

## YOUTH COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 4, 2023

ATTENDEES: Krista Carnes; Greg Geraci; Laura Hyatt; Frits Johnson; Eloise Mallie; Ava Mohr; Adrian Matyszkowicz; Cara Smith; Youth Director Alicia Sillars

YC members welcomed and voted on new student members Preston Carnes (10), Will Curtis (9), and Owen Heffron (10). Candidate Jake Patterson was unable to attend this meeting but will be voted on at November 1<sup>st</sup> meeting.

TOPS Registrations: Grade 6 – 120; Grade 7 – 159; Grade 8 – 144; 6th Grade BETA Rock Climbing Trip – currently 11 members signed up but blast only went out on Monday.

Past Programs – Campardy Game Show Challenge at the Depot – close to 30 middle school students enjoyed an afternoon of trivia, silly physical challenges and a lot of fun at this NYC sponsored event marketed at Depot’s club members

Upcoming programs:

- Movie at Highland Farms – Friday, 10/6/23. Rain is scheduled in the forecast so it was suggested we reschedule to Friday, 10/27. Alicia will bring suggestion back to colleagues in office who are co-sponsoring the event.
- Halloween Window Painting Contest – 10/21/23
- “Wreathing for Seniors” partnership with Mather Senior Center. Commission members voted on trying fake wreaths for this year’s activity.

Safe Rides – Robust discussion regarding the Safe Rides program took place. A junior in high school approached Alicia and the Depot (host) to find out if there’s any possibility to resurrect the program. Geoff Ball who ran the Safe Rides program for about 3+ years until it was shut down due to COVID gave an overview of the complexities of running the program, including but not limited to lack of parent volunteers (requirement to run Safe Rides on any given evening) as well as students who are committed to run and sustaining the program. The overwhelming consensus is that with the advent of Uber and other such ride sharing programs that the need is not as pressing as it once was. Alicia will speak with Town Administrator to see if the town would event support the program anymore and the Depot to see if they’d be willing to host the program anymore. Ava is going to reach out to a peer in Easton who is involved with their Safe Rides program to gain insight as to the impact and success they are seeing there.

Darien Dash – there seems to be support of the NYC sponsoring once again the Darien Dash, a community-wide scavenger hunt. Alicia will meet virtually with Eloise, Frits and Cara to start the process of developing this event.

Budget Process – Alicia will provide the first iteration of the Fiscal Year 2025 budget at next month's meeting. Deadline for submitting to Finance Department is typically early/mid-December.

Thriving Youth Darien Survey Last winter, Thriving Youth Darien conducted a survey to students in grades 6 – 12 measuring risky behaviors, overall mental health and assets. The results have been processed and analyzed and is sponsoring a survey roll-out to the community on October 12 at the Darien Library.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Alicia Sillars