

Meeting of the Youth Advisory Committee (YAC), Friday, April 5, 2019

In attendance were (in alphabetical order): Dr. Malcolm Astley, Det. Tyler Castagno, Reverend Ted Crass, Ms. Sarah Greenaway, Dr. Dossie Kahn, Rabbi Louis Polisson, Ms. Jane Purser, Ms. Lisa Raftery and Mr. Jason Verhoosky.

The meeting was called to order at 9:32 a.m.

The minutes from the March 8 meeting were reviewed and accepted 6-0.

The newest member of the YAC, Rabbi Louis Polisson of Congregation Or Atid, was introduced. Rev. Ted Crass, whom Rabbi Polisson is replacing, announced that this meeting might be his last, as he is moving to New Hampshire.

Mr. Jason Verhoosky gave a brief rundown of the vaping presentation he had given to an audience of 25 parents at Wayland High School three nights before, on Tuesday, April 2. The presentation covered the science behind vaping, provided current data points regarding youth usage, and suggested ways to start a conversation with one's children (or other youths) about vaping. The slide presentation that accompanied his talk will be available on the WaylandCares website. He said that Wayland High School principal Allyson Mizuguchi and guidance department head Mary Beth Sacramone were involved in flagging other resources for communicating information about vaping to WHS students.

The low attendance at the presentation at the high school was attributed to the meeting having been postponed from its original date of Thursday March 7 (and the new date receiving relatively little promotion), and it was suggested that the presentation should be given again. After a discussion about when would be the most convenient time for a second presentation, it was decided that it might be best to wait until fall.

Mr. Verhoosky discussed the need to reach out to middle school parents about the subject of vaping. He said he is often asked by parents how early is too early to start a conversation with their children about vaping. His reply is that it's never too early to start such a conversation. Parents have more influence over their children when they are in middle school, plus they are then talking to their kids *before* they have decided to experiment with substances. By the time they are in high school, kids have pretty much decided which substances they are going to experiment with. . .if they have not already started using them.

Ms. Jane Purser said that she was trying to get vaping education information put up at the Middle School. Ms. Lisa Raftery said that students are vaping at the Middle School, and that Wayland parents need to be made aware that this trend is actually happening here in Wayland.

Mr. Verhoosky was asked for some statistics regarding vaping usage among teenagers. He said that studies show that less than half of all teenagers have tried vaping, but over

the past three to four years, lifetime usage numbers have doubled. In 2012 it was 16%, in 2014 just shy of 30%, in 2016 it was 32% and in 2018, data showed that 46% of MetroWest students have at least tried vaping. The percentage of teens who are regular users is around 25%. These numbers represent the same curve as tobacco usage used to have.

Comment [P1]: Jason, please ck these figures. Also I didn't get if these numbers were for Metrowest or national.

Ms. Purser said that every week new data about the dangers of vaping appears. Earlier in the week a news story had come out about vaping users suffering seizures. So more information is coming out faster, but it will still take time to parse it all.

Mr. Verhoosky said that the good news is that those against vaping have achieved certain victories in 10 years of e-cigarette use what took 70 years with tobacco, such as raising the purchase age and banning flavors. But for the first six to eight years they were in existence, e-cigarettes were looked at as a smoking cessation tool. Now we see the regulatory mindset changing, from vaping devices can help you quit, and are in theory safer than traditional cigarettes, to they are safer, but we don't know how much safer. . .if at all. He said that youth smoking rates had fallen to less than 5%, but with vaping, there is a new generation of nicotine-addicted youth.

Mr. Ted Crass noted that many of the major vaping companies are owned by Big Tobacco.

Mr. Verhoosky said that when trying to convince youth to make healthy decisions, talking to them about the impact of vaping on their health isn't particularly effective, because 18-year-olds feel pretty invincible. A more effective conversation is to talk to them about how they're being duped, i.e., are the target of finely tuned marketing messages by these firms, who are owned by Big Tobacco.

He added that he meets with every freshman and senior wellness class at the high school level, and is looking to find a better way into the Middle School to deliver its message.

Dr. Malcolm Astley asked if the vaping presentation had been recorded. Mr. Verhoosky said that the presentation on April 2 was not recorded, although it had been scheduled to be recorded back on its original date of March 7.

