

**MINUTES OF THE BERNARDS TOWNSHIP
MUNICIPAL ALLIANCE/YOUTH SERVICES COMMISSION**

May 4, 2010

Bernards Township Municipal Building

Mayoral-Appointed Members Attending:

1. John Carpenter, Chair, Township Committee Rep.
2. Kathy Kelly, Bernards Township Health Dept., Vice Chair
3. Mary Jane Postal, Civic Group Rep.
4. Officer David Martin, Police Dept. Rep
5. Audrey Sherwyn, Board of Education Rep.
6. Fr. Rick Morley, Clergy Rep
7. Ellie Todt, Senior Citizen Rep.

Mayoral-Appointed Members Not in Attendance:

1. Dorothy Schleifer, Substance Abuse Rep.
2. Monique Loh, Citizen Rep., Secretary
3. Lynn Evelyn, Citizen Rep.
4. Officer Tracy Alexander, Police Dept. Rep.
5. Dr. Barbara Bush, School District Rep.
6. Lynn Mourey, PTO Rep.
7. Bob Skea, Citizen Rep., Ridge Youth Sports

Other Attendees

1. Ronnie Weiner, Somerset County Alliance Coordinator
2. Chris Rose, Youth Services Commission
3. Lou Carlucci, citizen
4. Brenda Esler, EmPower Somerset
5. Sharon Lutz, EmPower Somerset
6. Lucy Forgione, Health Officer
7. Danielle Cooper, Bernards Township Health Officer

Call to Order

John Carpenter called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m and all attendees stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Welcome and Reading of the Mission Statement.

John Carpenter read the Municipal Alliance's mission statement and the three goals of the Alliance: "The mission of the Bernards Township Municipal Alliance Against Substance Abuse is to provide consultation, programs, training and resources to members of the Bernards Township community with the goal of preventing and reducing the use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs."

The three goals of the Municipal Alliance are “ESP” – Educate about the addicting and damaging effects of tobacco, alcohol and other drugs, Support events and programs which provide healthy alternatives to substance abuse, and create a community wide Presence in the identification of problems and in designing effective and measurable solutions.

The sign-in sheet was passed around for roll call. John asked if there were any public comments, and as there were none, proceeded to open the meeting. John asked for staff comments and Lucy Forgione introduced Sharon Lutz and Brenda Esler from Empower Somerset as our speakers for the meeting. Lucy also thanked them for being sponsors for the Twilight Challenge 5K race and fundraiser.

Sharon Lutz, executive director of EmPower Somerset, explained the goals of their department, which are to provide life skills and prevention education to Somerset County. Brenda Esler shared her background and involvement with the program.

Reports:

Youth Services Commission - Chris Rose – A few workshops are coming up on the agenda: May 21st workshop on adolescent trauma. June 11th - “Sun, Surf, and Substance Abuse.” Community Connections seminars will be starting up again in September. There is about \$2500 left in the Youth Services fund and Chris asked if we have come up with ideas about how we’d like to spend the money. LCD software is one possible idea that was brought up at the April meeting. Next, Chris would like to know how we will spend the annual \$5000 grant for next year, which is normally spent on Youth Summit Day. The \$20,000 competitive grant will be available soon and Chris urged the Alliance to apply as Bernards has never submitted for this competitive grant before. Chris will meet with Lucy and BTHD staff about the new grant opportunity and the leftover funds.

Somerset County Alliance – Ronnie Weiner – Ronnie gave a reminder about the upcoming workshop in May about the new grant reporting forms, which Lucy and Danielle will be attending. The grant update is due the end of the month. Ronnie is around until the end of the month to meet with anyone who needs help and will be gone the entire month of June. Quarterly reports are due the same day as grant update.

Staff Comments:

Lucy introduced the new employee at the Health Department, Danielle Cooper, who is our new Community Program Coordinator. Danielle gave the members some background information about herself. She has been working in public health for about ten years doing many different kinds of health education and is looking forward to working with everyone on the Alliance.

Minutes from the April meeting were then approved.

