

MONTVILLE TOWNSHIP DRUG AWARENESS COUNCIL/MUNICIPAL ALLIANCE COMMITTEE

Minutes of December 14, 2016

Meeting Called to Order: by Chairperson J. Daughtry at 7:32pm

Members in Attendance: M. Campbell, L. Connelly, J. Daughtry, M. Johnson, S. Marcus, J. Matias, J. Scialla, K. Spitz, J. Witty.

Members Absent: J. Salamone (Excused), M. Cooney (Excused), M. Murolo, Carol S. Beyer

Liaisons in Attendance: D. Danzi – M.T.P.D., M. Palma – Montville BOE

Guests in Attendance: A. Puluso, Montville Township Health Officer

The meeting was opened with an introduction of this evening's guest, Aimee Puluso. As the Health Officer for Montville Township, A. Puluso reported on a number of upcoming programs and activities sponsored by the Health Department. These included: i) *the North Jersey Collaborative* – a Heroin workgroup that will be sponsoring a symposium in February, 2017 to provide more information on community offices, programs, and resources and avoid a duplication of efforts/enhance efficiency among municipal alliances at the county level (final date to be provided via Email); ii) *Educational Seminar for Realtors* to be hosted by the Township in an effort to educate local realtors on the dangers of leaving medications in medicine cabinets during open houses, provide lock bags for their use during these showings, and engage them as partners in raising awareness; iii) *Promotional Campaigns* aimed at raising the general level of awareness among members of the Montville community on the importance of locking medicine cabinets and the availability of the drop box for unused medication at the Montville Township Police Department.

A. Puluso stressed the Township's commitment to forming a unified effort against substance abuse, particularly Heroin, in the coming year, and invited the D.A.C. to join in wherever it could provide assistance. Likewise, the Health Department is happy to assist wherever it can. K. Spitz requested more information on upcoming programs via Email, to share on the D.A.C.'s newly formed Facebook page.

S. Marcus noted that there still does not appear to be any programs aimed at primary prevention. He also requested that the D.A.C. be able to review any materials associated with these programs before they are distributed to the public. There are a number of fliers and promotional materials that have been utilized in larger campaigns outside of the Township that included non-scientific information. If the D.A.C. is going to endorse or support any materials, S. Marcus requested that the Council have the opportunity to review them first to ensure that they are accurate.

A. Puluso clarified that there were no educational materials associated with the symposium, it's just an opportunity for municipalities, agencies, and other organizations to share information and unify their efforts. J. Witty noted it was a "one-stop" shop for information and services throughout Morris County. A. Puluso added that it is also meant to show what everyone else is doing, provide ideas and alert everyone as to what's available. As for the two educational campaigns, fliers and other promotional materials can be made available to the D.A.C., happy to send them to anyone who would like to review them. J. Witty recommended that the Health Department ensure that local senior centers are included on mailing and contact lists for more information on these programs.

J. Daughtry noted that the last time he spoke with A. Puluso, the D.A.C. was still finalizing details for its community roundtable within Montville Township. He reiterated that the Council would like to have the Health Department play a part in this program, but also wanted to make sure it does not overlap with other, ongoing programs. A. Puluso asked if there was a specific topic for the roundtable. J. Witty clarified that it is meant to be more of an open discussion, an opportunity to hear citizen concerns and issues they'd like to know more about. For the D.A.C., there's still no way of knowing what's really going on in the minds of local youth.

A. Puluso noted that this past year had been a particularly difficult year, approximately 8 local deaths attributable to drug overdoses. She noted that she is always happy to assist the Council, and to please contact her with any questions or comments. With the thanks and warm wishes for the Holiday Season on behalf of the Council, A. Puluso left the meeting.

S. Marcus asked for clarification as to the impetus for the sudden push in programming, just curious as to the timing/urgency. J. Daughtry reported that he and J. Witty had recently met with the Township Administration. The Township Committee is making combating substance abuse, particularly Heroin, a priority for the coming year. As such, they've allocated a significant amount of money to support programs and education. They would like to develop a unified plan of action that efficiently engages these resources. M. Campbell asked if the money has been earmarked, or assigned to any specific programs. She also reiterated the Chairperson's comments that it is important to ensure that this is a coordinated front. M. Campbell expressed her hopes that the roundtable could be a strong first step in bringing key communal voices together, and wanted to confirm that it was still being cosponsored by the First Aid Squad.

