

Belknap County Citizens Council on Children and Families

MEETING SUMMARY

COMMITTEE: Citizens Council

DATE: Friday, March 14, 2003

TIME BEGAN: : 8am **TIME ENDED:** 10:05am **FACILITATED BY:** Alida Millham **SUMMARY BY:** Judy Buswell

PRESENT: Peter Michaud, Jim Carroll, Kim Campbell, Jim Pilliod, Katy Kannaly-DeCarteret, Andre Paquette, Leo Sanfacon, Kevin Washburn, Dick Wallace, Nancy Porosky, Sue Smith, Bob Rovella, Gil Schohan, Alida Millham **EXCUSED:** Beth Bascom, John Irwin, Mary Alice Warner, Scott AndersEn **ABSENT:** Evelyn Auger, Linda Brewer, Mark Condodemetraky
GUEST: Judge Willard Martin **STAFF:** Alan Robichaud, Judy Buswell

1. **Approval of Minutes of February 14, 2003** Motion to accept minutes (Andre/Sue) as written carried.

2. **Additions to the Agenda**
 - Suggestion made and approved to move the discussion of potential use for the soon-to-be-vacated Laconia Police Department facility up on the agenda so that Jim Carroll, who has to leave before the end of the meeting, could participate.
 - Alida noted that beginning with this meeting, that Committee Chairs will no longer be presenting routine committee reports. As every Council member receives minutes from all committee meetings, routine committee reports would be redundant. Committee Chair will only bring forward items that need approval or input from the Council.

3. **Laconia Police Department Building** Jim Carroll explained his “very preliminary” ideas for use of this space when the Department moves to their new facility on Fair Street. He feels that its central location and configuration of space would make it an ideal spot to co-locate several agencies and organizations such as The Belknap County Teen Center, PACT offices, Laconia School District Project EXTRA etc. As his office space while City Prosecutor was in this building, he does not feel the facility is structurally unsound or in need of major repair. In February, several interested people including Council member, Mark Condodemetraky, had a quick “walk-through” tour of this facility. All expressed a willingness to continue exploring this idea.

It was noted that the Laconia Main Street leaders also “have their eyes on this facility”. Their rationale includes the critical need for additional parking spaces for the Post Office, reportedly in danger of moving away from the downtown area because of a lack of parking and easy access. Apparently, developing and maintaining successful commercial areas is contingent on keeping such frequented facilities as a Post Office in the downtown area. Laconia Main Street has also discussed using some of the property as part of the anticipated “River Walkway”, another potential drawing card for the downtown area.

Judge Martin suggested that some type of arrangement might be made with the Laconia Industrial Development Corporation, that has some extra capital to support development projects of a similar nature.

Council members agreed that while there may be interest from the Council in a co-location concept, it couldn't take any definitive position at this time.

ACTION: Jim Carroll will continue to update the Council as information becomes available.

3. **Committee Action Items**

Legislative and Advocacy Motion sought to approve Alida as Council liaison to the County Delegation. Motion made by Gil, seconded by Andre, carried. A second motion, duly made and seconded (Peter/Sue) was unanimously passed to have Alida and Alan work on a process of presenting information to the House Child and Family Law Committee.

Public Relations (Discussion on Annual Meeting) In the absence of Linda Brewer, Vice-Chair Kevin Washburn explained PR Committee's suggestion to change format of the Council Annual Meeting to one that includes participation of our community partners, an attempt to involve more people. It could be an opportunity for the various communities in the County to talk about progress toward goals identified through their Forums etc. This meeting could also involve a speaker of national stature who would attract a good attendance. As this new format will require a significantly longer preparation time, the PR Committee will need additional help from Council members and others in the community.

The Public Relations Committee should continue to explore other formats used successfully in this area, consider creating a Steering Committee to organize this meeting, and consider centering this meeting around the "Community Assets" identified at the Forums.

ACTION: The PR Committee will further define an approach for the Council's Annual Meeting and will bring back specific suggestions to the full Council.

Section in Citizen The Citizen daily newspaper has offered to run a regular section on children and families or Council-related information. Our role would be to provide copy to the Citizen in a timely and regular fashion. This project would require an individual to manage the details. The potential for this project is large and could provide opportunities for internships to public school journalism classes in Belknap County. It could also emphasize projects activated or supported by the Council, and should highlight the concepts of "Community Justice". Jim Carroll suggests regular newsletters as another communication and PR tool.

ACTION: Council members will submit any names of individuals who might coordinate this Citizen page project to Council staff.

4. **Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee** Andre Paquette, Committee Chair, summarized progress of this large committee whose focus is on studying the current system of juvenile justice, on understanding the range of available services and improving the process used for data collection and dissemination. The Committee is now going through "a systems walk-through", or a step-by-step outline taking a juvenile from his/her first contact with the system to his/her return to the community as a productive citizen. They are looking to identify delays, gaps, and barriers and becoming better equipped in explaining how the system works to the general public. Andre is in the process of interviewing key people throughout the system, especially those who keep and distribute data. Andre, Alan, and Judge Martin recently met with Judge Ed Kelly, NH District Court Administrator. They discussed how the committee can achieve its goal of gathering and collating data in an aggregate and anonymous case-study format to guide the evaluation of current and future projects, such as the County's Juvenile Restorative

Justice Program. There are several possibilities, including deputizing volunteers to assist Court personnel.

Jim Pilliod notes that “privacy policies” are being heavily scrutinized by the Legislature this year and that we must be aware that it may become more difficult, rather than easier, to access personal records. The exception that once applied to research needs does not exist now. It was noted that there are computer programs that “can sanitize” records so that they can be more accessed by more people.

