

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of Friends of Wayland Youth and Family Services

held at 7:00pm on February 5, 2018
at the Wayland Town Building

Attendance: Deb LaPierre, president; Eliza Mosurick, clerk; Eileen Wilson; and Jason Verhoosky, WYFS

Guest: Rebecca Smoler, Wayland Community for Social Justice

Agenda items:

SPARK KINDNESS

Deb met with Christine Guthery, founder and Executive Director of SPARK Kindness. Started to prevent bullying, but with a positive focus in kindness, resilience, and empathy, SPARK is now central to community programming in Natick. Christine worked to bring many organizations together and communicating the same message. In addition to grant funding to enable her work, Christine is now a paid consultant for Westborough schools.

As relates to Friends, Christine offered to attend a meeting. The group agreed this would offer an opportunity to ask questions and for her to provide feedback on our work. [ACTION ITEM: Deb to invite her to a future meeting] SPARK has relationships with an enviable network of speakers and has an extensive mailing list (of over 4000 people), that lead to “sold-out” events.

Two opportunities for later consideration are (1) enhancing the Friends website, including adding a “Donate” button, and (2) engaging community sponsors for programming.

WAYLAND COMMUNITY GROUP FAIR

Eileen suggested Friends, could host a Community Planning Night, to which all Wayland groups would be invited. Jason shared that Malcolm Astley, of the YAC and other Town groups, has also floated this suggestion and could co-sponsor. [ACTION ITEM: Deb to reach out to Malcolm] Each group would be asked to briefly share about themselves and talk about upcoming events. The two-fold purpose would be to (1) get everyone in the same room with the chance to identify potential collaborators, and (2) recognize crowded times on the Town-wide calendar.

Planning elements to be completed include:

1. Identify a date, probably in May
2. Draft “Instructions” that would be provided to attendees
3. Create a sign-up for groups interested in attending
4. Develop a “Directory” handout of groups town

Eliza will create and share a Google Doc in which we can brainstorm a list of organizations and individuals to invite, keep track of other ways we can publicize the event, share draft language for the publicity and instructions, etc. [ACTION ITEM]

The suggestion was made to inquire about having a listing of community groups on the Town website.

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RECRUITING NEW FRIENDS

The proposal to hold an event to recruit new members to Friends remains popular. Eileen offered to host at her home, although her address will not be disclosed until people RSVP. The date of March 27 (with the 28th as backup) was selected. Deb has drafted language about Friends that she will share with the group for comment. [ACTION ITEM] It was noted that this presents an opportunity to revisit our mission, talking points, and 5 minute message.

Deb will invite Sejal Srinivasan of the Middle School PTO, since she previously reached out to Friends about co-sponsoring programming, and other Friends agreed to personally invite people they think may be interested.

Two questions were raised related to the goal of this recruitment effort: (1) What is the ideal size of Friends? and (2) Are there specific roles we are looking for people to fill? Following discussion, it was noted that 3-4 new members would be appropriate at this time, and that skills related to updating and supporting the website, accounting, and marketing would be beneficial additions.

POTENTIAL PROGRAMMING

WCSJ

The WCSJ is interested in scheduling 2-3 more opportunities for people to strategize difficult conversations. At their recent meeting they decided to narrow the topic for each date, such as "Engaging in Difficult Conversations about ..." with plans for a night each on race, media, identity, etc. Events would follow a similar format to before, with everyone together at first for a video or modeling of sample scenarios, followed by longer breakout discussions.

Proposed dates are April 10th and May 15th; to be reviewed by WCSJ leadership. [ACTION ITEM] Friends will book the same HS rooms as before, once dates are confirmed. [ACTION ITEM] WCSJ will develop new handouts for each event, and will consider having available the discussion norms provided previously. Handout information is also available on the WCSJ website.

YOUTH IN PHILANTHROPY

Eileen reported that the people who approached her about Friends potentially sponsoring the Youth in Philanthropy program for the middle school have received private funding and hope to launch in the fall.

Discussion:

Summary:

The next meeting will held on Monday, March 5th at 7pm. Jason will reserve the small conference room. [ACTION ITEM]