J. Witty affirmed the involvement of the First Aid Squad. J. Scialla sought clarification as to whether or not the symposium mentioned by A. Puluso was meant to be in place of the roundtable. J. Witty clarified that they are two, separate events with different aims. J. Scialla

asked if any formal approval was needed for the roundtable, did not want to step on toes. J. Daughtry noted that no special approval was needed, and that the Council is able to move ahead once a date is set.

S. Marcus emphasized that members participating in the roundtable need to know what their roles are in advance. J. Scialla also raised a question as to who "Morris Cares" (reference by A. Puluso as a sponsoring organization for the symposium), are they a County Governmental Organization? Chairperson Daughtry noted that they are a private organization, J. Witty further noted that they are a center for addiction care and recovery, a ".org". Both Chairperson Daughtry and J. Witty have attended programs facilitated by Morris Cares, and that they specialize in counseling and treatment programs.

Approval of the Minutes:

M. Johnson presented the Council with the proposed minutes for the October 19th meeting of the D.A.C., circulated prior to the meeting via Email. A motion to approve the minutes as proposed was made by S. Marcus, seconded by L. Connelly, and approved by a voice vote of all members present.

Chairperson's Report:

Chair Daughtry reminded members that some individual terms are up at the end of the year, and that an application for renewal must be completed and returned to the Township Clerk by November 18th.

Chair Daughtry reported that he attended a County Opiate Task Force meeting along with L. Connelly, J. Witty, K. Spitz, and S. Marcus. The group brought back a CD of a 22-minute video shown at the meeting, "Chasing the Dragon". The video focuses on the prevalence of OxyContin in communities, resulting from prescriptions for pain relief that often lead to serious cases of addiction. J. Witty asked whether or not the Council might consider showing the video at a public event.

The group also reported on discussions regarding a new system being adopted by law enforcement agencies to take addicts to treatment facilities, rather than traditional processing upon arrest. K. Spitz noted that the movement stems from a system developed by a Police Chief in Massachusetts, which is now being adopted in West Orange.

The next meeting of the County Opiate Task Force was scheduled to take place on Wednesday, November 16th at 5pm at the Office of Temporary Assistance in Morristown. M. Johnson asked if these meetings were open to the public. Chair Daughtry replied that the Task Force is always looking for anyone with an interest to get involved.

S. Marcus noted in his summary of the meeting that he was disappointed in the lack of attention paid to primary prevention and systems to stop people from getting addicted in the first place. He noted that we should also be focused on talking to kids and families to help them understand that just because there is a pill out there these days for every issue does not mean that it should be prescribed or used. How do we fight this societal expectation that prompts people to seek these drugs automatically? J. Witty and S. Marcus also discussed past practices and efforts by the state to prevent "hit ups" of emergency rooms by walk-ins seeking to refill pain medication prescriptions. While an expansive system helps to track and report such cases in hospitals, there is no such resource for smaller "mom & pop" pharmacies.

Liaison Reports:

First Aid – No report given

Police – D. Danzi provided the Council with a detailed report on substance abuse cases for the year. S. Marcus asked if lab results were sought in all arrests related to substance abuse. D. Danzi reported that such tests are only sought if a case is proceeding to trial. S. Marcus noted that these tests can be valuable in detecting other, new substances that are being cut or mixed into other, more prevalent substances. The selective use of testing resulted in a delay in catching the rise of Fentanyl. J. Salamone asked to clarify whether or not the "out of town" arrests were drive-through cases resulting from motor vehicle stops. D. Danzi replied that it can be a mix. Sometimes the urge will strike people to stop where they are an engage in such an activity, or they are merely passing through on their way to do it somewhere else.

SAC – No Report given. J. Witty noted that it is important to have some representation from the S.A.C. to know what is going on in the schools. In past meetings, S.A.C. Liaisons had discussed developing a rotating schedule so that each meeting would be covered. M. Johnson noted that he will follow up.