EmPower Somerset Presentation – Sharon reintroduced EmPower Somerset, formerly the Somerset Council on Alcoholism & Drug Dependency, and prefaced their

presentation by offering to partner with us whenever possible. The group just sponsored an event on April 28th at Raritan Valley Community College aimed at 18-25 year olds about drinking and young adults. The night included a presentation by Project PRIDE, who offers presentations free of charge. Sharon continued with the Power Point presentation, which takes a science and research based approach. She commented on the risk factors that lead kids to use drugs as well as the resiliency factors that help to prevent alcohol/drug use. Sharon went on to share information from key informants about the new ways kids are getting high. Prescription pill use is on the rise, especially during SAT time, as kids feel it helps them concentrate. Beer pong is popular, as well as wizard sticks, flip flop flasks, and oxygen bars. In further discussing the Reef flip flop flask, John pointed out that this is an industry problem, and Reef has designed these to specifically target kids. Other new things kids are doing are hiding pills and joints in highlighters. Finally, Sharon mentioned the link between playing beer pong and the spread of H1N1 flu on college campuses. Ellie Todt pointed out that adults are the ones who are providing these things to young people. Brenda added that it's very difficult to work against the alcohol and tobacco industries that have infinitely more money than non-profits. Teaching coping skills is one way to help kids make smart and safe decisions. Sharon mentioned the new SIPSNATION website, and they'd love to get some input from kids in Basking Ridge to help build the site. As they closed, Brenda mentioned the sticker shock campaign that EmPower Somerset will run during prom and graduation, where stickers with laws regarding underage drinking and serving to minors will be placed on alcohol bottles and cases of beer in liquor stores, hopefully discouraging parents from buying for underage parties, an occurrence which happens more frequently during these times of celebration. They are looking for merchants who will support them in this cause. Finally, John asked Sharon and Brenda to take a look at our Delayed Onset presentation and provide us with feedback; Kathy will email them the presentation.

Subcommittee Updates

RHS Booth – We have support from Valerie Goger to go forward with the booth and she will help us with our next steps in getting approval. MJ Postal asked EmPower Somerset to work with us on our first booth.

Communications – Kathy reported for Lynn in her absence. Lynn Evelyn met with Kathy, Lucy, and Danielle about promoting the Delayed Onset campaign. Kathy asked the Alliance to think about names or slogans for the campaign, something catchy that parents will remember. Kathy also brought up the idea of having two angles of the presentation: one for parents of young children K-3rd grade and another for 4th-12th grade. The presentation for younger parents would focus more on protective factors and prevention and the older parents would still touch on those subjects but include more of the consequences involved. The presentation is still a work in progress so member comments and suggestions are welcome.

Lucy and Kathy have been invited to attend the PTO presidents meeting in June to present the idea and schedule a date for September to give the presentation to the PTOs.

Twilight Challenge – Danielle reported that we have 10 runners signed up for the race and six sponsors (\$750 raised so far). We need at least 16 volunteers for the event and Danielle passed around a signup sheet. RAD members will also be volunteering and we will post on the RHS community service website. There have been a lot of advertising efforts so far: a flyer went out in Friday Folder two weeks in a row, event listing on Facebook, mailing to past runners, HD newsletter, BT website and other running websites, BR Patch, Society Hill newsletter, YMCA, RHS welcome desk, and bulletin boards at RHS. The Health Department will make A-Frame signs to put up in front of their office.

Charter Day May 15th – Kathy handed out a sign up sheet for members to work a shift on Charter Day to sell water and distribute information. If anyone is interested in helping out on May 15th, please contact Kathy. The Alliance will have a prize wheel to draw people to the booth with ATOD facts and questions as well as flyers to promote the Twilight Challenge.

Taking the Show on the Road: Where to present “Delayed Onset” presentation – John wants to focus on getting ready to deliver the presentation to the public. Lucy offered to draft a letter to community groups to promote our presentation. The members agreed to a deadline of June 15th; MJ and Father Morley volunteered to co-lead a presentation to a group soon after the deadline. Father Morley will reach out to pastors of other churches to see if we can do a joint program. Anyone who is comfortable delivering the presentation is encouraged to do so. Jen Gunning is coming up with two pamphlets for the Alliance to hand out at the presentations.