Mr. Verhoosky said that on Thursday, March 28, he had spoken at a meeting in Westborough, Mass., titled Square One: A Community Conversation about Substance Use and Awareness. The event marked the first in a series of programs to be put on by Westborough Youth and Family Services, which is headed by Cara Pressley, as part of a coalition to jumpstart their community's move into greater prevention awareness.

Mr. Verhoosky said that on April 9 there was going to be a federally funded drive simulator, called Drive for your Life, at Wayland High School for all junior and seniors. The event, which was being put on in conjunction with SADD and SADD advisor John Berry, involves two simulators and trailers at the field house, one to show the effects of impaired driving under the influence of alcohol and marijuana, and one to show the

effects of distracted driving. While a student undergoes the simulated driving, the other students will be able to watch what he or she is experiencing on a screen.

There was a suggestion to make the simulation into a larger community event – not just for students -- held at a site such as the Town Center. Dr. Dossie Kahn said that adults are as guilty of distracted driving as teenagers, if not more so. She said that recently she did an unofficial count while watching cars go by and said that one of every four drivers was using a device. She said that teaching teenagers the dangers of distracted driving is made more difficult because they see so many adults on their devices, so that it becomes a matter of “do as we say, not as we do.” She added that the simulators of impaired and distracted driving were preferable to the mock crash display that had been at the high school in previous years, because it was trauma-producing.

Mr. Verhoosky related a recent experience of being at a red light. When the light changed to green, the car at the front of the line did not move. The car behind that driver was a police car, and the police officer shouted into bullhorn, “Hey you! Get off your phone!”

Det. Tyler Castagno was asked for information on how the town of Wayland handles stopping distracted driving. He said that because Massachusetts does not require hands-free driving, as does New York, it can be a challenge to pull someone over; the police officer needs to observe impeded operation of a vehicle. In a state without a hands-free requirement, if the driver is using a device but is otherwise driving perfectly, there is no cause to stop them. And even then, there is a loophole, in that Massachusetts allows drivers to use their phone for directions.

However, he noted that in Massachusetts, distracted driving carries more progressive penalties than speeding: If you are stopped, that violation never goes away. A first offense carries a \$100 fine; a second offense, no matter how long it occurs after the first offense, carries a \$250 fine, and a third offense, a \$500 fine. For someone under 21, the penalties are even harsher. A first offense, in addition to the fine, carries a 60-day license suspension; a second offense a 180-day license suspension; and a third offense a one-year license suspension.

Det. Castagno said that the Wayland police sometime employ a “pedestrian” on the street and check drivers going by. If that person sees a distracted driver, they can alert a police vehicle ahead, warning them to watch for the particular car and driver.

Det. Castagno was asked if the Wayland police advertise, via signage, the fact that they are looking for distracted drivers. He said the only time they do that is when school reopens in the fall, and the sign board in front of the Public Safety Building flashes a “Slow Down Wayland” message.

Dr. Kahn said that Youth and Family Services is very busy these days, but that she and clinician Kelsey Sanclemente keeping spots open for new consultations. She said it used to be that they would be busy throughout the school year but in the summer there were fewer therapies and interventions. But for the last few years, they have continued to get

new referrals through summer and now the practice is steady throughout the year. She added that there several ongoing education and support groups are going well, including a monthly grandparent group, a middle school boys group and a middle school youth empower group. The “Snack and Relax,” a collaboration with James Chiarelli, the Transition Coordinator at the high school, is also being well-attended, particularly by seniors.

Ms. Raftery asked if Youth and Family Services consultations are available to Metco students. Ms. Kahn said that poses an ongoing challenge, because there is no late Metco bus, meaning that Metco families can only access the services before and immediately after the school day. She said that for a crisis case, she will visit a family in Boston, but the accessibility of such remote services is limited by the fact that Youth and Family Services has only herself and Kelsey Sanclemente to meet with clients.

It was asked if Metco provides its own family services. The answer was no.

Ms. Purser said that it takes a specific event or organized activity, such as a talent show, to run a late bus for the Metco students. Ms. Purser noted that the cost of adding more transportation is made difficult by the fact that bus transportation already accounts for \$30,000, a big part of the school budget.

