

## Meeting Summary

R.E.C. Night Planning Group

November 12, 2008

Smith Hill CDC Offices

### Present:

Councilman, Terrence H. Hassett; RI State Representative, John J. McCauley Jr.; District Commander PPD, Lt. Michael Correia; SHCDC Executive Director, Francis Smith; ISPN Representatives: Director of Youth Programming, Heather Gaydos; Streetworker Program Manager, Ajay Benton; Streetworkers - Sareth Tony Kim and Tou Pathoummahong; Providence College representatives: Professor of Public and Community Service Studies, Keith Morton; Student Volunteers – Chris Horn and James Kimmet; Steel Yard Board Member, Lisa Carnavale; Rec. Center Representative, Ray McCauley; SHCDC Project Manager, Christian Caldarone

5:30 PM

Keith Morton provided an overview of the program which was complimented by a written summary review. Attendance at the program has grown tremendously in number and scope. The program now averages about 70 attendees a week from Smith Hill and surrounding areas and draws youth ages 10-20 from three primary ethnic groups – Laotian, African-American and Hispanic.

Volunteers shared their impressions of the impact this program was making in the lives of the youth involved as well as in the overall community. Streetworkers from the *Institute for the Study and Practice of Nonviolence* also reported about the positive effect the program has had on the youth and the relationship building that has occurred between youth and adults. The sentiment was overwhelmingly positive, with a few cautionary notes sounded about the stability of available space and safety concerns with such diverse groupings of youth.

In terms of the space availability, it was agreed that this was a complex issue that involved ironing out rules of conduct, a stable calendar and increasing the support from several levels for the rec center director. Lt. Correia stated that the director, Karl Brown, has justifiably stated his concerns to him about the safety of the youth in this program. Christian Caldarone stated that the Mr. Brown takes a considerable risk with hosting this program. A short conversation began about the nature of this program being qualitatively different from the typical programming at city rec centers and that this “transformative” change would require more planning. This planning is necessary to provide the proper support for the program as well as to Mr. Brown.

The Councilman suggested bringing the Director of Recreation Centers, Frank Santos, and the Associate Director, Tony Heywood, into the conversation. So the group decided to ask Mr. Brown his thoughts on this matter so we can convene this meeting.

Keith Morton described moving forward with program development along the lines of a Leadership Development Model. The first step in this development will be to convene regular meetings with key personnel. It was agreed that a core group would meet on approximately 2 times a month to address this issue as well as the week to week program management.

The funding issue was discussed. It was agreed that the biweekly planning group would originate some preliminary budget numbers for the next large planning meeting. Heather Gaydos reiterated the importance of developing a funding mechanism for the program. Currently, Providence College has been generously purchasing pizza and soda each week; however, it is clear that this financial contribution can not go on indefinitely.

Rep. John McCauley stated that St. Pat's may be a local resource for more space. Ray McCauley discussed maximizing the outreach for community volunteers. He suggested using churches and offered his cable access show for use in some capacity.

### **Resolutions**

- **The group resolved to convene a meeting with Rec. Center administration in order to increase cooperation and communication and to express our concerns that the work of the Rogers' Center director is supported at the administrative level.**
- **There will be a subcommittee comprised of ISPN staff, PC staff, SHCDC staff and Rec. Center staff to address weekly concerns, to outline programmatic development and to construct a budget. There is a great need for some compensation for key staffing in order to assure the program's success.**
- **This Community Planning group would reconvene in three to five months.**