Youth as appointed members – Kathy asked the members if they would agree to have two appointed youth members of the Municipal Alliance. MJ made a motion to petition the Township Committee to amend the structure of the Alliance to have at least two students appointed to the committee. Father Morley seconded the motion.

Reports:

Community Program Coordinator – Danielle Cooper

Girls on Track – Preparing for 5k on June 7th, 6:30pm at Colonial Park in Somerset. The girls are currently gathering sponsor donations; the team goal is to be able to donate \$500 to the Girls on Track program, which helps promote and keep the program alive, as well as bringing it to new communities.

Building Youth – Kathy Kelly

Letter Writing Campaign – Kathy shared a copy of a letter that a 5th grade student wrote to a senior. Letters have been collected and will be distributed to the seniors on Thursday, May 20th, the day before prom. We will also have a press release put in the paper right after prom about the program.

LMTI – Kathy is currently taking nominations, 41 students have been nominated already and we're looking for more high school students. Most of the kids are William Annin students.

Mini-Grant – Kathy asked the members to review a mini-grant application from a Boy Scout troop to do a beautification garden project at Liberty Corner School. The mini-grant was approved by all members.

Website – Lucy, Kathy, Danielle, and Jen Gunning met with two web site designers and will make a decision shortly. Alliance members were asked to take a look at our current website and make note of anything that they like and don't like so we have a clean and clear message going out to the public.

Letter to Parents – John Carpenter – A letter has been drafted which addresses parents about the “perils of the season” of prom and graduation, encouraging parents to make the right choices and “hold the line.” John would like it to come from the school principal, chief of police, the Municipal Alliance, the mayor, and anyone else who will sign it.

MJ asked about any speakers the school had coming in for prom. Audrey mentioned that Project PRIDE visited the high school and MJ wanted to have Alliance member(s) attend these types of assemblies in order to get a feel of what's being told to the kids by the schools so that we don't duplicate information and so that we can form a better partnership with the schools. We plan to ask the administration for a list of ATOD related assemblies at the beginning of the year and gain approval for an Alliance member to attend so they can report back to members.

Municipal Alliance Member Comments

Lou Carlucci missed public comment and had two things to share. On May 17th, the SDFSC is giving recommendations at the Board of Education meeting. He urged the Alliance to attend the meeting and raise some hard questions about their proposal. Second, since the school budget failed, Lou wanted to voice his opinion against “pay to play” activities. He urged others who feel strongly about it to voice their opinions. May 10th will be the Township Committee meeting to discuss the budget.

Dave Martin attended Pingry's prom assembly last month, which is mandatory for all parents whose children are going to attend the prom. They discussed drinking and driving, myths about drinking, what to do when someone is drinking and driving, etc. Dave said the program was very good and many parents were in attendance. Pingry offers two dates that parents can go to the meeting.

MJ went to Rockaway Township to listen to a presentation by a father who lost his son to suicide. The father offered to speak in our town anytime, free of charge. On June 2, at 7am, Colton Middle School is having celebrities visit and have breakfast with the kids. MJ would like to find someone to go with her. The WAMS garden project is moving forward and they will have a master gardener visit the site soon. Finally, MJ spent a

weekend in Monmouth County with the NJ Prevention Network, working with inner-city kids with the goal of giving them courage and hope for the future. NJ Prevention Network does a lot of programs and something for us to look into. They have a program called Jason's Prescription and Over the Counter Drug program that might be good for us.

Danielle told the member that Project Graduation is looking for volunteers to chaperone from 10pm – 5am. If anyone would like to volunteer or can think of someone who wants to volunteer, please contact Danielle at 908-204-2523.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:01 pm.

Next meeting is June 8, 2010 at 6pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathy Kelly, Board of Health Representative