



HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT

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City of Newton, Youth Commission January 12, 2022 – 6:30 p.m.

Attendance/Introductions:

Spencer Solcoff, Esther Zhang, Mia Chu, Lucy Ponce, Arman Tendulkar, Zack Gusenoff, Nolan Anthony, Audrey Wei, Shiv Sawhey, Rhiannon Esposito, Preethika Vemula, Ava Freeman, Rachel Alpert-Wisnia, Leo Liu, Shiv Sawhney, Ethan Situ, Ethan Dhadly, Jessie Traxler, Lily Siegelman, Maya Garg, Michelle Menken, Meghan Murtagh, Kathy Shields & Claudia Wu.

Meeting called to order at 6:35 p.m., followed by brief introductions.

Acceptance of December meeting minutes:

Commissioner R.E motioned to accept the meeting minutes for December. This motion was seconded by Commissioner E.S. Motion accepted by all commissioners present (7 accept -0 decline – 2 absent).

Announcement:

Newtonville Littering:

- Email sent to Meghan from Councilor Albright regarding the increase of littering in Newtonville, specifically around businesses and shared community spaces
- This is a popular village that is visited by residents, but its close proximity to Newton North, attracts many high school students for lunch each day
- Concern is that young people are not using designated trash receptacles
- Recognizing this may be bigger than Youth Commission, there are a few ways we can help:
 - putting together a small informational write up to be shared during month Advisory blocks
 - small write up in Youth Commission Newsletter
 - social Media Post
- Adult Advisory, C.W, also shared that the Center for Civic Engagement at Newton North is creating posters that Newtonville businesses can hang in their windows as gentle reminders to place trash in the waste receptacles. C.W also shared her email address for those interested in assisting with the posters.

Commission Update:

Mental Health Survey:

- Newton Public Schools will be implementing the YRBS (Youth Risk Behavior Survey) this upcoming February and again in November to all middle and high school students
- The YRBS is survey that measures risk factors such as sexual behavior, substance use, mental health, relationships
- It was decided that the YC would not administer an additional mental health survey, but to participate in the review of February YRBS Mental Health data, as well as influence the Mental Health section for the future YRBS survey that is to be administered in November
- NPS staff will attend spring YC meeting to share data and engage feedback

Other Business:

Subcommittee updates:

- **Community Engagement update given by R.E:**
 - **Gun shop in Newton:** The subcommittee is interested in continuing a discussion on this. Maybe the Youth Commission would want to write an open letter to City Government supporting the ban.
 - **Covid-19 FAQ's for Youth:** The constant changing of guidelines and policies around COVID 19 have left lots of unanswered questions and an increase in stress and anxiety amongst youth in our

community. The YC could put together an FAQ for publication in monthly newsletter, and social media outlets. Engage in conversations with DPH, Director of School Nursing and CDC website.

- **Village Centers/NewMo:** Thought of putting together a survey for youth to gather feedback on the Planning Departments, Zoning Redesign efforts; “How are village centers working for youth? What additional improvements do youth want to see.” Additionally, putting together publication material together for NewMo and its benefits for youth.
- **Social Event/Community Event:** Brainstormed ideas for an online social event, such as on [escape room challenge](#). Connecting to Newton Cultural Commission, which is responsible for many of Newton’s concerts, fairs, and festivals, to ask when these events might start up again and possibly collaborate on an event with youth appeal.
- **Communications update given by J.T:**
 - **Youth Commission Email Address:** The YC has recently been granted an email address; youthcommission@newtonma.gov. This email inbox will be monitored by Asst. Director of Youth Services, however incoming emails and responses will be a collaborative effort between Youth Services & Commissioners, as well as Communications team.
 - **Newsletter:** A YC monthly newsletter is set to launch in February. The Newsletter will include: overall YC updates and meeting information, subcommittee announcements, youth led/involved civic events/groups within our community, opinion piece from a Commissioner.
 - **Social Media:** Updating Instagram username & password. Limited access to those that need to post/or will be responsible for posting. Working on creating a YC Facebook.
 - **Community Event:** Outreach and engagement in our community. Attending already scheduled events and/or sponsoring an event. Getting the word out about YC and the work that we do and inviting others to join.
- **Mental Health update given by R.A.W:**
 - Youth Risk Behavior Survey (see notes above)
 - **Instagram Posts:** Bring back regularly Instagram posts supporting mental health. Posts will and can include information about coping strategies, motivation, resources, information about isolation, stress and sports, stress and schoolwork.
 - **Panel discussion:** Youth led panel discussion about mental health struggles and ways to cope, sharing of resources and connecting peers to peers.
 - **Mental Health/Wellness Event** (Community wide event) in the spring, outdoors. Collaborate with Community Engagement Subcommittee.
 - **Instagram:** Utilizing Instagram as a way to collect MH data from youth in the community.
- **Guest Speaker update given by E.D:**
 - Actively putting together speakers for monthly meetings. For February drafting emails to school board members: Margaret Albright and Ruth Goldman. Explore the role of the school board, different positions on the board and how youth can engage.
 - Topics for future meetings for consideration are: Covid influence on mental health, anti-bias/anti-racism lesson, Board of Health discussion, and the Mayor.
 - Large speaking events: TedX to be discussed at next meeting.

Next Youth Commission meeting; Wednesday, February 9 at 6:30 p.m., Newton Free Library.

Meeting closed at 7:40 p.m.