

Narragansett - URI Coalition Steering Committee

Tuesday – September 5, 2006

4:00PM

Narragansett Town Hall

Members present: Tom Dougan, Krista Garrett, Paul Haas, Maury Loontjens, Ryan Mitchell, Toni O'Neil, Joseph Robenhymer, Chief J. David Smith, Carol Stuart, George Tracy, Doug Wardwell, Leslie Williams, Coalition Coordinator, Paula Santos

Absent: Nancy Devaney, Jim Hurton

Guest: Lieutenant Michael Gamma

Tom Dougan began the meeting at 4:00pm.

OLD BUSINESS

- **Review of August SC minutes**
All approved the August minutes.
- **Approval of past SC minutes – determine best process**
Paula Distributed the Steering Committee minutes from January to May. Tom asked that the members review the February through May minutes (January previously approved) and come prepared to discuss/approve at the October meeting.
- **Holding Coalition meetings at different locations**
It was decided that the meetings are best held at the Town Hall. If the Subcommittees want to hold their meetings at different locations at times different from prior to the full Coalition meeting, they are encouraged to do so.
- **Establishing an “ombudsmen” group**
Discussion was held concerning creating an ombudsmen group that would respond to concerns raised by residents relative to the quality of life in their neighborhoods. This small group would receive this information directly from the concerned party, or the police or university or town official who may have been contacted directly. They would discuss how to approach the situation and make recommendation back to those parties that can do something about the situation. The primary purpose is to let residents know that someone cares and is willing to listen to their concerns. It was agreed that Tom and Paul would work together to submit a proposal for full Steering Committee review.
- **Creating a “dog & pony” show and bringing the coalition “to” the community**
The idea is to let the community know what is being done by the major stakeholders in the Coalition –the university, town administration, police department, neighborhood associations, realtors, students. It is a proactive step to go into the community. Krista suggested that the first presentation would be made for the Bonnet Fire District. Paul will put the idea on the next agenda and if invited, a presentation will be designed. Tom and Paul will take the lead on this and report back to the Steering committee.
- **Targeting specified neighborhoods with a troublesome past and sending in a “greeting team”**
The chief shared that the department is studying problematic neighborhoods and trying to think about how to extend the alarm system model to concerned property owners. Discussion was held about analyzing key rental neighborhoods like Eastward Look North and South, Bonnet, etc. by looking at the distribution of rental properties (data from rental registrations list) to permanent residences. The idea is prevention based - to look at the density of student rentals in any given

neighborhood and send in a greeting team to welcome the renters to the area and help the students understand what their neighborhood looks like and to try to build some awareness and responsibility. Students would be part of this welcome team as well as law enforcement and permanent residents. Toni was concerned that these may not be problem areas this year just because they were last year and did not want students to feel targeted or guilty by association. Tom asked Paula to look into similar programs developed at other universities that she learned of during a conference she attended this summer where the issues we face are almost identical.

The chief stated that last night was difficult: 32 calls and two stickers issued. A response team went out early and met with tenants. He spoke of a house they visited where the parents were present and it was a positive experience for all parties. He was proud of his force for their outstanding containment efforts on a tough first night back for many students. The problem is that is was Labor Day Monday night and classes don't start until Tuesday but Tuesday is a work day for most.

- **Celebrating Neighborhood Day**

Leslie announced that Eastward Look is celebrating neighborhood day and that the commuter housing office will be passing out "Bee a good neighbor" promotional bags, scheduling games and providing food. She distributed bags to all present. They will be distributed to residents in Eastward Look. Carol noted that Karen Ferrandi and Mary Fell are responsible for making this event happen. Paula distributed a copy of an ad that the University (Office of Student Life supported by Common Ground) is running in the *Narragansett Times*, *South County Independent* and the *Good 5¢ Cigar* supporting celebrating Neighborhood Day in Narragansett.

- **Goals selected – how to be implemented; current Subcommittee structure or not**

For the key focus areas, Carol recommended a change. To improve the quality of life in all neighborhoods *for permanent residents and URI student renters*. Change to *all residents*. All agreed and the statement will be revised in the guidelines.

Tom asked Paula to send the goals to each of the subcommittee chairs so they may develop their plans to support the implementation of the goals. The Chief reiterated the importance of allowing the subcommittees to recommend additional goals to the Steering Committee if they arise.

- **New moderator**

Tom announced that he is working with Ben Matone, former moderator, to find a replacement.

- **Final meeting calendar**

The following calendar received final approval:

<u>Steering Committee</u>	<u>Full Coalition</u>
September 2	September 19
October 3	October 17
November 14	November 28
December 5	December 19

Previously approved:

<u>Steering Committee</u>	<u>Full Coalition</u>		
January 9 (2 nd Tues)	January 23	4 th Tues	
February 6	February 20		
March 6	March 27**	4 th Tues	due to Spring break
April 3	April 17		
May 1	May 15		

NEW BUSINESS

- **September Coalition Meeting; preplanning for Fall meetings**

The September meeting will follow the standard agenda. Tom anticipated that Mark Wood will present Common Ground's planned activities for the upcoming academic year during the

Common Ground subcommittee report. If Mark wishes to present as a guest speaker during the beginning of the meeting, this is acceptable to all. Paula will clarify with Mark. It was agreed that each Coalition meeting will be planned at the Steering Committee immediately prior to the upcoming meeting.

- **Suggested Membership replacement statement – added to guidelines**
Steering Committee members will serve for open terms. Prior to the start of the new academic year, members will be asked to indicate their commitment to continue to serve on the Steering Committee. If a SC member misses three meetings in a row, he/she will be contacted to determine interest. Outgoing members are encouraged to find their replacement to serve on the Steering Committee.
All agreed to add this statement to the guidelines.

ANNOUNCEMENT

- Kim/Kara Churas (Lila Delman) is replacing Joe Robenhymmer (Ann O'Brien) on SC - Realtor rep Kim an/or Kara will co-chair the Realtors/NA subcommittee.
- Doug Wardwell is replacing Eileen Desforges - Neighborhood Association rep. Doug will not be replacing Eileen as chair of the Realtors/NA subcommittee. This position needs to be filled.
- South County Alcohol Retailers Summit will be held on September 19 at the North Beach Club House.
- Ron Lepre, Community Housing Officer, is taking the position of Chief of Police in the town of West Greenwich. They are looking for a replacement.
- Noise meters are being recalibrated and the University, through Common Ground, will be purchasing another one for the town.

Other

- Carol requested that the word “cranky” describing residents in the “Living in Narragansett Guide” be dropped. Leslie will make that change in the next addition.
- Tom will write Joe and Eileen letters of thanks for their dedication and commitment to the work of the Coalition. All approved.
- Doug asked the chief about how residents can be more supportive of our officers when they come into our neighborhoods. The chief said he supported the neighborhood watch concept.
- Lieutenant Gamma asked that we spread the word about having empathy for our police dispatchers. They are very empathetic to the concerns of the residents and will do all they can to make sure that the officer will arrive as soon as physically possible. The officers have made that same commitment.
- Paul asked that the steering committee endorse the chief having a press conference announcing all the information he gave tonight about the incredible work coming out of the police department. Paul said that the community needs to know this. Lieutenant Gamma said the force would really appreciate it. The chief appreciates the support.

The meeting adjourned at 5:05pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Paula Santos
Coalition Coordinator