Board of Education – No report given.

Township Committee – No report given.

Youth Services – Chair Daughtry stated that reports for the Youth Center activities were submitted via email by C. Ziolkowski.

Sub-Committee Reports:

Project Graduation Committee: No report given.

Project Promotion Committee: No report given.

Programs & Community Education Committee: J. Witty reported on the status of Red Ribbon Week programming. Posters are set to be hung within the Community Center starting on Monday, November 14th for judging. The award ceremony for students and parents will be held during the evening on November 30th, though location details have yet to be finalized.

J. Witty also noted that B. Seabury of the Morris County Prosecutor's Office is interested in helping with another presentation or program (he previously hosted a forum on the Opiate Epidemic in Morris County at the Montville Twp. High School) for February or March of 2017. J. Witty will continue to check back with him on his schedule, and will keep the Council posted.

Finally, J. Witty noted that Pequannock will be hosting a presentation by former NBA player Chris Herron. The presentation was previously attended by D.A.C. members to largely positive reviews, though has been noted to be particularly expensive. The Council discussed once again whether or not it could look into teaming up with other local organizations to host the program in town.

Finance Committee: No report given.

Youth Activities & Justice System Committee: M. Johnson reported that there have been no further updates from their contacts at Rutgers, and it does not look like a graduate student is available to assist with the survey project. J. Witty recommended reaching out to another school, and that they may have a contact at the University of Texas A&M. M. Johnson noted that he will look into this, and will look to bring the survey committee together after the Holidays to discuss other potential approaches to collecting insights and views from local youth.

Public/Other Business (Not on Agenda).

The D.A.C. welcomed two guests from the community, K. Haft and T. Becker. Both had heard of the D.A.C. and attended past programs, and joined tonight's meeting in the hopes of learning more about ongoing projects and to join in the discussion. S. Marcus asked K. Haft and T. Becker to provide a "parent's impression" of the drug and alcohol curriculum within the local public school system. T. Becker noted that she believed it to be very clinical, doing a great job of teaching students about the names and nature of the various substances that are out there. In her opinion, however, it was lacking an "experience" component that connected this technical information to its impact and presence within the real world. K. Spitz noted that she had spoken to the Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Rovtar, regarding the LEAD program and the inclusion of police as guest speakers. There are still discussions in the works as to what might be achievable. BOE liaison M. Palma followed up by asking for more information on these discussions. K. Spitz noted that Dr. Rovtar's initial response emphasized the difficulty in balancing guest speakers and other presentations with available instructional time. M. Johnson noted that Dr. Rovtar was very supportive of working with the D.A.C. to discuss and explore new programs and initiatives that might supplement the District's current instruction. With respect to LEAD, D. Danzi noted that there may not be much support for the program in the future, due to financial restraints.

K. Spitz followed up by noting that research into this program has been put on hold until the Police Department hires more officers. As discussed in previous meetings, the D.A.R.E. program utilized officers who were solely dedicated to community policing initiatives. No officers are currently employed in this capacity any longer. M. Cooney asked the D.A.C. what it can do to "set the stage", to ensure that necessary pieces are in place if and when more officers are available. M. Johnson noted that it's very difficult to lay a foundation, as the program depends on the availability of two organizations: the police and the schools. If one does not have a clear picture of what to expect from the other, it's very difficult to start preparing. The best we can do is keep communication channels open and engage both sides in moving the line towards our goal.

The date and time for the Round Table concept discussed by J. Scialla are still tentatively set as 7:30pm on Tuesday, November 29th at the First Aid Squad building.

Chair Daughtry reported that he has a meeting scheduled with the Township Administration in the coming week to discuss the \$15,000 recently allotted by the Township for "Drug Awareness Initiatives", and will report back on these discussions.

J. Witty reported that she will be attending a Parent Teacher Council meeting on November 17th.

Adjournment:

There being no further business to discuss on a motion made by J. Witty and seconded by J. Matias, all in favor by voice vote; meeting adjourned at 8:27pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael D. Johnson
Corresponding/Recording Secretary
January 11, 2017