Systemic)

Physical Activity/Screen Time

Mental Health

Abuse by Parents

Depression/Suicide

Lack of Supervision

Attachment/Connection

****Kristina agreed to call the first meeting.**

Secondary (12 to 18 yrs. of age)

Mark Brown

**Rod Merrell

Patty Page

Peggy Dyer

Don Cook

Janice O'Mahony

Hillary Mellish

Kate Grossman

Colleen Bowls

Identified Issues:

Substance Abuse
Mental Health (Depression)
Connection
Teen Suicide/Risky Behaviors
Graduation Rates
Homelessness
Sexuality
Emergency Foster Care
Parent Education/Support
Influences of the Media

****Rod has volunteered to call the first meeting.**

As a means of organizing efforts in the Study Groups, Don and Carol offered the 3-Silo conceptual model. A handout was given out to members to depict this model. This is simply dividing work to be done into 3 stages, or silos.

1. The first is very doable, short term projects that are needed, visible and can be accomplished rather quickly. These projects can help to begin to develop a pattern of successes. Examples might be: Presence at Youth Fairs, Creation of Crisis Cards for use by agencies and law enforcement, inter-agency collaborative efforts, etc.
2. The second silo is medium range projects. These projects are data driven, longer term projects, and doable. Examples might be: Intensive projects to affect underage drinking, parent education projects, etc.
3. The third silo is longer term projects that may result in system change. Examples are improvements in the Mental Health system, improving graduation rates, etc.

Meeting time drew to a close, and members were asked to fill out meeting evaluation forms for the Executive Committee.

There was brief discussion of how to include “public input/comment” into our meetings. This Commission is intended to be a vehicle for receiving public input. The Executive Committee will address this issue before the next full Commission meeting and bring ideas forward.

Members who have not done so already were asked to get Volunteer Information Forms filled out and bring to Dan at the next meeting.

Adjourned at approximately 6:40 PM.