

Health and Human Services Advisory Committee Minutes

January 28th

6:30 pm

room 106C Newton City Hall

Committee Attendees: Matt Stafford, Lisa Terrizi, Michelle Freshman, Brenda Anders Pring

1. Members asked for an explanation of what is CBD and how is it regulated which was provided by Commissioner. The group discussed the confusion among the public about what this is and whether it is as harmless as the industry claims.
2. One member raised a concern about a liquor store that has extensive selection of flavored nips at the counter and wonders whether this is potentially appealing to underage consumers. Commissioner agreed to share the concern with law enforcement.
3. New Tobacco Health Regulation was shared and discussed in detail. Board members expressed support that their advice around strengthening and expanding tobacco regulation in the City was implemented.
4. Emergency Preparedness and Code Red
 - New PSA video on ER preparedness – members thought the video the Mayor did already on recycling was great and they are pleased that she is planning to do another on this particular topic.
 - Door hangers – members suggested reaching out scout troops for help with this and putting them in water/sewer bills. One member suggested adding information on how to sign up for Code Red in the storm related robo calls. Commissioner agreed to share this idea with the executive office.
5. Marijuana Community Host Funds priorities: Commissioner shared draft memo of priorities identified by Newton PATH and explained how the Host agreements work with retail marijuana stores. Committee members agreed with all the priorities listed and asked for a few others to be discussed with relevant departments to consider. These included:
 - a. Canine support for drug investigations in law enforcement
 - b. Plain clothes officers and/or youth officers to discourage secondary drug trade to underage youth
 - c. More support for subsidized mental health care for young people in need who are at risk of self-medicating without treatment
 - d. Funding for research on corollary effects in the community pre and post marijuana stores looking at such potential concerns as:
 - i. Increased traffic accidents
 - ii. Increased traffic congestion
 - iii. Changes in youth use
 - iv. Increased babies born with THC exposure
 - v. Changes in addiction rates to other types of substances

6. Commissioner provided brief description of numerous upcoming programs/events -
 - Improbable Players (substance use awareness and prevention) program – recovery theater group out of Watertown will perform at an all Freshman class assembly at Newton North in late Feb. HHS is working to follow that program with the same program available in the evening for the community
 - Newton South will host Chris and Kathi Sullivan as their substance use prevention program in April for Sophomore and Juniors all class assemblies
 - HHS is bringing Joani Geltman (LICSW) parenting expert to provide a community presentation on parenting teens and setting limits. This program was initiated after school social workers and administrators suggested this was an area they could use support on in the community.
 - HHS is working to develop a program for parents of young people in their 20s who are struggling. HHS has seen numerous calls to social services from families who are struggling with parenting and family relationships at this juncture. The tentative plan is to bring in an expert speaker that will speak to a broad range of parents with young people this age and then provide targeted follow in partnership with the Department of Mental Health for families whose young person is more vulnerable.
 - Discussed current idea to bring in an artist to support a community event around suicide awareness and prevention. Tentative proposal is to design a collaborative art installation building on a weekend day bringing together multiple segments of the population to share in the design and construction of a group art project.
7. Backpack food for families program
 - a. Discussed current trends of high summer utilization, slower once school got started and then picked back up as the Thanksgiving and Winter holidays approached. Suggests that the programs goal of supplementing food that is provided at school for children when school is out is working. The Newton Free Library has been the most popular pick up spot and the library is happy with the program as well.