

**CITY OF NORWALK  
YOUTH SERVICES ADVISORY BOARD  
NOVEMBER 15, 2011**

ATTENDANCE: Anna Duleep, Lt. Ashley Gonzalez, Candace Meyer, Darlene Young.

STAFF: Linda Wilock, Youth Services Director;  
Jasen Getner, Juvenile Review Board.

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Wilock called the meeting to order at 4:10 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF September 20, 2011

\*\* The minutes of September 29, 2011 were tabled.

DEPARTMENT UPDATES

JRB UPDATE

Mr. Getner stated that a key development has been the loss of “flex-funding” through DCF. He gave a background of the program and explained that while Norwalk took advantage of this program, other towns did not and therefore the state had decided that JRBs do not need this funding. He added that this is a major setback.

Mr. Getner reported that although the JRB originally accepted only police and court referrals, it now accepts referrals from schools and parents.

Ms. Wilock reported that it has been more difficult than anticipated to enroll the target number of students in the Aggression Replacement Training (ART) groups. Ms. Mayer asked if there could be a follow-up program for students that had Saturday detention in the Fall to be in an ART group the next semester. Mr. Getner replied that is it a great idea and this would be appropriate for schools that have ISS or the in-school suspension program, such as Brien McMahon.

Ms. Meyer asked if the report done by the JRB is passed along with the City and Ms. Wilock replied that this is a good idea to include with her presentation to the Finance Department then on to the BET. She added that it would provide budget justification and statistics to document how the budget is spent.

Ms. Wilock congratulated Ms. Duleep on winning her seat on the Council then asked her to  
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explain the statements about the Department that were attributed to Ms. Duleep in the papers. Ms. Duleep replied that by no means did she intend to portray any negativity toward Ms. Wilock and stated that she fully supports Youth Services.

Ms. Wilock stated that during some of the City Council forums there was an implied statement that the Department of Youth Services is in disarray and that this is not true. Ms. Duleep clarified that she had worked hard to keep the position of Director of Youth Services during her last term on the council, but that the early retirement was the only option for the position. She added that this was to be a temporary solution, but that now, two years later, she wants to know what the Mayor's plan is for the future of the department. She explained that now that she is back on the Common Council, she hopes that the person who will be appointed to head the Committee will address this issue. She added that the Board of Education is already cutting out support for Early Childhood Education, and finds this very troubling. She added that she looks forward to bringing the Youth Services Department up to an area of priority for the City, and has publicly used this as her platform in running for the Council position.

Ms. Wilock added that the Mayor continues to be very committed to be an advocate for Youth Services.

## BUDGET

Ms. Wilock stated that this year's City budget has Jasen's position as a regular item; however the part-time budget was been cut by the Finance Department to compensate. She explained that as a result, the funding for the part-time assistant was cut. Grant funds make up the difference for the remainder of the current year, but funding for the position will be an issue in next year's budget.

## Mayor's Summer Youth Employment Advisory Committee

Ms. Young said that last month an Advisory Committee was formed and they met last month with representatives from the Carver Center, Housing Authority, Mr. Victor Baptiste from West Rocks, Carolyn Fuller and Jodi from the Leadership Institute. She stated that the Mayor is on board with the program and they are looking to collaborate with agencies to write grants and come up with fundraising programs. She stated that when the group met they tried to focus on ways to think out of the box to come up with ideas and to collaborate with programs.

She described a program called L.A. Hire and said it is a national program that could be a useful model for Norwalk. There is a website that she is looking at for ideas that may work here.

Ms. Young stated that she is hoping to achieve the goal to have over 200 summer jobs for 2012. She added that they are having a tough time financially due to a decline in contributions, and explained that although the cost per student is \$1,237.50 it is not required for those companies that cannot afford to contribute. Ms. Mayer suggested that there is a matching program for tax credit and suggested that a "Friend-raiser" program could work with the Chamber of Commerce by sharing positive experiences with other prospective company sponsors.

Ms. Young replied that this was a great idea and stated that she would like to meet with Ms. M Youth Services Advisory Board

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ayer further to look into exploring this. She added that the Chamber of Commerce already supports the School to Work program, but hopefully the Mayor's Summer Youth Jobs program can be included.

