

# *Narragansett - URI Coalition Steering Committee*

**Tuesday – April 4, 2006**

**4:00PM**

**Narragansett Town Hall**

Members present: Kate Bashwiner, Nancy Devaney, Tom Dougan, Jim Hurton, Colleen Lally, Maury Loontjens, Toni O'Neil, Joseph Robenhymmer, Rob Rossi, Chief J. David Smith, Carol Stuart, George Tracy, Doug Wardwell (for Eileen Desforges), Leslie Williams, Coalition Coordinator, Paula Santos  
Absent: Krista Garrett  
Guest: Dorie Lawson

The meeting began at 4:00pm.

## **New Business**

- **Review/Approval of minutes:**  
March Steering Coalition Minutes to be submitted for review and approval by e-mail.
- **New Liquor Store License issued**  
Nancy Devaney expressed her concern that a new liquor store license was issued by the Town Council. It was done so quickly that no one from the public really had the chance to express their opinions. Maury Loontgens said it was an internal business decision and not the concern of the Coalition. Leslie Williams questioned why the Coalition could not take a position on an action by a Town Council or legislative decision. Toni O'Neil expressed her concern that the Common Ground Sub-committee of which she is a member is focused on environmental strategies that includes limiting access to alcohol, particularly to the underage. She had e-mailed the Steering Committee as soon as she learned it was on the Town Council agenda and was disappointed that she received no reply from members and a reply from the University indicating their position to not get involved in Town decision making. The university would be happy to provide her and others with research references that indicate, from a population density perspective, it is not good to have too many liquor outlets in a small community and that it hurts momentum to minimizing access. She was not expressing her concern as a liquor store owner, because she, and any other liquor store owner can apply for the license. Both she and Nancy, who chairs the subcommittee, were concerned about the rapid decision and the lack of opportunity to provide input. The Chief responded that according to State regulations, Narragansett is eligible to license an additional liquor store.
- **Membership Update**  
Paul Haas was welcomed as the newest member to the Steering committee replacing Pat Zito. Paul represents the Bonnet Shores Fire District.
- **Survey Feedback – Kristen Quinlan**  
Postponed
- **April Coalition Meeting**  
In lieu of a presenter, it was agreed to have a structured open forum around issues of concerns to residents. This will hopefully encourage more membership participation. The meeting will be moved to April 25<sup>th</sup>. Members will be notified of the date change through the listserv and it will be posted on the web site.

- **Common Ground Mailing**

Dorie Lawson from Common Ground shared that the RhodeMap to Safety campaign would like to send a mailing to all Narragansett Residents informing them of the accomplishments to date. She asked if the Coalition's name could be used on the mailing. All agreed.

Carol Stuart questioned the recent ad in the *South County Independent* promoting the 19% decrease in URI party house complaints as recorded by the Narragansett Police. She expressed her frustration that she had e-mailed the entire steering committee regarding her concerns about publishing this ad but heard from no one. Dorie Lawson had contacted the chief and he confirmed the accuracy of the percentage. Paula explained that Eastward Look South was included in the original statistics presented at the January meeting but the numbers for that neighborhood (because of their relatively small size) were included in the "other" category. She verified the police numbers against the data sent to the university and adjusted for non-students. She was comfortable with the results. She is not questioning the accuracy of the number but the creation of a false image that everything is now wonderful in the neighborhoods. Carol would like to see the police record the number of complaints called into the police department in relation to the number of incidents. The Chief responded that not all complaints are incidences; sometimes the police respond to a complaint only to find out it's some folks sitting on their back porch having (maybe too loud) conversation; alcohol is not even involved. " Carol and the chief will pursue this. (The Chief had to leave at 5:00pm and out of respect for Carol's deep concern for certain residents in Eastward Look, an informal discussion among the remaining members continued after the meeting adjourned.)

In some cases, Carol stated, the behavior has reached a critical point and someone needs to be held accountable. Paul Haas offered that the process for problem resolution needs to move forward - then creative things can happen. He expressed that positive actions cannot be created in an adversarial climate. Ideas are fertile ground for action and he stated that the "punitive approach has had its day." There was discussion of some form of tribunal being established to tackle these ongoing resident's complaints.

- **Good Neighbor Contest**

It was agreed that the contest would be extended to encourage students to nominate their neighbors. All agreed that there were plenty of good students but that it would be a mistake to not recognize the good (permanent) neighbors.

## **Old Business**

- **Neighborhood Clean-up/Memorial Walk**

Leslie reminded everyone that the clean-up is scheduled for April 22nd. Bonnet Shores, Eastward Look and the Village of Point Judith are the target areas.

Paul Haas read a declaration of compassion regarding the loss of three URI students off the coast of Bonnet Shores and informed everyone that there would be a memorial walk held for the students after the clean-up. Everyone should gather at the Bonnet Shores recreation center immediately after the clean-up for refreshments and then to begin the walk together.

The meeting adjourned at 5:00pm. The next Steering Committee meeting will be held May 2, 2006 at 4:00pm in the Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted,

*Paula Santos*  
Coalition Coordinator