

Narragansett - URI Coalition

"Building a community of mutual respect"

Meeting Minutes Tuesday – January 23, 2007 7:00PM Narragansett Town Hall

SUBCOMMITTEE MEETINGS

The following subcommittees met prior to the full Coalition meeting:

- Communications (Chair: Tom Dougan, Acting Chair)
- Realtors/Neighborhood Association (Co-Chairs: Kim and Kara Churas)
- Programming (Chair: Leslie Williams)
- Common Ground (Chair: Nancy Devaney)

Tom Dougan opened the meeting at 7:05pm and called for reports.

Steering Committee Report

- "Orange Sticker"
At the last meeting a request was made to have a document that defined the steps that the police, realtors and University (if students involved) take when an incident has been investigated at a household and an orange sticker issued. Dr. Dougan has prepared a draft and offered copies to anyone interested. It will be reviewed and finalized by the next meeting and posted to the web. On behalf of the Steering Committee, member Paul Haas will be contacting the Town Solicitor to determine his opinion on amending the penalties associated with receiving an orange sticker
- Ombuds Team
Volunteers are still being sought and information is available on a table in the back of the room. Plans for producing a brochure describing the initiative are underway.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

COMMON GROUND – NANCY DEVANEY (URI GRAD STUDENT) REPORTING:

- Member Joe Meister has volunteered to present a welcome package to the owners of Catarina's Italian Village.
- There was a well-attended (50+ participants) ID training workshop offered last night by Narragansett Police Officers Vellone and Storme with Officer Balbi from the South Kingstown PD to alcohol retail establishments in Narragansett and SK. Officer Vellone stated that both SK businesses and the police department are aggressively enforcing alcohol-related laws and the establishments in the two towns are forming a nice partnership in the development of a new South County Alcohol Retailers Association.
- As a follow-up to the Alcohol Retail Summit held at the North Beach Club House last September, vendors from both Narragansett & SK have met to stiffening of penalties for violators of the RI Misrepresentation of Age Law. It is hoped that Legislators Lally (Narragansett) and Sosnowski (SK) will introduced the amendment.
- Common Ground is prepared to offer a new initiative to alcohol realties whereby staff is encouraged to follow RBS policy and thereby reduce liability and risk to the establishment.

COMMUNICATIONS – TOM DOUGAN REPORTING:

- Looking for a new Chairperson
- During break, e-mailed 6000 students requesting local address. Got back about 600 responses. Will continue working with realtors to secure this information.

- Fran Cohen reported that the workshop preparing students for their move off-campus is underway. Content deliver is being designed Information was gained from Coalition members (12/12/06 meeting) and focus groups will be help with on-campus and off-campus students. More than 20 workshops are planned to be held in the dormitories. We are working with housing staff, RAs, Greek leaders, community liaisons, and the student PR association to encourage attendance. Incentives are being offered such as iPods, gift certificates and the grand prize of a plasma TV. Any local businesses wishing to donate items would be greatly appreciated. Mailings to the student's homes will be sent in the summer and a follow-up contact in September.
 - Carol Stuart stated that different schools offered different kinds of programs covering specific topics. Dean Cohen clarified that the four key topics of this 1½ hour workshop are: mutual respect; safety; community involvement and renting basics. The focus will be on mutual respect and safely within your new neighborhood. Information will be available regarding leases, real estate agencies, tenant/landlord rights, local businesses, etc.
 - Nancy Devaney questioned whether or not students who participated in the workshop would be available for a financial incentive possibly with realtors or the property owner. Dean Cohen responded that yes, this has been discussed and will be pursued. It is hoped that a student who attends this workshop and participates in additional initiatives, like an on-line course, will be more desirable as a tenant and more responsible. A certificate may be issued that could be presented to the realtor. Again, this is under review.
 - When a student gets into trouble, depending on the situation, they are required to attend a social host workshop.
 - Chief Smith offered that Judge DeCubellis is open to considering community service as part of the penalty for ordinance violations.

PROGRAMMING – LESLIE WILLIAMS REPORTING

- Updated police reports on the table in the back
- Spring Clean up is scheduled for Earth Day weekend – Saturday, April 21 from 9:00 to noon at Bonnet Shores. Eastward Look and Point Judith.
- End of the semester Food Drive will be held around the 8th, 9th or 10th of May. Final date to be determined. Narragansett Rubbish Removal volunteers to pick up the food and it is donated to the Johnny Cake Center.
- The community liaisons are looking into holding a community bingo for the students and permanent residents. More to follow.

REALTORS/NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATIONS – KIM CHURAS REPORTING/CAROL STUART ADDING ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Clarification regarding the participation of town officials to the coalition and its subcommittees was discussed.

- The police are in the planning stages of responding to “problem houses” and meeting with neighborhood associations.
- The concept of “impact statements” relative to student behavior was addressed. It may not be appropriate to bring this kind of statement to the police as the behavior may not be illegal. However, the idea of presenting them to realtors was explored whereby they can follow-up with the tenants and possibly the parents.
- The police are designing a strategy for evaluating recorded offenses, complaints and repeat visits to a property. Sometimes a situation does not warrant a recorded offense (OF) or the issuance of an orange sticker. But there may be multiple visits to a property and now this raises a red flag. These will be evaluated closely.
- Officer Vellone stated that there were 58 stickers issues this last semester and 4 so far in 07. The Chief reported that there has been very positive discussion with property owners who are just as concerned about their properties receiving an orange sticker. As the Chief made clear, the sticker stays with the house and it is in the best interest of the property owner for their tenants not to get one. Student Senate President Neil Cavanaugh was concerned that incoming tenants are differentiated from new tenants where a house may have been given a sticker. Chief Smith assured him that this was the case.

OPEN FORUM

- Bob Shield's asked for clarification regarding an article in the December 28th edition of the *South County independent*. Dr. Dougan reported that the student body is approximately 15,000; 12,000 undergrads and 3000 graduate students. The upcoming three year plan calls for an increase of 1000 students across the student body including undergrads, transfers and graduate students (Masters and PhDs). Of the approximate 2900 freshmen, 95% are housed on campus. Approximately 50% of the sophomores stay on campus and 25% of juniors and seniors. There are about 5000 beds on campus including theme houses and fraternities and sororities. During the past year the university has been bringing 800 new beds on line and this is designated as upper classmen housing only. There is currently a waiting list of upperclassmen registered for this housing. There is a provision in the new three plan to explore an additional 500 to 600 new beds.

CLOSURE/NEXT MEETING

The meeting adjourned at 7:40pm. The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 20, 2007 at 7:00 pm in the Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted,

Paula Santos

Coalition Coordinator