

**Narragansett - URI Coalition
Steering Committee Minutes
4/05/07
3:00-5:00 PM
Narragansett Town Hall**

Members present: Jeff Ceasrine, Kim Churas, Nancy Devaney, Thomas Dougan, Paul Haas, Jim Hurton, Kerrie Koppenaal (for Mary Kate McKenna), Ben Matone, Chief Smith, Carol Stuart, Doug Wardwell, Leslie Williams, Coalition Coordinator, Paula Santos
Absent: Krista Garrett, Jim Hurton, Toni O'Neill, George Tracy

1. Review/Approval of past meeting minutes

Paul Hass moved to approve the Coalition minutes for the 5-12-05 and the Steering Committee minutes for 5-17-05. Both sets of minutes were approved.

2. Restructuring

The remainder of the meeting focused on restructuring of the Coalition. Paula presented three models from (1) no formal Coalition, to (2) a university community partnership with a redesigned meeting schedule to (3) a very different Coalition, one that focused strictly on alcohol prevention within the Washington County Region. Nancy explained that the latter was in the making and did not want to see this effort duplicated. Paula stated she was aware of this and is just putting it on the table as it was offered by Dr. Dougan in his submission of possible new organizations. If members feel that the Coalition has outlived its usefulness as the kind of group it currently is, then maybe an organization that strictly focuses on alcohol in the southern region of the state may be more appealing. Members stated why they were dissatisfied with the current state of the Coalition and agreed now is the time for change. Relationships are too adversarial and the negative forces seem to be dragging down all the good work that's been done.

One issue discussed was the Town Council members reporting on the committees on which they serve. Jeff Ceasrine stated that there are many committees that the council members are part of but maybe they could provide an update on the activity of the Coalition once per quarter. Jeff will discuss with the Council

In response to a query from police Chief Smith, Carol Stuart explained the representative system of the neighborhoods (Coalition of Neighborhood Associations) and that they are in the process of reorganizing. There may be new membership in the near future.

After members expressed their concerns about the Coalition Doug summed it up by saying we were all joined together by frustration yet committed to creating something better. He expressed that he thought the conversation was very helpful to the process.

Paul referenced the Coalition's position regarding the recent support of the misrepresentation of age and procurement laws. He would like to see the Coalition act more in this manner but is mindful of accepting responsibility for promulgating positions and the assumption of authority. The Coalition is a constituent based organization and is only valuable if its products are supported by its constituents. Discussion was held that if the SC stayed intact, how often would it meet? Is there a need for monthly Coalition meetings? What would the best means of communication to get the word out to those groups represented by the SC and so forth.

Both Dr Dougan and Carol Stuart submitted recommendations for restructuring. Carol had difficulty in sending it to the Steering Committee because the listserv does not allow for attachments.

Ben Matone stated that the students need the Coalition to help provide guidance about living off campus. He understands the importance of enforcement but would like to see a greater emphasis placed on education (of all) and more students involved in the community.

The students were thrilled to have the Coalition meeting on campus and hope that more meetings can be held there in the future. If this is a true campus community partnership, if this is the message we are trying to send, then it makes sense. Rotating meetings to different locations was briefly mentioned.

The students understand that if they were all responsible social drinkers there would probably not be a Coalition. Paul stressed the importance of trying to understand the culture of student life and vice versa. Education is important and Paul requested the opportunity to observe the off-campus preparation workshops which have been well-received by students.

The idea of the Steering Committee, which is in many ways a "Coalition" in and of itself due to its focus and diversity of interest, being the actual Coalition, was explored. The Chief introduced the following motion: *The Steering Committee, with its current positions representing different interests will become the Narragansett-URI Coalition*; seconded by Paul Haas. After lengthy discussion, the motion was tabled to the next meeting. It was decided to cancel the April Coalition meeting and continue this discussion.

Ben stated that as he is graduating he will be replaced by Tom Aarons, the new Student Senate external affairs chair. He thanked everyone for the opportunity to serve and their ongoing support.

Paula shared that George Tracy informed her that he will be unavailable for awhile but to please keep him informed. She also stated that Krista Garret had contacted her about her inability to attend meetings during tax season (due to her job.) Paula suggested that she might ask Councilman Jim Durkin to substitute for her as he is also assigned to the Coalition. Tom shared that Jim Hurton is looking to become actively involved again.

Doug motioned to adjourn, seconded by Paul; all in favor. Meeting adjourned at 5:15pm.

The next regularly scheduled SC meeting is 4:00pm, Tuesday, May first. The Coordinator is not able to be present.

Respectfully submitted,

Paula Santos
Coalition Coordinator