

**CITIZENS COUNCIL
MEETING OF MAY 19, 2006**

SUMMARY

Attending: Sue Smith, Sarah Fox, Jim Pilliod, Mary Alice Warner, Sandy Webber, Emily Clement, Christie Corrigan, Rick Keller, Rasim Gusinac, Laurie Belanger, Ruth Castonguay, Nancy Porosky, Dick Wallace.

The meeting was convened at 8:05 AM.

1. Welcome and Introductions

Members of the Council introduced themselves for the benefit of new members.

2. Additions/Amendments to the Agenda

New members were asked to stay for a few minutes following the meeting in order to have their pictures taken for news releases. They were also asked to provide Judy Buswell with a brief bio and e-mail address in order to be placed on the Council distribution and announcement lists.

3. Director's Report

National Crime Victims' Rights Week - Alan Robichaud recapped the activities and events of this initiative and thanked everyone who contributed so much to its success. Judy Buswell did an incredible job orchestrating the planning and coordination, supported by many people who all did their share. Such an undertaking could never be achieved without such support. Special thanks was given to David Stamps for the DVD he made. David contributed several hours of his own time to the production of this and we plan to circulate it around the region, accompanied by a small panel of people who can discuss victimization and victims' rights.

State Advisory Group (SAG) Grant - A grant was submitted on May 5 to the state, requesting over \$80K for the development of the Council's integrated data system which Andre Paquette has been spearheading through the Council Data Committee. This project would be the next iteration of the Report Card and statistical reporting on the status of juvenile justice within Belknap County. The SAG will make a determination in June and apprise us of our status. A copy of the grant abstract was distributed.

Voices of Youth and Families ~ New Hampshire - The Council was brought up to date on the development of the Voices statewide and national initiative to create an advocacy coalition for substance abuse issues. Alan recently conducted a survey of statewide coalitions as to their knowledge of and role in supporting parent support groups and other advocacy efforts. There is a group that meets monthly to plan initiatives to inform and promote parent support and youth and family involvement in advocacy issues pertaining to prevention, intervention, and treatment of alcohol, tobacco and other drug (ATOD) issues. A summary of the survey was distributed to Council members.

Convocation '07 - Alan noted that next year's Convocation is scheduled for January 23, 2007, scheduled again at the Winni-Expo Center in Lakeport. Lois Plimpton will serve as our keynote presenter and the theme will be something like: *Living, Learning and Literacy...Across the Ages!* Planning for the Convocation is well underway, but lots of hands are needed to successfully complete such a large event. If anyone is interested in helping out in any one of a number of need areas, please contact Judy Buswell (528-3185).

Parenting From the Inside Out - Alan deferred to Mary Alice Warner to update the Council on her unique project working with our juvenile justice providers and the Family Connections Program at the Lakes Region Facility (Department of Corrections). Working with inmates who have successfully completed an 18-hour parenting course, we are hoping to develop a dialogue among parents and their adolescents who are involved in the juvenile justice system. While the project is only in its initial stages of development, there is a good deal of excitement about the potential benefits to all who may become involved. If anyone is

interested in becoming a facilitator or otherwise volunteer at the prison, please speak with Mary Alice. Thank you Mary Alice, for your leadership in establishing this project.

Parents As Leaders in Society (PALS) – Planning is well-under way for the PALS '07 session of PALS. We continue to discuss the possibility of this leadership series being moved under the direction and coordination of the UNH Cooperative Extension office in Belknap County. Susan Cagle of the Belknap County Extension Office and Thom Linehan of the Merrimack County Extension Office, have joined the planning committee this year. Nancy Porosky attended last year's series and is also on this year's planning committee. Many thanks to Nancy and Ruth Castonguay for their ongoing efforts in providing parent and family leadership in Belknap County.

4. Work Group Reports

BARJ – Alan reported that Andre continues to work on the Report Card. Patti Moed has been receiving Andre's information and is working it into narrative that will be used in final production of the report. Thanks to Andre and Patti for undertaking this monumental task of turning out the first report card for Belknap County. Thanks to Gil Schohan too for her leadership and facilitation of the NCVRW planning committee.

