

Narragansett -URI Coalition

“Building a community of mutual respect”

**Meeting Minutes
Tuesday – September 20, 2005
7:00PM
Narragansett Beach Clubhouse**

SUBCOMMITTEE MEETINGS

The following subcommittees met prior to the full Coalition meeting:

- Communications (Chair: Jim Hurton)
- Realtors/Neighborhood Association (Co-Chairs: Eileen Desforbes and Joe Robenhymer)
- Programming (Chair: Leslie Williams)
- Common Ground (Chair: Nancy Devaney)

The Coalition Meeting convened at 7:00 PM.

Co-Chair Chief Smith welcomed everyone to the beginning of a new, exciting year. As our partnership strengthens, Chief Smith publicly acknowledged the good and consistent work of community officers Scott Vellone and Tony Pelopedia and recognized Henry Baker for his diligent record keeping services and production of valuable reports to the townspeople and university. Ron Lepre, retired state policeman and code enforcement/community housing officer, provides a civilian presence in our neighborhoods. He also thanked Jeff Peckham, Commander from the South Kingstown Police Department and Major Stephen Baker from URI's Police and Security Department for joining us this evening.

He asked Paula Santos, Coalition Coordinator, to introduce the new moderator. Paula introduced Ben Matone. Ben is a junior at URI who serves as a judicial and IFC (Inter-fraternity Council) parliamentarian. Due to scheduling conflicts last year, he was unable to attend many Coalition meetings but was involved through subcommittee work with Leslie Williams and Tom Dougan. He thanked everyone for providing him this opportunity to serve as moderator and reinforced that he was here to help the meetings run smoothly.

GUEST SPEAKER

The moderator introduced the first item on the agenda: RhodeMap to Safety: Dean Fran Cohen. Dean Cohen presented the Coalition with an overview of the University's RhodeMap to Safety media campaign. A scientific survey conducted in 2004 revealed that 83.3% of URI students wanted to see greater enforcement of state drinking and driving laws. URI and town officials are responding. The survey also indicated overwhelming student support for “safe ride” programs. With URI students leading the way, Common Ground and RhodeMap to Safety are working hard to help launch such a program, Rhody Rides, here at URI. We hope the community and student body will continue to support efforts to enhance student and community safety.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

The moderator called for reports from the subcommittee chairs.

- Steering Committee (Tom Dougan, reporting)
 - a. Dr. Dougan thanked everyone for their support and well wishes during his recovery and is very pleased to be back.

- b. The Steering Committee met throughout the summer and established four broad goals for the 05-06 academic year to guide the subcommittees in their activities:
 - **To increase student participation on the Coalition by 50%**
 - **To reduce the number of events that result in community complaints to the Narragansett Police Department regarding URI students**
 - **To receive final approval for the application of the student code of conduct to off-campus conduct**
 - **To develop a comprehensive media/publicity campaign to educate the South County community about the work of the Coalition**
- Communications Committee (Jim Hurton, reporting)
 - a. Reconstruction of the website is about 90% complete.
 - b. Better lines of communication have been established both within the Coalition and between the Coalition and the news media with an emphasis on the positive.
 - c. Kudos to the university for their excellent publication of the off-campus housing guide "Living in Narragansett" and thanks to the realtors for their distribution efforts.
- Programming Committee (Leslie Williams, reporting)
 - a. Leslie Williams and Pat Zito will be serving as co-chairs.
 - b. We have five new members.
 - c. The fall commuter orientation is scheduled for October 20th and will be held in the Memorial Union Ballroom. The subcommittee is still working out the details.
 - d. The late fall food drive is planned for December 10.
 - e. Trash pick-up day is May 8th.
 - f. Spring clean-up will once again be held in conjunction with Earth Day, April 22.
 - g. In conjunction with realtors/neighborhood associations, discussing a "get to know your neighbor" night at Okies in an alcohol-free event where the common interest is the Monday night New England Patriots football game.
- Realtor/Neighborhood Association Committee (Eileen Desforges, reporting)
 - a. Several new members were welcomed.
 - b. Model lease is still under review.
 - c. Trash continues to be a concern and excessive cars parked on properties.
 - d. Ron Lepre, new Community Housing Officer, addressed the group and answered many questions.
 - e. The subcommittee's next meeting is at 6:30pm, October 18, prior to the full Coalition meeting.
- Common Ground (Joe Meister, reporting)
 - a. Joe attended the University's press conference on RhodeMap to Safety and was very impressed with the university's commitment to student and overall public safety. When it comes to DUI, it seems we all have a friend or know of someone who was involved in often tragic events.
 - b. The committee met throughout the summer and continues to focus its attention on Responsible Beverage Service practices, DUI, and Designated Driver initiatives.
 - c. Many establishments have signed on as a cooperating tavern or package store and George's of Galilee representatives have officially joined the Common Ground subcommittee. Thank you George's

Open Forum

- A. The majority of the discussion of the open forum focused on off-campus student behavior.
 - Chief stated that if anyone in the audience had a specific incidence they wished to discuss with him to please do so after the meeting or call him directly.

- He reported that three houses were emblazoned with the “red sticker” as a result of noise ordinance violations at the beginning of the semester. Eight additional houses received stickers but no repeat offenses from the original three.
 - There were calls from tearful renters who called the police to say that were invaded by nomadic party goers. The police try to help out in this kind of situation.
 - Before arrests are issued, the officers make a judgment call based on the totality of the circumstances.
 - Jim mentioned the new landlord/tenant act and the possibility of eviction as a detriment to irresponsible behavior. Also, if the application of the code of conduct jurisdiction policy to the off-campus community is approved by the faculty senate, word will spread very quickly.
 - The chief implored the residents for their patience as there are often more calls than the department can handle at any one given time and sometimes the party may be so large it takes time to disburse the crowd leaving other areas unattended. The chief asked for confidence in the department.
 - Foot patrols may be increased.
 - Dwellings have to be registered with the town and square footage dictates how many individuals can live in the property. 20% of the property can be allotted for parking and one car per person is allowed.
 - The rental registration law requires that the renters’ names are posted in the dwelling
 - Realtors provide the list of properties and renters to the police department and this is helpful in determining who lives in the property and is valuable for emergency situations.
 - Tom encouraged residents to use the hot line at 874-5393.
- B. The Chief asked the URI students to stand and be acknowledged for participating in the Coalition. Positive change can happen with their involvement.
- C. The Coalition coordinator announced that the next meeting would be an open house and encouraged all to attend.

4. Closure/Next Meeting

There being no further business to address, the meeting adjourned at 8:10pm. The next Coalition meeting will take place October 18 at the Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted,

Paula Santos
Coalition Coordinator