Ms. Raftery pointed out that when the schools go to their revamped later hours in the fall of 2019, the problem may be worse for Metco kids. Ms. Purser said they are pushing partner programs to get Metco kids to stay later, but as it is, sometimes they don’t get home until 9 pm.

Ms. Purser reported that Middle School Youth Night on Friday night, March 8, was a big success. The more than 100 students who attended had a great time. She gave thanks to the Wayland Police Department, who donated \$250, and in particular Det. Castagno and Youth Officer Shane Bowles. The plan is do more such nights in the future.

Mr. Verhoosky said that SBIRT screening at the high school would take place the week of April 8.

He said that the data from the latest MetroWest Adolescent Survey was coming in, and that he and WHS Wellness Director Scott Parseghian are going to share the data with the public on a night in May, date tbd.

Mr. Verhoosky reminded the group that in the Tuesday, April 23 election, the question to ratify the previous town meeting vote against the retailing of marijuana in Wayland will be Question 1. A simple majority is needed to ratify the vote.

It was asked if the vote could be voided down the road if marijuana were to be legalized at the federal level. Mr. Verhoosky said that even if marijuana becomes legal at the federal level, towns can still ban retail sales of marijuana, the same way that towns can vote to be dry towns.

He noted that Brookline had just opened its first recreational store, and that this was the first such facility in the state reachable by public transportation; the other eight that previously opened were in suburban or rural locations. He said that, for what it's worth, this makes the store seem more like a normal part of the community.

Ms. Purser noted that the town warrant for the Town Meeting on Monday, April 29, was going in the mail that day for public notice. *(Note from the taker of minutes: She said this because the ban that was voted for in the October 2, 2018 special election was deemed invalid because the notice of the special election, i.e., the town warrant, was inadvertently not mailed to every household in Wayland, as is called for by Town of Wayland By-law and Mass General Law.)*

Mr. Verhoosky noted that the Board of Selectmen was asking Youth and Family Services members to poll themselves regarding Article 22 at the town meeting, the zoning amendment. At the previous town meeting, the people of Wayland voted to create a specific district for any potential marijuana-related business. In the revised article, the wording will refer to only Registered Marijuana Dispensaries (RMDs), also called Medical Marijuana Treatment Centers, which cannot be prohibited. He pointed out that in some other towns with similarly worded articles, marijuana businesses have sued the towns for lack of clarity.

A motion was made by Sarah Greenaway to accept the revised wording, with only medical establishments mentioned. The motion was seconded. However, Dr. Astley asked for a discussion as to whether the vote among members fits into the YAC's responsibilities. After the discussion, the motion was made again, seconded and the vote was 5-0 in favor of accepting the revised wording.

Mr. Verhoosky noted that the vote to ban all businesses would require a yes vote. He also observed that since the article was Article 22, that item might not come up at Town Meeting until Tuesday night, April 30.

Dr. Astley questioned whether the YAC, which he views as an advisory committee rather than a town board, has the authority to make recommendations to the town. Mr. Verhoosky said the town views the YAC as an appointed board, one that, like other town boards, holds open meetings. Therefore the YAC is permitted to take stances on town votes and hold ballot initiatives. Dr. Astley suggested it might be a matter for town counsel to weigh in on and issue a ruling. Ms. Verhoosky said he would be glad to bring the matter up with town administrator Ms. Louise Miller, but added that bringing the matter to town counsel might be deemed not affordable, in terms of budget.

Mr. Verhoosky said that Ms. Corrie Dretler was looking to step down from her role on the YAC. Ms. Pam Cerne has expressed interest in taking Ms. Dretler's place but first had to resolve a scheduling issue.

Dr. Astley said WHS graduate Danielle Barrett has written and is producing a play in New York City titled *The Five Stages* (the title refers to Elizabeth Kubler-Ross's five stages of grief). He thinks that the play could teach grieving skills that could be used when a relationship ends. He said the break-up is the most dangerous time in a relationship, and that learning how to grieve over that, and acquiring the skills to separate safely, could potentially prevent relationship violence.

The next meeting YAC meeting will be Friday, May 3.