A discussion ensued relative to strategies for fundraising, and Ms. Young stated that although the brochure has been sent out with the solicitation letter asking for sponsorships, they are expecting a continued reduction in contributions due to budget issues. She added that one problem is that they are not a 501C3 Non-Profit Organization, and that has prevented donations from local banks and other companies that require this federal not-for-profit designation. She added that they are working with Wells Fargo and are excited about their involvement in the program on financial literacy, and this represents an opportunity for summer youth jobs.

Ms. Duleep asked about internships and gave examples of how she was able to use internships in her own career, and Ms. Young replied that these are all good ideas to pursue.

#### Choice Neighborhoods Survey - Norwalk Housing Authority

Ms. Mayer distributed copies of the Washington Village Needs Assessment survey results dated October 2011 and highlighted key points of the results. She stated that the most significant point is that the response rate is 96% or 129 out of 135 households responded, which is an extraordinary percentage.

The summary recommendations follow:

## Gaps, Key Findings and Recommendations

The population at Washington Village is diverse and includes a mix of single adults, households with children and adults only households from very young to very old. English is not the primary language for 1/3 of households. Bi-lingual staff and ESL access are necessary.

Slightly more than half of households have school age children and of these, more than half have children ages 5 and under. Of the youngest children, only half are enrolled in early childhood programs. Parents need help accessing these programs and services as the research shows the benefits of these services, especially for very poor children.

While Washington Village has an educated tenancy with nearly three fourths of adults having achieved at least a high school degree, only forty percent of adults report income from wages. Residents could benefit from employment services.

In general, people like the neighborhood noting the schools, public transportation and location as being above average. Residents feel safe but many wanted more security and other measures to increase safety. More than half of households have cars and many cited parking as a problem.

Many residents have aspirations and are interested in owning businesses and/or their own homes but need assistance to do so.

Residents identified a number of services needs but the most commonly cited were programs for children and youth, computer and other job training, ESL and more opportunities for organized community interaction.

### Recommendations for a Redeveloped Washington Village

#### Site and Design

- Private entrances and yards
- Parking lots with designated spaces for residents
- Community and play spaces
- Larger units
- Good security and maintenance
- Address flooding problems

#### Planning Process and Transition

- Ongoing process for gathering resident input
- Ongoing process for keeping residents informed of plans
- Assistance with transition issues and decisions

#### Key Services and Amenities Needed

- Services in Spanish and Creole
- Computer lab
- Job placement assistance
- ESL
- Computer and other job training
- Connections to early childhood resources for children under age 5
- Programs for children and teens
- Home ownership counseling
- Small business development

A number of residents told interviewers that they appreciated the opportunity to participate in the survey and the planning process.

Redevelopment Agency, and Ms. Meyer replied that the RDA is funding one half of the redistrict plan with a City Match of the HUD grant. She added that the tenant based voucher of a 1:1 replacement of the physical unit is what is planned, but they are looking at other options such as Section 8 housing that may be easier to navigate through HUD, as it is very complicated. Ms. Wilock asked about the timing for the Choice Neighborhoods program and Ms. Meyer replied that it will take two years. She explained that the date for the grant application for the plan is June 2013 and it is a very involved process, but they are tackling it.

#### Marijuana Decriminalization

Lt. Gonzalez explained that the law regarding marijuana possession changed on October 1 from a misdemeanor for adults to a violation infraction for adults, but that for juveniles it still requires appearance in Juvenile Court. He stated that the changes in the law do not affect the youth, as the law is only for possession of less than 1 ounce, and that selling or intent to sell is still illegal.

He added that the Police have been very helpful with bringing back the Explorer's Program in January, and that program is a great addition to the needs of Norwalk's youth.

#### Other

Ms. Young asked how the Board can address the issue of "tooting their horn" as it relates to programs and efforts made by Youth Services for the youth of the City. Ms. Mayer suggested that this be added as an agenda item for further discussion and development of recommended programs.

Lt. Gonzalez stated that he has recently met with the Guardians, and there are some ideas worth pursuing as it relates to potential programs for Norwalk.

#### ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Marilyn Knox,  
Telesco Secretarial Services