



**Town of Arlington, Massachusetts**  
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## Minutes 04-30-09



**April 30, 2009**  
**5:30-7:00PM**

**Present:** Colleen Leger, Robert Bongiorno, Leon Cantor, Cindy Sheridan, Cindy Bouvier, Caroline Ress, Natasha Thorne, Christine Sharkey, Chris Schultz, Karen Dillon, Kathy Hirsch, Susan Svencer, Bryan Gallagher

**Attendees: 13**

### **I. Upcoming events:**

- Town meeting: Marijuana Article-- opposition to the marijuana article is strong and very vocal. The article would establish a \$300 fine for marijuana consumption.
- Arlington Children's Mental Health Forum: May 21<sup>st</sup>. It is sponsored by the Wayside Youth and Family Support Network and will take place at the Robbins Library. Leon is on the panel that will be speaking / presenting. Cindy B. requested someone from the school be on the panel, although Andrea Razi is busy.
- Youth at Risk Conference: June 10<sup>th</sup> at Endicott College. The AYHSC will cover the cost for any coalition members who would like to attend. Those interested should email Colleen.
- HRC Summer Experience: June 29<sup>th</sup> – July 2<sup>nd</sup>. This camp will be co-sponsored by BOH, APD, and the Department of Recreation. The program is in need of volunteers to organize / run activities for the kids. The 100 kids will be divided into three groups that rotate through activities. The last Thursday is a graduation ceremony / cook out. If you have questions, contact Lt. Bongiorno and/or Officer Smith. It was suggested that a bike safety component be included at the camp. Lt. Bongiorno noted there is a safety day on the books at the school for 6/20 and bike safety will be a part of that. It was also suggested that sun safety be incorporated into the camp and that Mount Auburn hospital has a program in place that they will take to towns and other organizations.
- CADCA Training: July 27<sup>th</sup>- 30<sup>th</sup>, in Louisville, KY. There is plenty of space and funding for coalition members to attend (have 5-6 slots). Colleen and Christine both find it incredibly worthwhile and encourage all to attend. Those interested should email Colleen.

### **II. Community Forum Debrief:**

Natasha provided the group with a community forum debrief. She noted feedback was overall very positive. The right presenter and good publicity make it worthwhile and achievable. Parents particularly liked the piece on substance abuse and adolescent brain development. It was noted that small group discussions could have

strengthened the program, as adults and youth in past years have really benefited from hearing from one another. Canceling ice time really helped to improve turnout. The consensus was that this should happen next year with a number of town organizations. Leon was interested in how to improve / expand community participation, noting a key means of doing that is ensuring other youth related events are not scheduled on the same day. That was the intent of working through the school district calendar, but events were scheduled after the Community Forum. Will work with schools / town next year to hopefully prevent that from happening. March is between sports seasons and generally a less busy time for students and families. For next year, the Coalition will seek buy-in from all schools in Arlington, school committee members, and other youth-related organizations. All noted having food available was quite helpful.

### III. Coalition Logo

Susan initiated a discussion regarding the logo choice for the coalition. All individuals voiced their opinions, and the group was split across 1A (square parent/child concept), 1D (round parent/child concept) and the original number 3 (head silhouettes of increasing size). Christine suggested we let the youth council have the final say across those three choices.

### IV. Working Group Updates:

- **Youth Council:** The council has elected two leaders, who happen to be a brother and sister. These leaders will take control of the meetings and lead the discussions moving forward. The council would like to have one initial substance free event in the town for high school students and maybe middle school students. The tentative date for the event is Friday 6/19 from 6-9 pm. The council would like a lawn party theme and to do something different, would like it to take place on the front lawn of the high school. They'd like a DJ, maybe an open mic, as well as volleyball and other recreation activities. The intent is to ask local merchants to donate (or possibly sell) food. Johnnie Foodmaster and Stop and Shop were noted as being very supportive of town and school events and as likely donors of food and supplies.
- **Diversions program:** The program has had a total of 22 cases, with 3 pending. 8 are active cases and 7 have completed the program. None of the kids who have completed the program have re-offended. There is a need to increase police referrals to the program. Several coalition members attended a restorative justice training and Cindy hopes a similar program is the next step for the town. With the part time nature of Cindy's position, managing the cases is becoming difficult.
- **Cops in Shops program:** Local cops posed as liquor store employees and looked for suspicious behavior among customers and shop employees. APD worked undercover at the three liquor stores in town. All Arlington shops were on board with the program and felt like it was a success all-around. Christine asked if it would be valuable to put Bryan in Medford to run a similar operation, and all felt this would be quite useful. Bryan G. felt this would be feasible as the two PDs are used to sharing data and information with one another anyway. Collaboration of this sort is especially important since kids and adults alike are used to going out of town for alcohol. .

### V. Coalition Corner:

Christine introduced the idea of have a bi-weekly or monthly column in the Advocate to update the community on the coalition, its activities and progress. She requested volunteers to write the articles and solicited ideas on article topics. Many potential topics were raised: cops and shops, peer leadership program at the Ottoson, yellow dress / remote control (dating violence), prom safety, marijuana law, social host liability, and counseling resources.

### VI. Hot Topics:

- Cindy B. asked if it would be possible to have a police officer or other official work with some high school athletes and provide them with after school activities before sports practice begins. The goal is to not only give the students something to do, but help build leadership opportunities. The school is looking for a couple hours after school, a few days a week. It does not need to be every day. The students love to dance, so something that incorporates dance / work out would be great. Lt. Bongiorno suggested Officer James Smith would be great at conducting such a program. The teachers have a meeting in two weeks, on May 14<sup>th</sup> to talk about ideas for the kids, and Cindy requested Officer Smith attend that meeting.