Community Development – Christie reported that the work group continues to walk through the numerous initiatives in which the Council is engaged. This process will help to inform the work group of it works once there is clearer understanding of current projects and defined gaps. The group is considering ways to incorporate the initiatives into new Council member orientation. The work group has changed its meeting time to the first Wednesday of the month at 4:00 PM. Anyone interested in joining this work group is welcome to do so.

Prevention – Ruth Castonguay reported that the work continues in seeking resources to establish parent support group facilitator training. We are still awaiting word whether the state will support a proposal submitted by FOR/NH to conduct this training. The New Hampshire Task Force on Women and Addiction has changed its name to New Hampshire Task Force on Women and Recovery to emphasize the positive nature of recovery. This task force is conducting its annual meeting on June 29 at the Exeter Inn. Also mentioned was an upcoming Women's Leadership Training scheduled for June 15 from 4:00 PM to 7:00 PM. (See attached flyer). More information on any of these events and initiatives may be obtained by contacting Ruth.

Executive Committee- Sue Smith reported that the committee reviewed Sandy Webber's application being brought forward for today's Council consideration. **Motion** duly made and seconded (Mary Alice Warner/Jim Pilliod), the Council unanimously voted to approve Sandy Webber as our newest Council member, representing Laconia. Congratulations and welcome Sandy!

The committee will be reviewing a draft policy on Council Recruitment and Orientation at its next meeting.

5. It's Personal – Anyone Can Be a Victim – DVD

The Council viewed the DVD produced by David Stamps for use during National Crime Victims' Rights Week. This 20-minute version received many positive comments and will be used throughout the year as members of the NCVRW planning committee continue to provide public presentations on victimization. The viewing generated much discussion and compliments to David Stamps who donated many hours of his own time in the production of the DVD. Some comments are captured below:

- Jim Pilliod related to studies performed by Dr. Vincent Felitti on long-term effects of child abuse. (See study and related sites at <http://www.cavalcadeproductions.com/ace-study.html>).
- Rasim Gusinac spoke about the hidden scars of victimization and things that lie below the surface of what we read in the papers.
- Mary Alice Warner felt that the DVD was nicely done and very helpful in understanding victims' perspectives.
- Dick Wallace suggested that Council members encourage all police departments to develop victims' services along the lines of what Kathy Currier is doing in Alton.

Action Council members approach their respective Police Departments to see what is currently being, or may be able to be done to provide victims services to their communities.

- Sue Smith felt that DVD make a tie to the victimization that occurs in incidents of drunk driving as depicted in the DVD. This is something that was made more clear to her in watching the DVD.
- Laurie Belanger spoke of the continuous need for supporting children of murdered parents. Laurie is familiar with four such stories in youth that she sees; an occurrence of which most of us in communities are unaware.

It was felt that Council members need to introduce ways of getting this DVD viewed throughout schools, businesses, and other venues throughout the county. It really makes one think of the array and breadth of how crime impacts the community and its people.

Again, many thanks to David Stamps for his excellent work and generous contribution of time and talent.

Minutes of April 24, 2006

Motion On a motion duly made and seconded (Emily Clement/Nancy Porosky), the minutes were approved as written.

Other Business

Rasim Gusinac mentioned that he and his wife, Umija, will attain US Citizenship on May 26, 2006. Congratulations to them both for this amazing milestone and welcome to their new homeland.

Rasim also raised a number of issues regarding religious observances of some of our refugees who are getting along in age. Because of religious beliefs of differing ideologies represented by Russian Turks and others, there is a lack of understanding and access to the needs of some of the local refugees (those who practice (e.g. Islamism, etc.). Burial rites and places are not allowed by State law (i.e. "green burials") and so people's religious practices force them to turn elsewhere at often great expense.

Other issues confronting refugees include employment, housing, medical needs and isolation due to cultural differences of their new society.

These issues transcend the purview of the Council and it was recommended that the Community Development work group discuss them and determine whether there is an appropriate role for the Council to play. **Action** The work group will review and report back to the Council.

Adjournment

Motion On a motion made and seconded (Dick Wallace/Rick Keller) the meeting was adjourned at 9:35 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Alan Robichaud