5. **Restorative Justice Advisory Committee** Leo Sanfacon, Committee Chair, reported on a recent meeting where data collection was also identified as a priority need. While the Restorative Justice Program is doing very well, the process for interpreting and reporting its data, still needs clarification. The committee and Brian Loanes are working to refine their agreement with JusticeWorks.

Continued funding is another emerging need. They are exploring the possibilities of becoming a State-approved provider.

6. **Council Chair** Alida Millham, Council Chair noted the following items:
 - ***Executive Committee Meetings*** Alida suggests that Council by-laws be amended to eliminate the clause in Article 8, Section 1a to strike the phrase “...and development of agendas and plans for future Council meetings.” Eliminating this clause will allow the Executive Committee to reduce the number of its meetings yet allow more time to discuss its potential role with the Council. Motion to eliminate this clause made by Leo Sanfacon; second by Andre Paquette; motion carried.

Further discussion on the role of the Executive Committee underscored that the majority of Council work is being done in committees and that the current procedure duplicates Council meetings. While some think the Executive Committee should meet more frequently rather than less often, others feel that the role of this Committee must be better defined. One function is to assist the Executive Director between the Council meetings, when and if necessary. Alan Robichaud agrees much of current function of Executive is redundant, yet there needs to be alternative strategies to increase communication among committees between Council meetings. We should consider other communication vehicles, such as a secure portion of our website for Council member communication. Reducing the frequency of Executive Committee meetings will also mean that committees must intentionally think about what items to bring to the full Council.

ACTION: The Executive Committee will hold its regularly scheduled meeting in April for further discussion on the role of this committee.

- ***Council Budget*** passed the County Delegation with little or no comment by Delegation members. As the Council is not funded by public funds, this assent was expected; however next year, when the County will be asked to assume some of the costs, the approach we take with the Delegation and County citizens should be well conceived.
- ***Legislative and Advocacy Committee*** needs additional members. Anyone wishing to join this committee should contact Alida or Council staff.

- **Meeting Attendance Issues** remain a concern. Members are missing on a regular basis at full Council meetings. This issue requires further discussion. What is “an excused absence”?

7. **Executive Director Report**

- **Laconia District Courthouse** Ongoing lease discussions between the City and the State are progressing nicely with the addition of a “reversion clause” that says that the State must return the facility to the City when and if it no longer is used as a Courthouse. The State is able to bond for expansion only if they own the building. Laconia Main Street is interested in keeping the Courthouse in its current use. The emerging challenge now is that State budget cuts have eliminated previous Capital Budget line items for architectural and engineering costs. The Council participated this past week in a letter-writing campaign to the Public Works Committee where the Capital Budget is being heard.
- **Community Centers** have emerged as an identified community priority from the Forums. While it will not be the responsibility of the Council to build centers, the Council can identify those resources that can assist communities in their planning efforts. One such resource is Concordia Associates in New Orleans, LA. One of their principals, Steven Bingler, is consulting in Littleton, NH on some of their educational-community partnerships. Alan has had preliminary conversations with Bingler and would like the Council to consider bringing him to the Lakes Region to work with community leaders around alternative designs for community centers. A proposal for NH Charitable Fund Project Grant monies for \$5,000 is being prepared for an April 1 submission; monies will be used to support a short community residency with a nationally recognized architect-consultant in the Fall of 2003. Alan is interested in “Train the Trainer” sessions, a role Bingler plays in Littleton. Alan, and others, will be meeting with Don Jutton, a Meredith-based Littleton consultant, to learn more about the Littleton project and the impact of Bingler’s work.
- **Neighborhood Development Project** is underway. Alan and others have met to discuss community safety and appearance of the Sanborn Park area in Lakeport. This connection came about through Brian Loanes’ interest in developing this area as a Community Service project. Further discussions with business people and residents in this area underscored the need for improved relations with the LPD and an improved sense of safety by its residents. Chief Oetinger is also involved in his discussion and the residents are now being encouraged to convene a neighborhood meeting in early April that includes the Leavitt Park Association, City Councilors, and others. The Council’s role is not one of “doing the work” but acting as a catalyst that leads them to find neighborhood and local solutions for neighborhood and local problems. Chief Oetinger has been extremely supportive and responsive to the concerns raised by the neighbors of this park
- **Addictions Task Force** is underway through the efforts of Riley Regan (the Director of NH DADAPR), the Council, Jackie Abikoff, who will act as Chair, and Sue Caldon, the Director of the Nathan Brody Chemical Dependency Program at LRGHealthcare. Riley would like “local groups” such as this one to plan a coordinated response to substance abuse and addictions issues in the County and then apply for State/Federal funds to support programs and activities that can result in general systemic change around service delivery. This group, that now includes about 30 invitees, will meet on March 31.

- ***Reclaiming Futures status*** has now changed. New Hampshire is now one of the full-fledged partners and will receive full, rather than partial funding. One of the original ten grantees has withdrawn from the national program.
 - ***Domestic Violence*** conference in this area will be facilitated by Alan, responding to a request from the local DV Council in the Lakes Region.
8. **Future Council Meetings** will continue to be held here in Laconia. Council meetings in the communities should be well coordinated and promoted so that local people will attend and participate. It may be possible to hold the May Council meeting outside of Laconia, such as in New Hampton, Alton, or Gilford, three communities that have not yet hosted Council meetings.
- ACTION: Plans for the May Council meeting will be developed by the Executive Committee and announced at the April Council meeting.**

NEXT COUNCIL MEETING

WHEN: Friday, April 11th 8-10am

WHERE: River Level Meeting Room, Busiel Mill in Laconia